

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS 9
2025-2026 Syllabus
Mrs. Douglas and Mr. Edmister(P1)

The books that help you most are those which make you think the most. Pablo Neruda

You don't have to burn books to destroy a culture. Just get people to stop reading them Ray Bradbury

Reading fiction is the way we rehearse our own lives and prepare ourselves for things we are going to encounter. Lois Lowry

Course Objectives:

- Develop our ability to critically read, write, speak, listen, and view.
- Strengthen transferable skills: critical thinking, collaboration, comparison, problem-solving, and communication
- Grow an appreciation for the English language art form.
- Manipulate a variety of text-types with increasing complexity
- Thoughtfully respond to literature.
- Acknowledge, explore, and evaluate varying perspectives and ideologies.

Course Materials:

- ✓ folder*
- ✓ notepad*
- ✓ writing utensils*
- ✓ books*
- ✓ I-pad+

**Class folder, notepad, books, and writing utensils are to remain in the classroom. Additional folders may be provided for homework, at the student's request and according to folder availability.*

The purposeful damage and neglect of classroom resources will be viewed as a violation of respect and as vandalism of school property. Expect a consequence if you intentionally choose these actions.

Classroom books that are lost or damaged result in a "student obligation." This means your parents would be required to pay for the book.

+I-pads are to remain in your bookbag, unless directed otherwise. They should be charged and ready for classroom use at all times.

Units of Study

- Got Grit? – **True Grit** – How does a person develop grit? Is grit a life skill worthy of developing?
- The Coming-of-Age Novel – **The Outsiders** – How do socio-economic stereotypes and prejudices affect the individual within a society? How do moral dilemmas affect moral growth?
 - Classic Paired Text: **Great Expectations** – What defines a gentleman or gentlewoman? What's in a name? When is love cruel and self-serving? How important are our roots to future character development?
- Writing Lab: Argument Writing – How do we form and communicate an informed position on a societal issue? What distinguishes an opinion from an argument? How do we conduct credible research?
- The Dystopian Novel – **Lord of the Flies** – What is the inherent nature of humans? How tenable is the civilized self? How does mob mentality influence the actions of the individual? Why are we sometimes unwilling to hear the truth?
 - Modern Paired Text: **Divergent** – How do our own individual ideologies influence how we live our lives? How much government control should a society allow? What are the pros and cons of educational/occupational tracks based on skill and aptitude?

• Drama through Film:

- Shakespearean Drama – **Romeo and Juliet** – What are the consequences of rash decisions? When are good intentions dangerous? Why are teenagers so impulsive? Is it fate or destiny?
 - Modern Paired Text: **Son of the Mob**
- Victorian Drama – **The Importance of Being Ernest** – What effect does societal hypocrisy have on the individual? What are the consequences of being a poser?
- Modern Drama – **A Raisin in the Sun** – How does one continue to have hope after dreams are deferred?

Many units of study are centered on a novel that we read together in class. If you are absent, see me when you return to school to sign out a book for the day.

Grading Procedures:

Grades will be calculated from **total point values**.

In-class assignments, in-class participation, homework, quizzes/tests, and essays will be assigned points based on length, complexity and significance. The points you earn will reflect your attendance, engagement, accuracy, thoughtfulness, timeliness and willingness to think and respond critically.

Members of a classroom strive to learn together. You are a member of a learning community! Each of us needs to be actively engaged in the learning process every day so together we can meet our daily learning goals.

Your daily attendance and learner behaviors will earn you a weekly participation grade. Make it a priority to be here every day! When you are not in class, we miss you, and you lose out on a ton.

Classwork:

- Most lesson activities are designed to be completed during a class period. They are regularly assessed a point value.
- Classwork will be graded in a variety of ways: effort, accuracy, thoughtfulness, collaborative effort, thoroughness, and/or timeliness.

Participation:

- If you are fully engaged in classroom activities and respectful of our learning environment, you have the potential to earn 10 points per week (100%) or 2 points a day. Your weekly participation grade will be recorded in PowerSchool.
- Participation is based on learning behaviors like attendance, in-class behavior/attitudes, organization, timeliness, ability to follow classroom routines and expectations, and in-class/out-of-class assignment completion.
- Frequent absences result in learning and comprehension gaps. Every day builds on the next. Plan to be in class every day. Just as important is your effort to minimize time out of the classroom. Time out of the classroom, like regular lengthy bathroom use or signing up for each and every field trip, will adversely impact your weekly participation grade over time.
See me immediately after an absence to discuss reading and classroom assignments you missed.
- A high level of participation in classroom activities, or lack of, will be reflected in your weekly participation grade.
- Desired learning behaviors or attitudes will positively affect your daily/weekly participation grade. Likewise, undesired learning behaviors which communicate a disrespect for me, your classmates and this classroom will detrimentally affect your daily/weekly participation grade.
- If you have any questions about your weekly participation grade, please see me to schedule a time to discuss!

Assignments

• Homework

Homeroom activities are assigned for independent skill practice.

- Homework assignments are due at the beginning of class.
- Classwork assigned during class-time may be assigned as homework for completion.
- Late homework will only be accepted **1 DAY** after the actual due date at the top of your scheduled class period for **50% credit**. After that, no points can be earned. However, if you still desire to complete the assignment, your weekly participation grade will reflect this effort :)
- A **10% reduction** will be assessed if an assignment is turned in after your scheduled class but on the same day on which the assignment was due.
- If homework is graded or reviewed in class, a late submission may be denied. *I give notice of these types of homework assignments.*
- If an absence occurs on the day a previously scheduled assignment is due, the assignment is due upon your return to school at the beginning of your English class period, otherwise, it is considered "late."
- In the case of a scheduled absence, it is expected that the previously scheduled assignment is submitted before the absence to avoid a "late" submission.
- Incomplete homework assignments may result in ineligibility.
- Avoid copying a classmate's work and presenting it as your own. Avoid AI-written responses. This will result in earning 0% on the assignment and a referral for both the plagiarizer and the plagiarized. Reference the Plagiarism section on pg. 3.

• Quizzes

Quizzes are designed to check for understanding. Quizzes reveal individual/whole class learning gaps or misconceptions.

- Periodic quizzes – both announced and unannounced – will be given. These quizzes will take various forms.
- A prior absence will not be accepted as a reason for me to delay a quiz, whether scheduled or impromptu. When you return to school after an absence, see me during homeroom to borrow a book so you can catch up on any reading you missed prior to your scheduled English class.

• Tests/Essays/Projects/Presentations

Tests, essays, and projects are designed to demonstrate what you have learned and evidence the standards-based skills you have gained by the end of a unit of study.

- These are typically end-of-unit assignments. They are designed to assess your ability to identify and analyze the themes of a novel, use critical thinking skills, conduct a comparison, and showcase your ability to connect themes across novels.
- These end-of-unit assignments are usually the most difficult to complete and, therefore, I assign them high point values.
- Frequent absences from class create gaps in your comprehension of the plot of a novel and an understanding of a novel's important ideas, making it more difficult to successfully and effortlessly complete end-of-unit assessments.
- These types of assessments, if not completed on time, will result in you being placed on the ineligibility report.

Guidelines and Expectations for Respectful Classroom Behavior

I expect you to conduct yourselves in a way that communicates respect for our learning community. This requires treating each other respectfully, treating the material we are studying respectfully, treating the classroom routines and expectations respectfully, treating the classroom space respectfully, and treating me respectfully, every day. You can expect that I will treat you respectfully.

• Hats & Hoods & Sunglasses & Blankets & GVCS Dress Code

- Hats, which do not disrupt the learning environment, are **permitted** to be worn in class.
- Hats are **not** permitted to be pulled down completely over ears or face.
- Hoods are **not** permitted to be worn in class.
- Sunglasses are **not** permitted to be worn in class.
- Blankets are **not** permitted to be brought to class.
- Abide by the school dress code. Do not wear anything with graphics or messages, which are potentially offensive to others.

Please honor these expectations before entering my classroom! I know the classroom you just left may have different rules, but it's important that you learn to navigate different sets of expectations.

• Backpacks

- Backpacks are permitted in class.
- Backpacks must be tucked fully under your desk or placed in the back of the classroom.

• Food/Drink:

- Water is permitted in the classroom.
- Food and non-water beverages (aka Dunkin' coffee, energy drinks, etc.) are **not permitted** in the classroom.

• DISTRICT cellphone policy (7:45 am–2:54 pm):

- NO cellphones, smart-watches, wireless headphones, earbuds or any other smart device will be used, accessed, visible or heard in the classroom.
- These smart devices are expected to be turned off and placed in your backpack or locker or left at home – NOT in your pocket. **Be honest.**
- A school-issued I-pad is a permissible device for classroom use. Keep it in your backpack, unless otherwise directed by me.

*Cellphones smartwatches, smart devices and wireless headphones, earbuds, and other types of smart devices are expected to have been turned off and placed in your backpack or locker at 7:45 a.m. I should **never** see these devices in my classroom. Avoid giving me ANY reason to suspect you are using any of these disallowed devices. I will be required to collect it and turn it into the office. Be disciplined and simply wait until the end of the school day to access messages, etc. Enjoy a 7-hr. break from social media and text messages.*

• Punctuality

- Be on time for class every day.
- You will be assigned a seat. However, anticipate the re-assigning of seats, if necessary, to meet specific learning goals.
- You are required to have a pass from a teacher, staff member, the nurse or the welcome desk if you arrive late for class.
- If you enter the classroom late, do NOT disrupt instruction. **Quickly and quietly** take your seat. I will come to you to collect your pass and give you any materials you may need for class.

• Dismissal Time

- Only I dismiss the class. I promise that I do watch the clock so that you don't have to! Refrain from clock-watching and packing up before I have granted permission to do so. The last few minutes of class are very important! This is when we recap, look ahead to the next class, give reminders about assignments coming due, and give instructions for collecting materials.

Expectations During a Classtime

- You are expected to participate in class discussions. English is a discussion-heavy class!
- Ask and answer questions in class that are directly related to our discussion.
- Your active and appropriate participation is something I keep track of every day. Your learner behaviors, or lack of, will be reflected in your weekly participation grade.
- Raise your hand. Avoid blurting out. Refrain from interrupting or in any way being dismissive or critical of the opinions or perspectives of others. Avoid any type of attention-seeking behavior.
- At all times, avoid the use of foul language, sexual innuendoes, rude comments, derogatory comments, name-calling, side-jokes/comments, or murmuring. Remember where you are. Words matter! Choose them carefully!
- It is never my intention nor my desire to embarrass you or publicly call you out on your behavior. I will attempt to use non-verbal cues to get your attention. Learn to read my non-verbal language to avoid a public re-direct.
- Be mindful of your body language! It is a non-verbal discussion with me and your classmates! Some body language communicates disinterest, boredom, devaluation, inattentiveness and/or negativity. Please exhibit courteous and attentive body language: good posture, eye contact, active listening/viewing, note-taking, eyes-on-the-text, etc. This kind of body language communicates respect for me and the important work we are engaged in every day. If you get sleepy while we are reading, be proactive. Stand in the back of the classroom, if necessary. You will not be permitted to sleep during class – I am sorry!
- Absolutely avoid using class discussion to air differences you may have with other students or teachers. Additionally, do not use class discussion to ask questions regarding your individual grades or ineligibility status, or any issue you may have with classroom policies, seating arrangements, and/or expectations. **Please see me privately on these matters.**
- Any behavior I deem to be disruptive, disrespectful, or insubordinate will be subject to a logical consequence, dependent on the severity of the disruption. This could be:
 - a warning
 - a phone call or email home
 - a written referral to the principal
 - probation or ineligibility
 - removal from the classroom

*Note: The **intentional spoiling of a book or movie** disrespects me, your classmate, and this classroom. I expect that you will never intentionally spoil a book or movie for a classmate by blurting out plot details and plot twists. I consider this to be an extremely rude and disrespectful behavior. You can expect me to respond accordingly.*

○ What not to say to your teacher as you enter the classroom!

- Are we doing anything today?
 - Did we do anything yesterday?
 - Did I miss anything when I was out?
 - Can we go outside today?
 - Can we just do nothing today?
 - Can we watch a movie?
 - This is stupid.
 - I can't possibly do this! I have brain fog.
 - This writing assignment is so dumb!
 - What do you mean I have to do it again?
 - Reading is so boring!
 - Can we do something fun today?
 - Can we change seats?
 - Ugh, English class!
- Refrain from entering the classroom and spouting negativity concerning today's planned lesson.
 - If you feel negative about any given classroom activity, it is expected that you will keep it to yourself. Discuss concerns with me privately.
 - Refrain from making negative comments about the books we are reading or the movies we may be watching or the learning activities I have planned or the classmates you have been asked to collaborate with. You are welcome to your opinion but keep any negative opinions to yourself! This negativity affects me and detrimentally affects the learning of others. Strive to have an open mind and choose a positive attitude.

Plagiarism

- Plagiarism is stealing someone's intellectual work and presenting it as your own.
- Plagiarism – both intentional and unintentional – results in consequences, per the GVCS Student Code of Conduct.
- **AI generated responses submitted as your own work will be considered plagiarized** and likewise subject to plagiarism consequences, per the GVCS Student Code of Conduct.

Permission to Leave the Room

- Permission to leave the classroom is permissible at *my discretion*.
 - Granting you permission to be excused from the classroom is solely my decision. I will rarely deny you access to the bathroom, but don't necessarily expect me to say "yes" immediately. I may suggest that you wait until a better time. I expect you to respect and abide by that decision.
 - Do use the time built into your schedule to see the nurse, or go to the main office, or get a drink of water, use the restroom, give blood, or see Mrs. Preston, etc., Consider bringing a pre-filled water bottle to class.
 - Permission to leave class to use the bathroom should be a rare occasion, not an everyday, at the same time, and for the same length of time occasion. Limit time out of the classroom. Long and frequent bathroom breaks will affect your participation grade and may result in a call home and/or to the nurse
 - Some instructional times to be out of the classroom are worse than others. Expect, I may ask you to wait, and to ask me again at a better time. I expect you to respect and abide by that decision.
 - The beginning of class is not a permissible time to be out of the classroom. This is when instructions are given, and bellringer activities are assigned. Another impermissible time to leave the classroom is when we are reading. You cannot expect to have strong comprehension if you accumulate daily reading gaps. A

reasonable time to ask permission to leave the classroom is when we are engaged in independent classwork; however, you will still be responsible for getting the assignment completed in the time allotted.

- Anytime you are given permission to leave the classroom, it is expected that you sign-out and sign-in. No exceptions.

Classroom Space and Resources

- The physical classroom and classroom resources are ours to share responsibly and respectfully. Certain spaces and resources are for my use only. Please do not touch anything on my desk or answer the classroom phone without my permission. Do not sit on my chair or enter the space behind my desk space unless given permission.
- Classroom resources should be handled respectfully and responsibly. These include but are not limited to writing utensils, notepads, folders, books, pencil sharpeners, desks, bookshelves, etc.
- You are expected to organize your materials and participate in the daily routine of distributing and collecting classroom materials.
- Classroom windows are to be opened only after receiving permission from me. Do not touch the shades.

Ineligibility

- Your eligibility, or ineligibility will be determined based on the learning behaviors you regularly exhibit. These include classroom attendance and participation, organization to meet deadlines, and assignment completion. See the learner behaviors rubric for how expectations are scored. Ask how you can improve your learner behaviors to avoid ineligibility.

Books and Films

Following is a list of books and films you will read/view this year.

Novels:

- *True Grit*
- *The Outsiders*
- *Lord of the Flies*
- *Divergent*
- *Son of the Mob*

Films:

- *The Outsiders* (1983) PG
- *True Grit* (2010) PG-13
- *The Lord of the Flies* (1963) NR
- *Cast Away* (2000) PG-13
- *Divergent* (2014) PG-13
- *William Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet* (1996) PG-13
- *The Importance of Being Ernest* (2002) PG
- *A Raisin in the Sun* (2008) PG-13
- *Warm Bodies* (2013) PG-13

**Be Ready! Be Present! Be Responsible!
Be Respectful! Be Awesome!**

You are responsible for the information contained in this syllabus and for abiding by the policies therein.

To the Parents/Guardians of Mrs. Douglas's and Mr. Edmister's students:

We consider it a privilege to teach your student this school year. We are excited about the time we will spend together engaging with stories which will give us opportunities to explore varying experiences and perspectives – ultimately preparing us for real life.

These guidelines and expectations are outlined to provide a nurturing and equitable learning environment for everyone. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this information or any matter throughout the school year, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Please send me (Mrs. Douglas) **a message in our new ParentSquare app** to let me know that you have read this syllabus. (Click on Messages, click New Message, and type my last name, and it should be easy to send me a direct message!)

If parents at different numbers both want to be contacted throughout the year, please have both send this message and indicate as such.

If you have reservations about a film your student will read/view, let me know in your message, as I need to gain parental permission.

Lastly, starting this messaging conversation will provide you with an easy way to communicate with me later in the school year, if needed. Thanks!

Sincerely,
Mrs. Douglas**

Contact Info: kdouglas@genvalley.org
585-268-7900 ext. 1138

bwedmister@genvally.org (P1 students, only)
585-268-7900 ext. 1135

****I reserve the right to make changes to this document and the policies herein.**
9/2/26