8th Grade ELA Honors Syllabus

COURSE OUTCOME:

Course Description

This year in Reading Language Arts, students will be engaging in a variety of writing modes, participating in in-depth inquiry and analysis of complex text, and experiencing rigorous classroom discussions led by both the teacher and their peers.

Throughout the year, students will be embracing critical thinking skills, collaboration with peers, communication with peers and adults, and creativity to master the State Standards in order to prepare for the new End of Year Assessment for Reading Language Arts. **https://www.tn.gov/education/instruction/academic-standards/english-language-arts-standards.html**

INSTRUCTION:

Topics Covered

Students will progress through the year-long course in modules centered around a common theme that guides the reading, writing, and grammar content. We will be using a thematic text, or texts, each for each module to guide our reading and writing. The TN ELA Standards are cyclical, so we will be working with our literature, informational text, language, and writing standards throughout each module of instruction.

General Pacing

- **Unit 8A: Perspective and Narrative**
  - This unit aims to teach students to *read like writers*: to pay attention to the craft of writing, to the moves a good writer makes to shape the way we see a scene or feel about a character—to stir us up, or surprise us, or leave us wondering what will happen next. In these sub-units, students study three examples of narrative writing—passages from Roald Dahl's *Going Solo*, Amy Tan's "Fish Cheeks," and Kaitlyn Greenidge's "My Mother's Garden"—reading each text multiple times in order to discover not just *what* it says, but *how* the author uses key narrative writing skills to convey his or her ideas. Students respond to writing prompts that alternate between analytic and narrative writing. By the end of the sub-units, students will write a small personal narrative about a moment in their childhood.

- **Unit 8B: Liberty and Equality**
  - The Declaration of Independence, the foundational document that expresses the ideals of a new nation, claimed that "all men are created equal." Yet, even as this document was drafted, the nation was engaged in a fierce debate about the meaning of those words. This unit focuses on the writings of both famous and lesser-known Americans who were critically, intellectually, and physically engaged in that debate during the Civil War time period. The lessons allow students to dive into these important texts, with a clear focus on how each writer reflects on this question, and give them many opportunities to reflect on, discuss, write about, and debate ideas of equality, opportunity, justice, and freedom.

- **Unit 8C: Science and Science Fiction**
  - Amplify's Science & Science Fiction unit stars two trailblazing women who charted new terrains in literature and computer science: Mary Shelley and Ada Lovelace. In the first 17 lessons of the unit, students read *Gris Grimly's Frankenstein*, a graphic novel that adds captivating illustrations to an abridgment of the 1818 edition of Mary Shelley's book. Grimly's haunting portrayal of Mary Shelley's original narrative pushes students to wrestle with some of the book's central themes: a creator's responsibility for their creation, the role of society in shaping our presence in the world, and the promises and risks of scientific inquiry.In the Poetical Science sub-unit, students read two poems, a speech, and excerpts from Chapter 1 of Walter Isaacson's *The Innovators* to compare and contrast the ways in which William Wordsworth, Lord Byron, and Ada Lovelace viewed humanity's relationship with technology. Are we the masters of our machines, or are the machines our masters?

- **Unit 8D: Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet**
  - The lessons in this unit cover five short excerpts from Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. Students are introduced to the plot of the play as they explore and closely read several of its most famous scenes. After working their way through the unit, students will be able to spot and follow an extended metaphor and translate Shakespearean English into their own words. The lessons will spark a curiosity about the *whole* play, providing the foundation for a deeper dive when students study *Romeo and Juliet* in a later grade.

- **Unit 8E: Holocaust: Memory and Meaning**
  - How do a society and its people become participants in such an atrocity? And what is the responsibility of those who experienced, witnessed, participated in, or who now learn about these events? Students will use an ELA lens and close reading to dig into these questions. The selected materials present events from several different perspectives—those of perpetrators, survivors, victims, bystanders, and witnesses—allowing students to develop a critical understanding of the strategies Nazis used to influence the mindset of a nation, and the human responses to the unfolding of genocide.

- **Unit 8F: The Space Race Collection**
  - In the lessons on information literacy that begin the unit, students learn how to tell the difference between primary, secondary, and tertiary sources; determine if a source is reliable; and understand ethical uses of information. Having practiced these skills, students are ready to develop and sharpen their sourcing abilities in the next lessons in which they construct their own research questions and explore the internet for answers.

Materials Needed

See supply list on school webpage (http://holstonms.knoxschools.org/)
- 3-prong/2-pocket folder

- 2 reams copy paper

Resources:
- *Online Resources*: **AmplifyELA website**
- *Amplify ELA Textbook* **(2021 Amplify Education)**
- *Compliance with Instructional Materials Policy & Procedure I-211:*
  - *If you do not approve of a specific resource listed in this syllabus, please make your request to me in writing and an alternative assignment and/or materials will be provided. The request should include your name, the student's name, the specific activity/materials in which you do not want your child to participate or to which you do not want them exposed, and the nature of your objection.

ASSESSMENTS:
Students are expected to be prepared, study effectively, ask questions, be proactive in their learning and give their best effort on all assessments. Students will be assessed on their progress throughout the year in the following ways: through Amplify End of Unit Tests, Quarterly Benchmarks, Writing Assessments, and the End-of-Year State Assessment. It is in the students' best interest to work towards mastery of 8th grade skills, as new and more rigorous skills and standards are expected for high school.

1st Semester
- 90% = Formative (homework/classwork) and Summative (tests/quizzes) Assessments
- 10% TCAP

2nd Semester
- 90% = Formative (homework/classwork) and Summative (tests/quizzes) Assessments
- 10% TCAP

2. Grading will follow Knox County Schools Policy
   A= 93-100   B= 85-92   C= 75-84   D= 70-74   F= 69 and below

3. Every student is expected to complete **every** assignment **on time.**

4. **Canvas Learning Management System:** Canvas will be a central location to stay updated on student assignments and progress.
   - Canvas will be organized by **module**, and within each module, assignments and resources will be kept with the most recent at the top.
   - Students will be responsible for being able to maneuver through Canvas to see assignments, hand in assignments or projects, and participate in on-line discussions.
   - Students will be able to message the instructor through Canvas; proper email etiquette will be the standard and expected to receive a response.
   - Grades for assignments or tests completed on Canvas will be recorded in Aspen. Grades in Canvas are used to acknowledge receipt of submitted work, and may not reflect a final grade.

Parent Portal

I will communicate with the student and parent through Canvas and/or Aspen. In order to give timely feedback, I will update grades at least once per week on Aspen.

Late work

1. Work will be considered late if the assignment is not turned in **on the date due.**
2. Work will ONLY be accepted in the current grading period (every 4 ½ weeks). Work will NOT be accepted after the grading period has closed.

Make-up work policy

1. **Attendance** plays a **vital** role in student success and achievement in school. Please make every effort to attend every day. I understand that things happen and that absences are sometimes inevitable. As students have access to a computer, students should be able to complete assignments if they are not in class.
2. **Students are responsible** for completing missed work immediately upon returning to school and completing it in a timely manner.
3. **Students are responsible** for communicating with their teacher in regards to being absent and checkecking on what is missed that day. Please check Canvas for assignments that have been missed.

Extra Credit Policy

Extra credit **will not be given**. Students are expected to do their best on every assignment as it is assigned. If work is completed on time, extra credit will not be necessary.

GENERAL EXPECTATIONS:

Student Expectations
● Students must adhere to the KCS Policy J-260 Dress Code. ● Students are expected to follow KCS Policy J-191 Misbehaviors and Disciplinary Options to provide a safe and respectful environment for teachers and students. ● Students are expected to follow the KCS Policy I-220-3 when utilizing technology. Proper behavior, as it relates to the use of computers, is no different than proper behavior in other aspects of school activities. All users are expected to use the computers and computer networks in a responsible, ethical, and polite manner. KCS reserves the right to monitor all technology resource activity. ● Students are responsible for the content posted through their login and account activity. Sharing or using usernames and passwords with others or using other's usernames and passwords is strictly prohibited. ● Follow KCS grade-level expectations for digital citizenship. (https://www.commonsense.org/education/digital-citizenship/curriculum)

- Students must maintain a log of usernames and passwords for all virtual learning platforms.
- Students will be expected to adhere to all assessment policies for diagnostic, benchmark, and Standards Based Assessments.
- Students are expected to check Canvas or other teacher communication formats daily.
- Student attendance will be recorded daily and entered into Aspen.
- Students are expected to be active participants in activities as directed by the teacher.
- Submit assignments as directed by the teacher. Assignments may be assigned with flexibility to submit weekly. (Example: Saturday by midnight)

- If a student fails to complete an assignment and there is no communication within 5 school days, then the students shall earn a failing grade for the assignment.
- Advocate for personal needs and additional support when needed. Students are expected to meet the teacher policy regarding assignment submission, late work, and incomplete work. Students are expected to meet all deadlines.
- Students will be held accountable for meeting teacher classroom policies.
- Report any technical issues through the Tech Help Desk (865-594-1830) as soon as an issue arises. The help desk is manned from 8:00 AM - 4:30 PM Monday - Friday.

BEST PRACTICES
- ❖ Be appropriate and respectful in your actions.
- ❖ Listen to the educator or individual speaking.
- ❖ Stay engaged throughout the lesson or activity.
- ❖ Ensure that all work is your own.
- ❖ Bring a charged laptop to class every day.

Parent Expectations

- Parents are expected to set up a dedicated learning space in the home - free from distractions and interruption (pets, siblings, television, etc...). This may include a quiet space to complete classwork.
- Parents are expected to check KCS platforms (Canvas and ASPEN) for assignments and grades.
- Parents are expected to provide schools and teachers with the most current contact information (phone numbers, emergency contact, and address).
- Parents are expected to maintain open lines of communication (phone and email) with teachers and communicate any concerns or questions to the teacher. Teachers are expected to return communication within 1 business day.
- Parents are expected to ensure that the student is communicating appropriately with teachers and classmates (email, chat feature, etc…).
- Parents are expected to adhere to the Civility Code KCS Policy B-230.
- Parents are expected to ensure that the student follows the KCS dress code. (J-260)
- Parents are expected to ensure that the student follows the established classroom rules and expectations for in-person.
- Parents are expected to ensure that the student follows the KCS grade-level expectations for digital citizenship. (https://www.commonsense.org/education/digital-citizenship/curriculum)
- Parents are expected to support academic integrity by allowing students to work independently and by monitoring resources used.
- Parents are expected to monitor student work and ensure that assignments are submitted according to directions by the teacher. This includes due dates and format.
- Parents are expected to ensure that all KCS policies and procedures are followed.
- Students must understand they must be properly dressed and cannot issue inappropriate or threatening language in the school building.
- Parents are expected to follow federal and state laws regarding student privacy and FERPA.
- Parents are expected to read, review, and follow the KCS Responsible Use Policy (Knox County Schools Procedure (I-220-3).

Teacher Expectations

- Teachers will utilize educational communication services (e.g. Remind, Canvas, Aspen) to remain in contact with families and students. Teachers will not use their personal cell phone numbers to directly contact students individually.
- Teachers will be available during regular school hours; they will be available via email and will respond within 1 business day. Office hours will be posted and consistently maintained.
- Teachers will provide and post syllabi on Canvas at the beginning of each term to communicate expectations.
- Teachers will communicate expectations for assignment deadlines and point/percent penalties (if any) for late work.
- Teachers will communicate how students should alert the instructor if they are experiencing technological issues that could result in missing/late assignments.
- Teachers will ensure grades reflect student ability, not access to resources.

- Teachers will uphold specialized education plans, including IEPs, ILPs, and 504s.
- Teachers will actively participate in the development of educational programming for students as appropriate.
- Teachers will maintain the principles outlined in the KCS Connect course.
- Teachers will collaborate with content-area/grade-level PLCs to remain aligned with the determined curriculum and pacing guide.
- Teachers within the same school will work together to ensure consistently high expectations and best use of technology.
- Teachers may plan for students to have a combination of instructions in the form of a flipped classroom.
- Teachers will provide a variety (multiple) of ways to ensure students understand and can demonstrate mastery of the content standards.
- Teachers will monitor progress on a weekly basis to ensure that students are on-track/on-pace. Students who are not on-track will need extra, intensive meeting time to catch up on missing mastery items.

- **Device Use/Misuse:** Improper use of any computer or the network is prohibited. This includes the following:
  - Use of racist, profane, or obscene language or materials
  - Using the network for financial gain, political or commercial activity
  - Attempting to or harming equipment, materials or data
  - Attempting to or sending anonymous messages of any kind
  - Using the network to access inappropriate material
  - Knowingly placing a computer virus on a computer or the network
  - Using the network to provide addresses or other personal information that others may use inappropriately
  - Accessing of information resources, files, and documents of another user without permission
  - Vandalism, any malicious attempt to harm or destroy district equipment or materials, data of another user of the district's system, or any of the agencies or other networks to which the district has access is prohibited. Deliberate attempts to degrade or disrupt system performance may be viewed as violations of district guidelines and, possibly, as criminal activity under applicable state and federal laws. This includes, but is not limited to, the uploading or creating of computer viruses.
  - Forgery or attempted forgery of electronic messages is prohibited. Attempts to read, delete, copy, or modify the electronic mail of other system users or deliberate interference with the ability of other system users to send/receive electronic mail is prohibited. Forgery or attempted forgery of documents or currency is prohibited. Deliberate attempts to create, copy or modify

official documents or currency using district technology resources may be viewed as a violation of district guidelines and, possibly, as criminal activity under applicable state and federal laws.

Failure to comply with these standards may result in temporary or permanent removal of user access to KCS Virtual Instruction.

● **Students:**
  ○ **Attendance Policy**
     Parents/guardians have the legal responsibility to ensure that their child is fully participating in virtual and in-person school by monitoring their progress and time spent on daily course work. When a student is unable to participate in daily instruction, parent notes/doctor notes should be submitted. All virtual students are held to the same attendance policies/guidelines as students who are in traditional schools. See Knox County Board of Education Attendance Policy (J-120) regarding absence documentation.

● **Classroom Policy/Procedures**
     Student are expected to adhere to the Four Pillars of our Holston Community:
     - Be Safe
     - Be Respectful
     - Be Ready
     - Be Responsible
     All Classroom policies and procedures stem from these four main tenets.

● **Honor Code -** please reference the Plagiarism section of the syllabus

● **Intervention Strategy:**
  - Tutoring is available to all students after school on Tuesdays and Thursdays, October through May.
     ● **Please call the main office for more information.**

● **PLAGIARISM**
  According to Harbrace Handbook, 15ᵗʰ edition:
     Plagiarism is defined as "presenting someone else's ideas, research, or opinion as your own without proper documentation, even if it has been rephrased." It includes, but is not limited to the following:
     1. Copying verbatim all or part of another's written work;
     2. Using phrases, figures, or illustrations without citing the source;
     3. Paraphrasing ideas, conclusions, or research without citing the source;
     4. Using all or part of a literary plot, poem, or film without attributing the work to its creator.

  Cheating is defined as representing any other person's work or work from any source as your own.

  CONSEQUENCES OF PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is a form of stealing and academic fraud. Students who are found guilty of plagiarism will have the option of either re-doing the assignment within a specified time period and accepting a grade letter drop or taking a zero on the assignment. Parents should be involved in making the decision.

==Per Tennessee State Board of Education Policy, the following MUST be posted on each syllabus:==
Board Policy 1-431, Issues 7/95 Revised 6/08
The Board affirms that it is essential that the teaching about religion—and not of a religion be conducted in a factual, objective, and respectful manner in accordance with the following:

● Music, art, literature, or drama with a religious theme or basis are permitted as part of the curriculum for school-sponsored activities and programs, provided it is essential to the learning experience in the various fields of study and is presented objectively;

● The emphasis on religious themes in the arts, literature, and history shall be only as extensive as necessary for a balanced and comprehensive study of these areas. Such studies shall never foster any particular religious tenets or demean any religious beliefs; and

● Student-initiated expressions to questions or assignments which reflect their beliefs or non-beliefs about a religious theme shall be accommodated. For example, students are free to express religious belief or non-belief in compositions, art forms, music, speech, and debate.

● Additionally, if a course features religion within the curriculum and instructional materials, this information must be included within the syllabus, and the syllabus must be publicly posted.

● Within the syllabus, teachers must include specific religion-aligned selections that will be used throughout the year or semester.

How to contact Ms. Pallesen:
    o   Email: karen.pallesen@knoxschools.org
    o   Phone: 865-594-1300 ext. 41271 between 2:25-3:30 pm on Monday and Wednesday