

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS AND ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

GRADE EIGHT Course Title: Grade 8 English: Awareness and Responsibility

Course Description: This course revolves around the central questions that are pertinent to our eighth graders' ethical and moral dilemmas. We focus on examining how characters and people react to social and political injustices, as well as developing a sense of self. From there students reflect and are encouraged to develop their own voice. Students are exposed to various literary genres, including poetry, drama, nonfiction, the short story and the novel, that encompass a core of classic and contemporary literature. Students will utilize various reading strategies. They will exercise knowledge of core literary and poetic vocabulary. Students will read independently age appropriate material. Grammar instruction focuses on the reinforcement of the parts of speech, rules of punctuation, and sentence structure. Students will focus on writing formal literary essays, developing a thesis with supporting details and conclusions that make connections to the broader world. The process of pre-writing, drafting, editing, and deep revision will be developed. Various creative-writing assignments will be assigned to further their experience of the English language. Additionally students will gain proficiency in writing on demand (WOD), which is a large part of the contemporary writing experience. Throughout the year, activities emphasizing the development of public speaking and listening skills will be presented.

Essential Questions:

- What does it mean to be a responsible citizen?
- How can we be proactive in order to better our world?

**ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOL: ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS
GRADE EIGHT**

Curriculum Topics

- Students demonstrate knowledge of short story structure, setting, plot, characterization, theme and symbols.
- Students will respond to and analyze the effects of figurative language, form, sound, and graphics in order to uncover meaning in poetry.
- Students exhibit understanding of research methodology on different content in the curriculum.
- Students interpret fiction and its characteristics. Students will identify, analyze and apply knowledge of themes, structure, drama elements and provide evidence from the text to support their understanding.
- Students develop their five-paragraph essay to defend a literary thesis.
- Students master seven Parts of Speech and elements of sentence structure.
- Students use literature as a springboard for aesthetic interpretation and appreciation.

Benchmarks

Literature:

- Students identify the defining elements of drama, poetry, non-fiction, the short story and the novel are reinforced.
- Students utilize appropriate literary vocabulary for each genre.
 - Drama** – drama structure, stage directions, flashback, monologue, dialogue, stage presence, costuming and props.
 - Poetry** – simile, metaphor, personification, onomatopoeia, alliteration, narrative poems, and poetry with emphasis on the essential questions.
 - Short Story/Novel** – character/characterization, setting, conflict, story structure, types of conflict, climax, theme, symbolism, irony, imagery, and foreshadowing.
- Students utilize reading strategies – pre-reading, prediction, kinesthetic activities, vocabulary in context, discussion, and visualization.
- Students continuously read independent reading books.

Language:

- Students review the parts of speech and learn prepositions, compound adjectives, and possessive nouns.
- Students learn sentences structures: simple, compound, appositives, complex, parallel structure, and compound subjects and predicates.
- Students learn the rules of basic punctuation and learn the uses of the colon, semi-colon, and points of ellipsis.
- Students practice language for daily use through supplemental review of mechanics, usage and grammar through the five sentence types in “MUGSHOTS”.

Composition:

- Students learn the structure of a formal five-paragraph essay on a literary topic.
- Students utilize the writing process: prewriting, drafting, editing, revision and deep revision which focuses on logic, sequencing of ideas and diction.
- Students write on demand (WOD) through quick writes, journals, writers notebooks, scaffolding, exit cards and other means.
- Students learn how to set off the title of all genres studied including poetry, short stories, drama and novels using MLA format
- Students learn how to compose transition sentences and use transition words effectively. Students learn to eliminate personal pronouns in formal persuasive and literary compositions.

Media:

- Students use the Internet for research projects.
- Students view videos and hear text through various recordings.
- Students compare and contrast video productions to original text.