

Grade 8 Language Arts Classroom Syllabus

Mrs. Greene - Room 324

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In eighth grade we will build on the strategies, skills, and positive habits formed in earlier years. My job is to prepare each student for success in high school and beyond by providing a challenging curriculum in a supportive setting. By the end of 8th grade, it is my goal that all students will love to read and write, feel confident and enthusiastic about their ability to do both, and be well-prepared to meet the demands of high school.

Supply List:

- ❖ 2 Composition Notebooks (100+ pages each)
- ❖ 2 Highlighters (different colors)
- ❖ 1 Pocket Folder (plastic is recommended)
- ❖ Pencils, Blue or Black pens, and Red pens
- ❖ Eraser
- ❖ Glue Stick

Academic Routines

You will learn how to...

- Keep a Metacognitive Log to keep track of your thinking, and to reflect on your strengths and challenges as a reader.
- Develop a writing piece through the Writer's Workshop model.
- Engage with your peers in in-depth discussions, problem solving, and a clarification of ideas while participating in seminars and Literature Circles.

Grading

Grades will be updated weekly and will be recorded on-line using the district-wide PowerSchool program. Parents and students can access grades using: <https://pschool.aaps.k12.mi.us/public/>. Grades will reflect a "balanced literacy" model where scores will be based on the following weights:

Reading: 30%

Writing: 30%

Speaking and Listening: 20%

Vocabulary: 20%

Many assignments will use a 4-point scale. The 4-point scale breaks down as the following:

- **4- Got it!** A score of a 4 means that a student has mastered a learning target. They can independently explain their learning to a peer, a teacher, or the class.
- **3- Almost there:** A score of a 3 means that a student consistently meets their learning target with minimal support, but they may need a little help applying their knowledge and providing more evidence of understanding.
- **2- Moving in the right direction:** A score of a 2 means that a student has not mastered this target, though they show partial understanding. They need extra support to apply their knowledge and extra support to provide more evidence of understanding. A student earning a 2 on an assessment should study for and do a retake.
- **1-Just getting started:** A score of a 1 means that a student has not yet mastered this target. They have shown little evidence of understanding the target. A student earning a 1 still needs help on this target, and may consider getting help during advisory or in class

(if time allows) to keep working on this target. A student earning a 1 on an assessment has to study for and do a retake.

- **0-Zero:** A zero is only used if a student has not turned in an assignment OR left an assignment or assessment blank. This means that a student has provided no evidence of learning. Late work is accepted and can be turned in any time before the end of the quarter.

Summative Assessments

These are assessments (tests) that measure a student's learning at the end of a certain time period such as the end of a unit. Summative assessments serve as a summary of a student's ability to meet the learning targets. These assessments appear in PowerSchool and count towards the student's final grade in the class. Students, who do not meet the learning targets featured on the summative assessment, will be able to retake the assessment on a later date.

Formative Assessments

Some assignments that will be entered into PowerSchool are practice assignments for students to complete as they learn the targets. These assignments help communicate what the student knows and what the student needs to learn in order to be prepared for the summative assessment, but they will not count towards the students' final grade.

Rubrics

Students will receive rubrics to use as a writing resource for extended writing assignments. These tools describe in writing the quality of work that is expected for a student to meet the learning targets. It helps the student know what is expected. Rubrics also provide feedback to the student on how to improve.

Assessment Retakes

Students are encouraged to take advantage of additional opportunities to show mastery of a concept or skill. If a student would like a second (or third) opportunity to show that he/she has met the learning target, he/she will need to complete a "Retake Request" ticket, provide evidence of practicing the learning target, return the ticket (with a parent or guardian's signature), and make arrangements with me to retake the assessment. The parameters (such as deadlines or participation in group discussions) for retake opportunities will be communicated in class. After the student demonstrates his/her achievement, his/her grade will be changed in PowerSchool.

Late Work

Students will receive full credit for late work, assuming the quarter is still in session (for the work to be applied), or the unit still underway. Students will be forewarned of hard deadlines. The only exception to this rule applies to speaking and listening grades. If a student is unprepared to participate in a discussion such as literature circles because he/she did not complete their assignment, the student may not earn back credit.

Absences

As a rule, students are not permitted to make up missed assignments during class time because then they will miss the class activities. Students should check the "Weekly Agenda" (which is posted next to the door) or class website to find out what assignments they missed. Students are welcome to come make up work during lunch, Advisory, or after school. Just be sure to let me know when you plan to seek help so that I can be available. If a student has an excused absence, their work must be turned in by the end of the corresponding number of days that they were absent.

Curriculum

Reading:

In 8th grade we are going to work on building our comprehension, vocabulary, and fluency (of both fiction and nonfiction texts) through read-alouds, independent reading, seminars and literature circles. Our novel studies will focus on the following genres: historical fiction, science fiction, and realistic fiction. A reading calendar will be announced and posted so that you know what is expected of you as a reader. It is important for you to keep up with your reading so that you can participate in classroom discussions and assignments. Tests and/or papers will follow all reading units and will always be announced at least one week in advance. We will also read various short stories and poems throughout the year. Students will be expected to read books of their choice outside of class and complete (and present) quarterly reading projects.

Writing:

Students will maintain a varied portfolio that will include: professional writing, creative writing, literary essay, literary response, poems, argumentative/persuasive essay, journaling, speech, and short stories. Within the workshop model, students will develop an idea through the writing process (prewrite, draft, revise, edit, publish). The writing curriculum focuses on the 6 + 1 traits of writing (ideas, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency, conventions, and presentation). Grammar lessons are taught during the mini-lesson and conferencing portions of writing workshops and are in response to student-need.

Speaking, Listening, and Viewing:

All students are expected to participate and contribute to class whole-class and small-group discussions. Additionally, students will create, deliver, and evaluate oral presentations with a focus on verbal and nonverbal techniques.

Vocabulary:

Students will work to define grade-appropriate words selected from our novel studies. On assignments, quizzes, and tests, students will be required to apply their understanding of these words. Students will also work to understand high-frequency Latin roots.

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Please read and discuss the course description for Mrs. Greene's Language Arts class. Hopefully, class expectations, curriculum and goals are clear. I am available for conferences at any time to address student needs, suggestions, or questions that you may have.



Please sign this page and give it to your child to return to me. Your signature indicates that you have read the syllabus and class expectations for this class. Thank you. I am really looking forward to learning with your child this year! If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to either email me at greenesarah@aaps.k12.mi.us or write them below.

Student Name: _____ Student Signature: _____

Parent Signature: _____ Class Period: _____

Any additional information that you would like me to know:

General Procedures:

Entering the classroom

1. Walk in quietly, sit in your assigned seat and begin the "Do Now"
2. Make sure you are prepared with all of your materials
Book, folder or binder, planner, homework, pencil, pen (make sure you sharpen your pencil within the first 3 minutes of class)
3. If I am not in the room or at the door, you are to wait in the hall

The first three minutes of class

1. Take out any homework that is due
2. Check the board for the "Do Now" assignment
3. Sharpen pencil
4. Get absent work if needed

If you are tardy to class

1. Walk in quietly
2. If you have a pass, leave it on the edge of your desk and I will come get it
3. Begin working on your assignment

Dismissal

1. A teacher will dismiss you
2. Your table will not be dismissed until your area is clean, including the floor
3. When you have been dismissed, push your chair in and walk out quietly

If the phone rings

1. A teacher will answer the phone at all times, unless otherwise directed
2. If I ask you to answer the phone, please say the following: "Hello! Mrs. Greene's room, student speaking."
3. When I am on the phone, you are to continue working, or sit quietly until I am finished

If you complete your assignment

1. You may either work on the "May Do" assignment or read independently

If you have a question

1. Please raise your hand
2. If you are working in a group or with a partner, please be sure everyone has the same question
3. Try to continue working until I can get to your table to help you

When you are working on your assignments

1. You are to stay in your assigned seat, working quietly
2. Topic related questions may occur in a whisper voice only

If for any reason you need to leave the classroom

1. You must ask a teacher first
2. You must fill out a pass, and get it signed in order to leave the room
3. Use your passes wisely

Food and drinks in the classroom

1. Water bottles are permitted in the classroom
2. You are not allowed to chew gum during class
3. No other food may be brought into the classroom, unless given permission from teacher

Items you may not handle in the classroom

1. Anything on the teacher's desk or tables (including the chime)
2. Anything inside the cabinets
3. Markers – no writing on the board without permission