

Course Syllabus for English Language Arts 7
St. Johns Middle School
St. Johns, Michigan

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Dear Parents/Guardians,

After reading through the syllabus, please take the time to fill out and return the attached final page of this letter. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact us at any time during the school year. We are looking forward to a productive and successful year!

Sincerely,
Andrea Makarauskas
Katie Goff

Course Description: This course is based on the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts Grade 7. We will focus on skills and strategies in the areas of reading, writing, speaking and listening, viewing, and language usage. Students will work with both fictional and informational genres in reading and writing. Students will read short stories and novels in the narrative genres of mythology, mystery, and drama. Students will read essays, articles, and books in connection to the informational genres of biography, autobiography, and memoirs. Students will write several types of journal and response writing, as well as argumentative writing, an informative/explanatory piece, explore narrative writing, and literary analysis.

Goals of Course: The goal of English Language Arts 7 is for each student to successfully complete the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts Grade 7 in the areas of reading, writing, speaking and listening, and language usage as required by the State of Michigan Department of Education.

Required Course Materials: The following materials will be needed on a daily basis throughout the school year: one-inch three-ring binder with three dividers, lined paper, pencils, red pens, blue or black pens, highlighters. A flash-drive to store electronic documents is highly recommended.

Resources: *Teaching Reading: A Differentiated Approach*, *Daily Warm-ups: Language Arts*, *Write Source Writing Program Grade 7*, selected short stories, selected novels as related to unit study, online resources and databases, Information Center materials.

Grading Policy: Assignments are graded using a point system. Each assignment is worth a certain number of points. The points students earn on all assignments are added and then divided by the total possible points to get a percentage. Percentages are then converted to grades using the middle school grading scale.

The types of activities graded are written class and homework assignments, tests and quizzes, proper use of time and preparedness for Reading and Writing Workshop, Reading Record, responses to reading, writing assignments, and completion of trimester reading requirements. Final assessment pieces will make up the majority of the final points counting towards grades with daily practice assignments carrying less weight.

Extra credit or bonus points may be available at times in connection with established assignments. However, specially designed extra credit assignments or projects to enhance a grade will not be offered.

If a student is unhappy with his or her grade or needs extra help in class, I will be available before or after school for additional help. Students wishing to receive extra help will need to schedule a meeting at least one day in advance. I am available most days, but may not be available every day, so it is important students schedule meetings with me ahead of time.

Grading Scale:

A	100%	C	76%-73%
A-	92%-90%	C-	72%-70%
B+	89%-87%	D+	69%-67%
B	86%-83%	D	66%-63%
B-	82%-80%	D-	62%-60%
C+	79%-77%	E	59% or lower

Assignment Policy: All work is expected to be completed and turned in on time. It should meet quality standards, including neatness, legibility, and evidence of best effort.

A due date will be specified for all assignments when they are received. Due dates will be posted in the classroom, on the daily agenda, and should be recorded in the student's daily planner. Assignments must be turned in on the assigned due date to receive full credit. Assignments turned in late will receive 50 percent of the points that the students would have earned if the assignment was turned in on time. If students do not turn in their assignments, students will receive a zero and the assignment will be flagged as "missing" in Infinite Campus. Since many assignments build on one another, completing and turning in work on time is essential to ensure a student's opportunity for success.

Long-term projects turned in late will drop one grade for each day the project is late.

When students are absent, they must check the Class Assignments Calendar posted in the classroom and gather any missing assignments from the designated file folder. Students are responsible for finding out what needs to be done on these assignments. Students have the number of days that they were absent to complete missed assignments, unless otherwise specified by the teacher. If students are absent the day a previous assignment is due, the assignment is due the day the student returns to school.

Behavioral Expectations: Students are expected to be respectful of others and their surroundings. Students also need to be respectful in showing personal responsibility in their own achievement and success.

Students are expected to respect:

1. Yourself
 - Keep a positive attitude
 - Be honest
 - Turn assignments in on time
 - Come to class with all required materials
 - Arrive on time
 - Do your best by making learning your first priority
2. Others
 - Listen carefully and follow directions
 - Be considerate of the feelings and ideas of others, even if they differ from your own
 - Do your part in group activities
3. Property
 - Return all classroom materials to their proper place
 - Be kind to books and other classroom materials and fixtures

Learning and Social Behavior Plan: If it becomes necessary to address a student's learning or social behaviors (i.e. not following classroom rules, turning in several late assignments) the following steps will be taken:

1. A verbal notice is given, and/or I will hold a conference with the student
2. If the behavior continues, I will contact parents or guardians to develop a plan to address the behavior
3. If a student reaches step three, further appropriate action is taken, such as a referral to the Assistant Principal

This plan may change as warranted by circumstances, such as in the case of a severe disruption in the classroom, verbal harassment or intimidation of other students, the use of inappropriate language, or an act threatening the safety of others.

Helpful Hints: Students will keep an English Language Arts Binder. This one-inch three-ring binder will include sections labeled "Resources," "Texts," and "Current Assignments." Students are responsible for keeping their English Language Arts Binders organized according to the guidelines given for each marking period. Binders are an important resource in supporting student achievement each marking period. Students need to bring their English Language Arts Binder to class each day. Binders may also go home with students to help with the completion of assignments and to study for tests and quizzes.

Students will complete individual reading requirements each marking period. These requirements will be given to students near the beginning of each trimester outlining all books to be read as well as where and how to find books that meet the reading requirements. Students will fill out book plans with the required book information, weekly deadlines, and final deadlines for taking SRC quizzes. Requirements will be based on students' individual performance on the Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI) and assessed using the quizzes provided in Scholastic Reading Counts (SRC) and other reading strategy assignments.

Students need to come to class each day with reading materials of their choice. Students will need to have the book they are currently reading for their reading requirements. In addition they may also bring magazines or newspapers. We will frequently have Reading and Writing Workshop, and independent reading will be one of the activities. Reading and Writing Workshops include a variety of activities that foster individual development of reading and writing skills, strategies, and setting purposes for reading and writing. Since regular reading is necessary for students to make growth in their reading abilities, reading is considered their ongoing homework assignment all year. Please make an effort to have regular conversations with your child regarding reading selections and their individual reading progress.

Students will visit the Information Center every other week on Fridays during the school year. If students wish to check out, return, or renew books at other times, the Information Center is open before school and after school, too.

As a part of the 7th grade English Language Arts Common Core Standards, 7th graders will be participating in several listening and viewing activities to support their learning in both fictional and informational genres. Below is a list of some of the films we may be sharing with students throughout the school year.

The Ransom of Red Chief (1998)

Rated: Not Rated

Genre: short story

Two bumbling ne'er-do-wells, Sam and Bill kidnap Andy Dorset, the mischievous nine year old son of Ambrose Dorset, a pompous banker and civic leader. Andy is convinced by the duo that he is involved in a madcap adventure and pretends to be Red Chief, a fierce Indian warrior. Andy is known for his wild imagination, so when his father receives a ransom note for only \$47.50, he thinks it's a prank. But when two dangerous convicts have escaped from prison, Andy may finally be in real danger...

Jim Henson's The Storyteller: Greek Myths (1997)

Rated: Not Rated

Genre: Myths and Legends

An imaginative series comprised of four episodes, features both human actors and creations from Jim Henson's Creature Shop in the retelling of classic Greek mythology: Daedalus and Icarus, Orpheus and Eurydice, Perseus and the Gorgon, and Theseus and the Minotaur.

Percy Jackson & The Olympians: The Lightning Thief

Rated: PG

Genre: Myths and Legends

Modern and mythical worlds collide in this thunderous fantasy-adventure. Percy Jackson is no ordinary teenager. He's just learned he's the son of Poseidon and is accused of stealing Zeus' lightning bolt—the most powerful weapon ever created! With storm clouds brewing, Percy embarks on an incredible cross-country journey to prove his innocence, recover the bolt and prevent a war amongst the gods that could destroy our world!

A Christmas Carol (1984)

Rated: PG

Genre: Drama

This is the Charles Dickens classic holiday tale of one man learning the true meaning of Christmas. Ebenezer Scrooge is a cynical old man whose greatest concern is money, and who regards compassion as a luxury he can't afford. On Christmas Eve, Scrooge is visited by the ghost of Jacob Marley, his former business partner, who arranges for Scrooge to be visited by three spirits in an attempt to show him the error of his ways. The Spirits force Scrooge to examine the failings of his own life, as well as the bravery and optimism of his loyal but ill-treated employee Bob Cratchit.

The Twilight Zone: Volume 2 Episode 22: "The Monsters are Due on Maple Street" (aired March 4, 1960 on CBS)

Rated: Not Rated

Genre: Drama

Inexplicable events cause the residents of quiet Maple Street to erupt into rioting. The residents suspect an alien invasion has occurred. If so, where are the alien monsters?

Life is Beautiful

Rated: PG-13

Genre: Historical Fiction

In 1930s Italy, a carefree Jewish book keeper named Guido starts a fairy tale life by courting and marrying a lovely woman from a nearby city. Guido and his wife have a son and live happily together until the occupation of Italy by German forces. In an attempt to hold his family together and help his son survive the horrors of a Jewish Concentration Camp, Guido imagines that the Holocaust is a game and that the grand prize for winning is a tank. *(IMDB)*

Clue: The Movie (1987)

Rated: PG

Genre: Mystery

Clue is a silly whodunit based on the familiar board game featuring Colonel Mustard, Mrs. Peacock, and all the other usual suspects. A broadly comic cast plays the sundry suspects gathered in a mansion to solve a murder, knowing that one of their numbers is the culprit.

Please sign and return the attached form by _____.
Thank You!

Looking forward to a great year in 7th grade English Language Arts!

Parent Permissions and Contact Information

My child is _____.

I hereby give my permission for my child to view:

_____ Any of the movies described in the letter

_____ All of the movies described **EXCEPT:**

_____ My child does not have permission to participate in the viewing of any of the films.

_____ If any additional films are added later in the school year I would like to receive notification to give permission before viewing.

I have read the information in this course syllabus. I understand the policies in place in this class, and I accept the responsibility for abiding by them.

Parent Signature

Date

Student Signature

Date

The best way to contact parents/guardians is (mark all that apply):

___ Phone call home Best time: Number:

___ Phone call at work Best time: Number:

___ Cell phone Best time: Number:

___ E-mail E-mail address:

Questions or concerns: