

7th Grade Honors English Language Arts Syllabus 2018-2019

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Course Description

In seventh grade, students will read major works of fiction and nonfiction from all over the world and from different time periods. They will come to learn how to understand what they read and evaluate an author's assumptions and claims. My hope is that students will find this course challenging, but have the tools they need to dive into rigorous texts and be successful. In this course I will also push for students to find joy in reading by helping them discover books of high interest! This course will follow the TDOE state standards and will be made equitable for all students. At the honors level, students may experience texts with a higher level of complexity than the grade level classes. Curriculum modules should reflect the TDOE Honors Framework for extension.

Instruction: A Brief Overview

Weeks 1-9

The focus of the first nine weeks will be a basic refresher on sentence types and structure, phrases, clauses, and conjunctions. Students will then be exploring a Dystopian novel and focusing on the theme of "What is Truth?" for this unit. We will be linking informational texts that relate back to the novel and learn how to annotate for comprehension. This skill will follow us throughout the rest of the course.

- *The Giver* by Lois Lowry
- Various poems by various authors
- Various short stories by various authors
- Articles pulled from Newsela, CommonLit, and Actively Learn

Weeks 10-19

The focus of these nine weeks will be building off of the first nine, while working closely with a novel that introduces a complex narrator and covers some issues from the Holocaust. They will be challenged with this more rigorous text that introduces issues that may be tough to conceptualize. We will work on writing conventions and teaching students how to create their own narrative.

- *The Book Thief* by Markus Zusak
- Various poems and stories by various authors
- Articles pulled from Newsela, CommonLit, and Actively Learn

Weeks 20-29

These nine weeks will make a shift to research, as we will be working with a novel that kicks off learning about the Civil Rights Movement. Students will be learning how to research a historical event and inform

an audience through a research essay. Students will also be working on organization and how to find reliable sources.

- *The Watsons go to Birmingham* by Christopher Paul Curtis
- Various poems and stories by various authors
- Articles pulled from Newsela, CommonLit, and Actively Learn

Last 9 weeks

These last nine weeks will be used to focus on fine tuning skills needed for eighth grade and beyond. Students will also be reading *The Pact*, by Lisa Fraizer Page and *The Three Doctors*, which is a novel that will hopefully inspire them to hold each other accountable to being the best versions of themselves as they continue their educational careers. End of year testing will also be held within these nine weeks, so we will be preparing for those as well.

Materials Needed

- Pencils
- Notebook (spiral or composition)
- Pens
- It is recommended that you buy your own copies of the novels we will be reading this year, as there are not enough individual copies for each student. However, we will make sure students all have equal opportunity to the copies we do have.
 - *The Giver* by Lois Lowry
 - *The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins
 - *The Watsons go to Birmingham* by Christopher Paul Curtis
 - *The Pact* by Lisa Fraizer Page and *The Three Doctors*

There is no need for students to bring any other supplies for this class unless they would like to provide a box of tissues, hand sanitizer, or post-it notes.

Resources

- *Reality Central*, Pearson
- *Literature: Common Core Edition*, Pearson
- *Writer's Choice Grammar and Composition*, Glencoe
- *The Book Thief* movie, Rated PG-13
- *The Giver* movie, Rated PG-13
- *The Outsiders* movie, Rated PG
- Various educational videos pulled from Discovery Education, TeacherTube, YouTube, and CommonLit streamed through Canvas

**Throughout the year if further resources are used I will send out a letter to all students as well as update the syllabus on the class page

Knox County Board of Education Policy- Religion in the Curriculum

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:

1. Art, music, literature, or drama with a religious theme or bases 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;
2. 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 an particular religious tenets or demean any religious beliefs; and
3. 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 compositions, art forms, music, speech, and debate.

Compliance with Instructional Materials Policy & Procedure IFAB

Teachers, school administrators, and instructional supervisors/specialists will work together to select appropriate high quality instructional materials. Such materials could include (but are not limited to) books, magazines, newspapers, journals, and video, audio, digital, and web resources.

Selection of instructional materials will be based on the criteria listed below and should be continuously re-evaluated in relation to changing curriculum content, pedagogical research, and the needs of students, teachers, and administrators.

All resources used during a course of study or in conjunction with school-wide activities will be openly disclosed to parents/guardians and other stakeholders sufficiently in advance of their use with students for parents to request an alternate assignment should they have a concern about the selected materials. Alternate assignments will receive the same level of instructional and assessment rigor as the primary assignment. Instructional materials prescribed within the established curricula for Advanced Placement, dual enrollment, dual credit and International Baccalaureate Programme courses are on a post-secondary level and are considered appropriate for this level of academic endeavor. Enrollment in these courses constitutes acceptance of the instructional program. Alternate assignments will not generally be available for this level of coursework.

The Director of Schools will establish an administrative procedure for review and selection of materials subject to this policy. Particular attention will be paid to addressing the suitability of instructional materials that include content which might be considered sensitive by parents or students (for example, materials that contain coarse language, graphic violence, explicit sexual content, illegal use of drugs or alcohol). The Director of Schools will also establish a procedure for the reconsideration of approved materials as may be requested by parents or staff members.

Criteria for Selection:

- Educational purpose (as defined by state standards)
- Contribution the subject matter makes to the curriculum and to the interests of the students

- Appropriateness to social, emotional, and intellectual level of intended audience
- Favorable reviews found in standard selection sources
- Favorable recommendations based on preview and examination of materials by professional personnel
- Reputation and significance of the author, producer, and publisher
- Validity, currency, and appropriateness of the material
- Contribution the materials makes to the breadth of representative viewpoints on controversial issues
- High degree of potential user appeal
- High artistic quality and/or literary style
- Quality and variety of format
- Value commensurate with cost and/or need
- Timeliness or permanence of the content

Assessment

Competencies:

Students will take a benchmark assessment at the end of each unit of instruction. These assessments will measure the students' ability to apply what they have learned about writing conventions, reading skills, comprehension, speaking and listening, research, and organization.

Expectations:

Students are expected to do all work, ON TIME, and to best of their ability. Students are expected to be to class on time and prepared. We will uphold the Golden Rule in the classroom and treat others the way we want to be treated at all times. Students are expected to actively participate in discussions and engage one another intellectually. **ALL STUDENTS ARE EXPECTED TO BE HONEST AS CHEATING ON ANY ASSIGNMENT WILL RESULT IN A ZERO (0%) FOR THAT GRADE.**

_____ (student and guardian initial).

Grading Policy

Students will earn around three grades per week. All summative grades will count at 60% of a student's overall grade. Formative grades will count towards 40% of a student's overall grades. I have committed to post grades once a week. My goal is to post grades every Monday.

Knox County Grading Scale:

93%-100% = A

85%-92% = B

75%-84% = C

70%-74% = D

69% and lower will not qualify as a passing grade

*Please let me know if there is anything I can do to help your child be successful! I want this to a partnership where we are working together to provide the best environment for your student to work in within reason.

Make-Up Work Policy

Absent Student Make-Up

Making-up assignments; If a student must be absent from school for any reason, excused or unexcused up to ten (10) days, upon returning to school, he/she shall be given the opportunity to make up any and all assignments that were missed during the student's absence. The student must request make-up assignments within three (3) days after returning. Teachers shall set a reasonable time for the completion of the work. Failure of a student to initiate a request for make-up work within three (3) days will result in lost opportunity for credit for that assignment.

Late Work Policy

A student is always encouraged to turn in late work since practice is important to mastery. Late work will be accepted until the afternoon of the nine week academic incentive day. It is up to teacher discretion whether they decide to take away points. If they choose to do so, students may only lose points according to the following procedure: Each day late will result in an automatic 5% decrease in the possible maximum points for the assignment.

If missing work is not turned in before the nine week cut-off, it will be recorded as a zero in the gradebook. I will remind students of missing work, but it is ultimately their responsibility to turn it in before the deadline.

Projects and Papers

Students will be expected to write an outline, rough draft, go through editing and revising steps, and produce a final draft for every essay/paper assigned. These will be guided in seventh grade, as we are preparing them to do it more independently in the future. Most writing will be able to be done in class, but students will need to spend time outside of class working on many of the assignments.

Students are expected to TYPE their final draft at this point in their education. Due to technology requirements, there are no exceptions on this. Please let me know if I can help in anyway with this requirement! **NO handwritten final drafts will be accepted _____ (student and adult initial).**

Attendance Policy

Student need to be at school in order to learn. We are committed to making this a safe environment for students to learn. We have many group projects and assignments and if students are not present they will

miss out on a wonderful collaboration time, as well as missing out on an opportunity for feedback from teachers and peers. Students will find make-up work in the bin at the front of the classroom, but will be expected to see me to set a due date time. ****SEE MAKE-UP WORK POLICY ABOVE****

Plagiarism

According to Harbrace Handbook, 15th edition:

“Plagiarism is defined as presenting someone else’s idea, 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 it’s creator.”

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 redoing 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.

Contact Information

The best form of contact is through email, however, my classroom phone is set to voicemail and I will be able to check that after school to call you back. Again, the quickest response will be through email. Please let me know if there is anything I can help you or you child with throughout this school year!

Knox County E-mail: paris.hutchison@knoxschools.org

****Please sign and return this form by Friday, August 10th, 2018****

I have read the following syllabus and understand the requirements for this course:

(Student Print and Signature)

(Parent Print and Signature)