

Gresham Middle School
8th Grade English Language Arts 2015-2016

Instructor: Mrs. Alice McManus e-mail: alice.mcmanus@knoxschools.org

COURSE OUTCOME:

Course Description: English Language Arts classes encompass eight strands: Reading (Literature and Informational Text), Writing, Speaking and Listening, and Language.

Hyperlink to local curriculum and state standards:

<http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RL/8>

INSTRUCTION:

Skills Covered: As students master the standards, they will demonstrate independence; build strong content knowledge; respond to the varying demands of audience, task, purpose, and discipline; comprehend as well as critique; value evidence; use technology and digital media strategically and capably; and come to understand other perspectives and cultures.

General Pacing: Instruction will follow the pacing and guidelines set forth by the Knox County Middle Schools English/Language Arts department.

Materials Needed:

*one three ring binder (1 ½ inches)*five dividers *notebook paper
*two packs of index cards *glue stick *red, blue, and black pen
*highlighters(multicolor pack)

Resources:

School based: Pearson/Prentice Hall *Literature: Common Core Edition (Grade 8)*

Library: Students will go to the GMS School Library on a regular basis to check out books. Additionally, they will have a classroom library to use as a resource.

Major Works to be Read: Touching Spirit Bear by Ben Mikaelson

Films: Throughout the course of study, students **may** view films, film-clips, documentaries, or educational programming directly correlated to their study. All audio-visuals will comply with Knox County guidelines.

Religion in the Curriculum

Knox County Board policy states:

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.

* 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 child'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.

ASSESSMENT

Expectations/Skills: Students are expected to read regularly outside of school. Research proves that regular reading improves comprehension, vocabulary, and writing skills.

Because of the variety of skills covered in this course, a variety of techniques will be used to assess them. A mix of both formative assessments (such as quizzes, writing assignments, and other checks for understanding) and summative assessments (such as unit exams and other written products) will be used.

Grading Policy/Rubrics: Standards Based Grading is used at Gresham Middle School. **Students and parents will receive Standards Based Grading Rubrics for project-based learning.** The following Knox County grading scale will be used:

A = 93-100	Exceeding Expectations
B = 85-92	Meeting Expectations
C = 75-84	Approaching Expectations
D = 70-74	Attempting Expectations
F = 0-69	Insufficient Evidence

Grades are cumulative spanning an entire semester. The final semester grade will be based upon the cumulative class numerical average according to the KCS grading scale. The one overall yearly grade will be determined by calculating the average of the first and second semester grades. Interim reports will be issued every 4½ weeks during a semester.

Makeup Work: Students must check with me to discuss the work they miss after an absence. Knox County policy states that students have up to three days after an absence to inquire about makeup work. All makeup work is due within one week of the absence.

Late Work: If a major assignment is past due, there will be a minimum of a 10% penalty. If an assignment is worth 100 points and it is turned in late, the highest grade that assignment will receive is a 90. Excessively late work (more than one week) could receive a maximum of a 30% penalty. In that case, if the assignment is worth 100 points and it is more than one week late, the highest grade would be a 70.

Portal Post Policy: One way in which I am able to communicate with the student and parent is through Parent Portal. In order to give timely feedback, I will update grades in a timely manner.

STUDENTS

Attendance Policy: I expect students to make attendance a top priority. If you are not present, you miss out on valuable learning opportunities and end up playing “catch-up.”

Classroom Rules:

- Be prompt.
- Be prepared.
- Stay on task.
- Raise your hand before speaking.
- Be respectful.

Honor Code: 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:

- Copying verbatim all or part of another’s written work;
- Using phrases, figures, or illustrations without citing the source;
- Paraphrasing ideas, conclusion, or research without citing the source;
- 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.

TEACHER

Communication Strategy: The best way to reach me is by e-mail at alice.mcmanus@knoxschools.org. You may also call the school phone at 689-1430 and leave a message for me.

Tutoring/Extra Help: I am available for extra help during Early Study Hall and daily focus groups.