Eighth Grade Instructional Plan for English Language Arts & Reading

Course Overview

Welcome to 8th Grade English Language Arts and Reading (ELAR) at Abell Junior High. This course serves as a critical bridge between middle school and high school literacy, reinforcing foundational skills while preparing students for more rigorous academic expectations aligned with the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS).

Throughout the year, students will engage with a variety of increasingly complex texts—both literary and informational—to strengthen their reading comprehension, literary analysis, and inferencing skills. Writing instruction will focus on developing clear, well-organized compositions across multiple genres, with an emphasis on argumentation, personal narrative, expository writing, and STAAR Extended Constructed Responses (ECRs).

In addition to reading and writing, students will build academic vocabulary, practice effective speaking and listening strategies, and participate in discussions that promote critical thinking. This course aims to foster independence, confidence, and a growth mindset as students prepare for success in high school and beyond.

Contact Information

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Classroom Expectations

To create a learning environment that supports academic and personal growth, students are expected to:

- Come to class prepared with necessary materials and a willingness to learn
- Show respect for themselves, their peers, and all adults in the classroom
- Follow directions promptly and participate actively in all classroom activities
- Take responsibility for their own learning, including completing assignments on time
- Maintain academic integrity and uphold high standards of honesty and effort
- Support a collaborative classroom culture by listening respectfully and working cooperatively

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Attendance Policy & Its Importance

Regular attendance is essential for academic success, especially in a reading and writing-intensive course like 8th Grade ELAR. Each day builds upon prior learning, and frequent absences can make it difficult for students to stay on track with instruction, discussions, and assignments.

We encourage students to attend class daily and arrive on time, ready to learn. If an absence is unavoidable, it is important that a parent or guardian contacts the school to verify the absence. Verified absences are recorded in the district's attendance system and help keep records accurate for state accountability and truancy purposes.

Students who are absent are responsible for checking Google Classroom and communicating with the teacher to make up missed work in a timely manner. Extended absences may require additional support or a recovery plan to ensure that students master essential skills and concepts.

Please notify the school if your child will be absent. Frequent or extended absences may make it more difficult for your child to learn necessary foundational skills that ensure student success this year and in future school years.

Learning Objectives

By the end of the year, students in 8th Grade ELAR will be able to:

- Analyze and interpret complex literary and informational texts
- Make inferences and draw conclusions using text evidence
- Identify and evaluate author's purpose, tone, and use of literary and rhetorical devices
- Write clearly and effectively in multiple modes, including narrative, expository, and argumentative writing
- Develop and support a central idea in extended constructed responses (ECRs) aligned to STAAR
- Revise and edit writing for clarity, coherence, grammar, and conventions
- Expand academic vocabulary and apply it in speaking and writing
- Engage in meaningful discussions by listening actively, making connections, building on others' ideas, and expressing their own clearly
- Apply research skills to locate, evaluate, and integrate credible sources into original writing

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- Demonstrate digital literacy and responsible use of technology in reading, writing, and communication

Course Resources

Instructional materials for 8th Grade ELAR are selected and organized in alignment with guidance from the district English Language Arts department. These resources are designed to support TEKS-based instruction, STAAR readiness, and the development of critical reading and writing skills. Students will engage with a variety of texts and tools, including:

- District-Approved Novels – Used to support literary analysis and thematic exploration throughout the year
- CommonLit – A platform for accessing paired texts, short stories, and informational articles used for reading comprehension and writing assignments
- Plays and Drama Texts – Incorporated during the drama unit to analyze dramatic elements, character development, and dialogue
- Google Classroom – The central hub for accessing assignments, announcements, digital readings, and writing tasks
- District Curriculum Guidance and Assessments – Provided by the ELAR department to guide pacing, unit planning, and assessment alignment. **Amplify** is the district adopted curriculum.
- Supplemental Materials – Including poetry, current events articles, videos, and teacher-curated resources to enrich instruction and support various learning styles

Additional materials may be introduced throughout the year to respond to student needs, curriculum updates, or instructional opportunities.

Grading Policy

According to Midland ISD Grading Policy:
The summative evaluation of a student's grade during a recording period should be based on sufficient data collected in class in the form of various assessments. Regular and periodic assessment of student progress ensures a student has ample time for remediation.

Students must receive feedback on every graded assignment within three to seven days. Major assignments will receive feedback within ten days. Teachers will, at a minimum, communicate with students and their guardians every ten school days regarding upcoming assessments, classroom reminders, learning topics covered in class, and/or expectations. Regular communication may be electronic through the adopted Student Information System or other messaging applications. Teachers will maintain a parent communication log during each grading cycle.

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Major assignments - 60% Minor assignments - 40%
Semester exams count as 15% toward the final semester grade
Please feel free to reach out with any questions or concerns. We are excited to work together to make this a successful year of learning!

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Please fill out the portion below and return this portion to your teacher.

We acknowledge that we have read and that we understand the expectations in 8th Grade ELAR. We agree to contact the teacher should we have any questions or concerns regarding this instructional plan.

Parent Name: _____

Student Name: _____

Cell Phone Number: _____

Parent Signature : _____

Student Signature: _____

Date:_____

