

**Ms. Elizabeth Leavitt**  
**Eighth Grade English Language Arts**  
Powell Middle School  
[elizabeth.eastman@knoxschools.org](mailto:elizabeth.eastman@knoxschools.org)  
School office phone: 865- 938-9008  
Cell phone: Available Upon Request



## **Course Description:**

Eighth Grade English/Language Arts (ELA) will focus on both reading and writing. Students will read a variety of texts including both fiction and nonfiction. The written component includes various forms of language including grammar, conventions, vocabulary, and spelling. Students will use a range of texts to enhance their understanding, develop writing conventions, and apply language skills in both speaking and listening.

## **State Revised Curriculum Standards:**

The standards for ELA are divided into five strands:

- Reading: Literature (RL) and Informational Text (RI)
- Writing (W)
- Speaking and Listening (SL)
- Language (L)
- Foundation K-5 Literacy

To view the academic standards for 8<sup>th</sup> grade ELA, please visit:

<https://www.tn.gov/education/article/english-language-arts-standards>

### **Texts and Resources:**

*Writer's Choice Grammar and Composition* - Glencoe  
*Elements of Literature* – Holt  
*Writer's Choice Literature* – Glencoe  
*Prentice Hall Literature* – Pearson

Current events articles to be used in class discussions and assignments may be pulled from, but not limited to the following: *commonlit.org*, *Time Magazine*, *The New York Times*, *Knoxville News Sentinel*, *Washington Post*, *CNN.com*, *Tennessee Electronic Library*, *NEWSELA*, etc. Students will be reading both literary and informational extended and shorter texts.

### **Novel Studies we may complete this year:**

*Jefferson's Sons*                      *April Morning*                      *The Count of Monte Cristo*    *Night*  
*The Boy Who Dared*                      *Warriors Don't Cry*  
*Phantom of the Opera Teleplay*

### **Grade Categories**

#### **Fall Semester: (ELA)**

Benchmark Assessments	3%
All other Daily Work	97%

#### **Fall Semester: (Honors):**

Benchmark Assessment	3%
Honors Midterm	10%
All other Daily Work	87%

#### **Spring Semester (All Classes)**

Benchmark Assessment	3%
TCAP	15%
All other Daily Work	82%

### **Suggested Student Materials**

- A folder or binder to hold work
- Loose Leaf, Wide-Ruled Paper
- Pencils (regular & colored)
- Pens (any color)
- Highlighters (any color)
- Post-It notes (multiple; any color)

## **Videos:**

Some examples of videos that may be used to enhance lessons and engage students in classroom discussion and writing strategies are:

*Life is Beautiful*

*On Native Soil*

Clips from commonlit.org

*Charley (Flowers for Algernon)*

Clips from Teacher Tube

Clips from Discovery Education

*Hidden Figures*

*The Count of Monte Cristo*

*Oprah's Interview of Elie Wiesel at Auschwitz*

*Phantom of the Opera*

Knox County policy states that a student must request absence work within 3 days of return to school. Failure of the student to initiate a request for the make-up work will result in lost opportunity for credit. **See agenda page 5.**

## **Make-Up /Absence Work:**

Please check the Make UP Work Bin for the week and day you missed! This is located at the student entry table in our classroom. If a student is absent on a day that handouts are provided, then they will find a copy upon return to class in the Make UP Work Bin. Given adequate planning and preparation time, students are expected to make up any tests/quizzes on the day they return to school from an absence. If students have extended absences, then alternative make up work deadlines may be arranged.

## **Writing Portfolio:**

Throughout the year, students will work on various pieces of writing that provide the opportunity to demonstrate mastery with ALL modes of writing. Periodically, students will choose ONE writing piece to take through the entire writing process and submit it for evaluation/grading. This piece will be placed in your writing portfolio. Electronic portfolios may be used this year on Google Drive.

## **Grading Scale:**

Students will earn grades based on daily work, homework, quizzes, projects, and tests. The current grading scale is as follows:

- A 93-100
- B 85-92

- C 75-84
- D 70-74
- F 0-69

### **Behavior Expectations:**

Be prepared. Be on time. Be respectful. Be attentive. Strive for excellence.

### **Knox County's Policy on Religion in Curriculum:**

While a link to Knox County's policy on Religion in the Curriculum is provided, I have included the wording of it below.

<http://knoxschools.org/cms/lib7/TN01917079/Centricity/domain/974/policies2016/I-431%20Religion%20>

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. 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;
- 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 any 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 or non-belief in compositions, art forms, music, speech and debate.

**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."

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.*

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*Please sign and return: I have received a copy of and read through Ms. Leavitt's 2019-2020 English Language Arts syllabus, which includes the policy on plagiarism. Please add your contact information below. A copy of this syllabus will be posted on Aspen.*

*Student Name:* \_\_\_\_\_ *Parent Name:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Email/phone:* \_\_\_\_\_