

Eighth Grade English Language Arts

Course Overview

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Language Arts is a course that builds upon the skills and knowledge that you have acquired in the previous years and extends on them. Importantly, we move beyond looking at a piece of literature as a simple story, or whatever. Literature—and all art—is an opportunity for us to look at ourselves and the world around us in ways that we otherwise cannot. This class, then, is less about individual stories and articles than it is about life. To get the most out of this course, you'll need to be open to seeing things in potentially different ways than you've been seeing them. You will have quite a bit of personal choice in your coursework this year—sometimes in the texts you'll read, other times in the assignments you'll do. As such, how much you enjoy this course and how much you get out of this course will depend far more on you and your willingness to try things than whether you like me as a teacher or the individual texts that we read.

Course Objectives:

- Read with more depth
- Write with more clarity
- Think more critically

Course Overview:

- Guilt and Responsibility unit
 - (How do we define guilt and responsibility?)
- Identity Unit
 - (What makes you who you are?)
- Argumentative Writing
 - (How can we effectively communicate and engage those around us?)
- Fight for Human Rights
 - (What are the struggles that we still see in our society?)
- Pondering Our Future
 - (What are the possible future struggles for our society?)

Needed Materials:

- Chromebooks (charged up before class) All of the texts that we will read/study this year are available on our class website. Some of the texts are only available on the class website and not in our textbooks.
- Paper (either loose-leaf or spiral notebook)
- Pens and/or pencils—your preference, but please keep pen colors to blue or black
- A folder or a small binder is strongly recommended, but not required.

Class Policies

Late Work:

- Late work (even if submitted later in the same class period or school day) receives 90% of the earned credit for that assignment.
- After one calendar week, late assignments will receive 80% of the earned credit. Each additional week will drop the earned credit by 10%, up to a maximum penalty of 50% of the earned credit. Weeks that we do not have any school do not count toward late deductions, but partial weeks still do count towards reductions.
- Work can be turned in for 50% credit until the quarter's end (though I often set a specific day near the end of the quarter as the final opportunity for late work turn in to ensure I can get it graded in time.)

Free Late:

- Each student is allowed one “free late” per nine weeks, in which he or she can turn in an assignment and eliminate 10% of the earned late penalty for that assignment. For example, an assignment that would ordinarily receive 70% of the earned credit would receive 80% of the earned credit using the free late. The free late must be used during the appropriate nine weeks (you cannot use more than one in the same quarter). Any assignment returning to 100% credit using a free late will not be flagged as late in Infinite Campus and will allow you to still potentially earn the end-of-quarter extra credit.
- The student him/herself must notify the teacher in writing upon the submission of the late work of the intent to use the free late. The free late will never be applied automatically and must be requested *at the time of submission*—it will not be retroactively applied later on.

Extra Credit:

- Students without any late or missing work will receive roughly 2% extra credit on your total grade at the end of each quarter. Using a free late does not count against you if it is used within the first week of collection of that assignment (allowing you 100% of the earned credit)—that assignment that the free late was used on will not be marked as late in the grade book. Assignments turned in after the one week will still be marked late if a free late is used, but that assignment will earn more credit than if it was not used. Unused free late passes at the end of a quarter are eligible for additional extra 1% credit, as long as the no missing/no late bonus was also earned.
- I do not offer extra credit assignments. If I felt it was worth your time and energy, I would assign it as a class assignment. Therefore, please take advantage of the end-of-quarter bonus.

Absent Work:

- There will be a calendar that lists what was done in class that day, so when absent, please check the calendar to see what needs made up. It is always a student's own responsibility to see what work needs to be made up. I do not generally approach or remind students about work done and/or needed in regards to their absences.

Food:

- While food in the classroom doesn't bother me as a whole, we do have a variety of students with various food allergies. For their safety, I do not allow food in the classroom.

Other:

- You may use a hall pass four times per quarter. You may not borrow passes from other students or from future or past quarters.
- All school-wide rules are observed in class, including, but not limited to, rules regarding the use of electronic devices (cell phones, headphones/earbuds, etc.) and wearing of headwear (hats and hoods).