

Eighth Grade Language Arts Course Overview

Teacher e-mail: tony.madore@madisonschools.net
Class website: 8mms.weebly.com

In this course you'll be exposed to the major genres of literature (short fiction, nonfiction, drama, and poetry), though the literature in this course is usually organized more around themes or topics rather than simply genre. We will study the various elements and techniques of different types of writings to examine how the many parts of writing work together to create an overall impact as a whole. Additionally, and perhaps more importantly, we will also look at literature as a means of expression of one's world views. However, while literature and reading is the central focus of this course, it is not our only one. We will also work to some degree with vocabulary, grammar, and writing.

Ultimately, Eighth Grade Language Arts will build upon the skills and knowledge that you have acquired in the previous years and extend on them, and just as importantly, get you prepared for what awaits you in high school. We move beyond looking at a piece of literature as a simple story. Literature is an opportunity for us to look at the world and ourselves in ways that we otherwise cannot. This class then is less about stories than it is about life. To get the most out of this course, you'll need to be prepared, and you'll need to be open to seeing things in potentially different ways than you've been seeing them. Ultimately, how much you enjoy this course and how much you get out of this course will depend on you.

Objectives:

- Reading with more depth
- Writing with more clarity
- Thinking more critically

Course Overview:

Material/content covered:

- Literature (drama, short fiction, nonfiction, poetry)
- Writing
- Vocabulary/word parts
- Grammar

Materials:

You'll need to bring the following materials to class every day:

- Loose leaf paper or a notebook
- A writing utensil (either a pen or a pencil)
- A binder for the course with several dividers to keep organized is strongly encouraged.

Class Policies

Late Work:

- Late work receives 90% of the earned credit for that assignment.
- After five school days (including the original collection date), late assignments will receive 80% of the earned credit.
- After three weeks, the assignment will receive 60% of the earned credit.
- Each student is allowed one “free late” per nine weeks, in which he or she can turn in an assignment within the appropriate time window without losing 10%. Therefore, an assignment that would ordinarily receive 90% of the earned credit would receive 100% of the earned credit using the free late. Similarly, an assignment turned in after five days from the collection date, which would ordinarily earn 80% of the earned credit, would receive 90% of the earned credit using the free late. Also, the free late must be used during the appropriate nine weeks (you cannot use more than one in the same quarter). The student him/herself must notify the teacher in writing 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 cannot be retroactively applied.
- Students without any late or missing work will receive extra credit at the end of each quarter (approximately 2% of your quarter total). 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 approximately another 1% extra credit, as long as the original 2% was earned.

Passes:

- Each student is eligible to use up to four passes for each nine week quarter this year. You may not borrow from other students or other quarters.
- Other: All school-wide rules are observed in class, including, but not limited to, rules regarding the use of gum, food and drink, electronic devices (cell phones, etc.) and wearing of headwear (hats and hoods).
- 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.