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8th Grade ELA

Mrs. Jensen

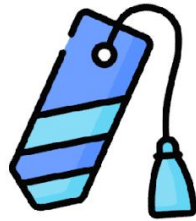
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2024-2025

Why Should You Care About 8th Grade ELA?

How can literature expand our worldview? What can books teach us about ourselves? How can we write in order to persuade, entertain, or inform our readers? How can an expanded vocabulary help us to understand, describe, specify, and illuminate our world? How can we think critically, so we know which information we can really trust and put to use? This course will answer all of these important questions and more, so you can end the school year confident in your reading, writing, and critical thinking skills.



How Will This Course Help You in **Your Future**?

Strong reading, writing, and critical thinking skills will not only help you in every subject in school, but in any career you choose for yourself. Additionally, the literature that we read in this class will help you to personally connect with important ideas while opening your eyes to other points of view. Finally, study after study has shown that collaborative and cooperative skills are key to success for people working in almost any field. This class touches on all of these areas and will set you up for a lifetime of success. By the end of the school year, you will be able to do all the following and more!:

- Read, understand, and analyze grade-level stories, novels, articles, and poems
- Evaluate the credibility of sources
- Create writing that makes a claim and supports it with premises, evidence, and justification
- Use the art of language to create strong, engaging writing in many genres
- Understand and employ the mechanics of punctuation, grammar, and spelling
- Identify topics, conflicts, and themes in literature and apply them to our current world
- Increase your vocabulary by hundreds of words
- Work with other students toward common goals



How Will You **Do Well** in This Class?

- **Be Respectful.** This means that students should be supportive to peers, be attentive to staff, keep their environment clean, and be self-reflective.
- **Be Engaged.** Participate in class discussions and activities. Only use technology in a manner that is conducive to class success.
- **Be Diligent.** We should strive to be diligent with our work and our character, even if we get frustrated. Failed attempts teach lessons. Lack of attempts don't.



What Will We Learn in This Class?

Over the course of the year, this class will address each of the Common Core's English language arts standards for 8th grade. You will develop skills in reading, writing, language, speaking, and listening as you engage in activities focusing on the following standards:

*Focus is subject to change any quarter depending on the needs of the 8th grade cohort.

Quarter 1

Focus: Reading Literature; Writing Narratives

. Essential Standards/ Skills:

RL2: identify the theme of works of literature and analyze its development; write an objective summary

RL3: analyze the impact of specific lines of dialogue or incidents in a work of literature

RL6: analyze the effect of differences in point of view between the characters and the audience in a work of literature (e.g. dramatic irony, humor, suspense)

W3: write narratives

Quarter 2

Focus: Reading Informational Texts; Writing Informative/Explanatory Essays

. Essential Standards/ Skills:

RI2: identify the central idea of an informational text and analyze its development;

write an objective summary

RI3: analyze how connections/distinctions are made in an informational text

RI4: determine the meaning of words used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze tone

RI5: analyze individual paragraphs and the role of individual sentences on the central idea of the text

W2: write informative/ explanatory essays

SL2: analyze the purpose of information presented

SL3: evaluate a speaker's arguments and claims



Quarter 3

Focus: Reading Literature and Informational Texts; Writing Argumentative Essays

. Essential Standards/ Skills:

RI6: determine an author's point of view, perspective, and purpose; analyze how an author responds to conflicting information

RI7: evaluate the advantages/disadvantages of using different mediums to present information

RI9: analyze a case in which two texts present conflicting information; evaluate when the authors differ on matters of fact or opinion

RL7: compare/contrast a story/drama and its filmed version; evaluate choices made by director/actors

W1: write arguments

SL1: participate effectively in a range of discussions; come prepared, draw on evidence, and consider/respond to information presented by others

Quarter 4

Focus: Reading Literature and Informational Texts; Writing Informative and Argumentative Essays

. Essential Standards/ Skills:

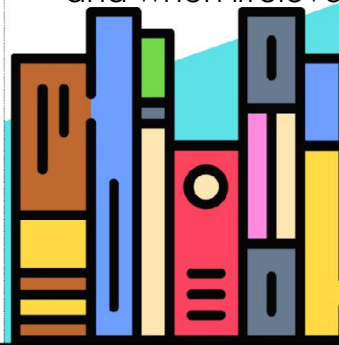
RL5: compare/contrast the structure of two texts and how the structure contributes to the overall meaning

RL7: (see above)

RL9: analyze how a modern work draws on universal themes, patterns, or character types, including how it is made new

RI1: cite the evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text

RI8: evaluate the author's claims and assess whether sufficient evidence is present and when irrelevant evidence is presented



How Will You and I Assess Your Learning?

- **Classwork:** 20% of your grade will be based on classwork, which will include short written responses, note-taking, activities based on class readings and topics, exit tickets, reflections, and more.
- **Writing Projects, Quizzes, and Tests:** 80% of your grade will be based on the final drafts of your writing projects, which include a response to literature essay, an argumentative essay, an expository writing project, a personal narrative, poems, and more. In addition, each unit will have a final test at the end, and you will respond to quizzes systematically throughout each unit. These quizzes will cover learning such as vocabulary, reading comprehension, language arts skills, etc.

What Is Academic Integrity and How Will You Adhere to It?

“Integrity” is the quality of being honest and making honorable choices. “Academic integrity” means that you are honest about your schoolwork: you turn in your own assignments, do not copy from others, give credit when you refer to someone else’s research or ideas, etc. In this class, we will talk about plagiarism, which is the stealing of someone else’s work. Surprisingly, a lot of plagiarism is accidental! Here are a few examples of plagiarism, so you can make sure to avoid them:

- **Complete or direct plagiarism:** “Complete plagiarism” is turning in an entire draft of someone else’s work. “Direct plagiarism” is copying lines or paragraphs from another’s work; even if the rest of the paper is your own writing, that copied line or paragraph is plagiarism.
- **Paraphrasing plagiarism:** If you change some of the wording but still use another’s ideas, this is plagiarism if you do not credit the source. I will show you how to use citations to give credit to other people in your writing.
- **Self-plagiarism:** Wait, this is a thing? Yup! If you wrote a paper for another class and turn it in to this class too, that is self-plagiarism (unless you inform me, your teacher, and for some reason I say this is okay. I probably won’t, though, because I want you to practice and improve your skills!).

What Are the Consequences for Academic Dishonesty?

If you have plagiarized and this appears to be accidental, we will have a discussion on how to fix the problem, and I will give you an opportunity to revise your work. (For example, this would be our procedure if you mistakenly cited a source incorrectly.) In cases of purposeful plagiarism (like copying/pasting parts of another’s writing), you will be given a chance to rewrite your piece of writing from scratch and resubmit your work for half credit. In most cases, I will also make a phone call home to notify your parent or guardian of the situation. If this problem occurs again, I will notify administration about the problem.



LATE WORK

Please see the 8th Grade Expectations sheet for the late work policy.

ABSENCE POLICY

Please see the 8th Grade Expectations sheet for the absence policy.



MATERIALS NEEDED

Please bring the following materials to class each day:

- A 1" 3-ring binder with lined paper.
- A highlighter
- Writing utensils (pens and/or pencils)

COMMUNICATION

- **Email:** You can send me an email Britney.Jensen@dvusd.org
- **Tutoring:** Available 8-8:30 AM with an appointment. Appointments should be made with me at least one day in advance.

