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7th Grade Language Arts 2022-2023

Why Should You Care About Language Arts?

How can literature expand our worldview? What can books teach us about ourselves? How can we write in order to persuade, entertain, or inform our readers? How can an expanded vocabulary help us understand, describe, specify, and illuminate our world? How can we think critically, so we know which information we can trust and use? This course will answer all of these important questions and more, so you can end the school year confident in your reading, writing, and critical thinking skills.

How Will This Course Help You in Your Future?

Strong reading, writing, and critical thinking skills will help you not only in every subject in school, but in any career you choose. Additionally, the literature we read in this class will help you connect personally with important ideas while opening your eyes to other points of view. Finally, study after study has shown that collaborative and cooperative skills are key to success for people working in almost any field. This class touches on all these areas and will set you up for a lifetime of success. By the end of the school year, you will be able to do all the following and more:

- Read, understand, and analyze grade-level stories, novels, articles, and poems.
- Evaluate the credibility of sources.
- Create writing that makes a claim and supports it with premises, evidence, and justification.
- Use the art of language to create strong, engaging writing in many genres.
- Understand and employ the mechanics of punctuation, grammar, and spelling.
- Identify topics, conflicts, and themes in literature and apply them to our current world.
- Increase your vocabulary.
- Work with other students toward common goals.

What Will We Learn in This Class?

Over the course of the year, this class will address each of the [Oklahoma Academic Standards for English Language Arts](#) for seventh grade. You will develop skills in reading, writing, listening, speaking, vocabulary, language, and research as you engage in various activities, assignments, and projects.

How Will You Do Well in This Class?

- **Be Kind.** No one can do their best unless *everyone* can do their best. Support your peers with friendly gestures, patience, and acceptance. Do not use language or labels that may hurt others or make them feel isolated. Instead, try to learn about your peers and teachers—where they come from, and how they view the world. You don't have to agree with everyone, but disagree politely when someone does not share your view.
- **Be Cooperative.** We will do a lot of group work in this class. Be a leader by modeling positive behaviors, giving creative ideas and feedback, and encouraging your groupmates. A cooperative student does not “take over” projects, but they also do their fair share and contribute their skills toward the task. Be open to working with all students. (If you have an issue with a fellow student in your group, discuss this privately with the teacher.)
- **Be Curious.** Let your imagination and intellect free! When given a choice of topics to research, be passionate and choose topics that really light your desire to know more. Dive into your reading and open your world with all of the ideas you encounter. Ask yourself, “What do I want to improve on?” and “How can I do that?”
- **Be Communicative.** Be open with your teacher about your needs and concerns, ideally before a problem occurs or as soon as you become aware of a problem. Be open about what helps you learn and what makes it harder for you to learn. Also, communicate openly with your peers, whether you are doing peer revisions together, working on a group project, or having a discussion.

Materials Needed

Please bring the following materials to class each day:

- A folder with brads (preferably with pockets, too)
- A composition notebook
- Writing utensils (both pens and pencils)
- Highlighters
- Colored pencils (12-count package)
- A self-selected book for independent reading

Share Your Perspective

Use your voice to present your unique perspective by speaking and writing

“One voice can change a room, and if one voice can change a room, then it can change a city, and if it can change a city, it can change a state, and if it change a state, it can change a nation, and if it can change a nation, it can change the world.

Your voice can change the world.”

— Barack Obama



Consider Other Perspectives

Get a glimpse of other peoples' perspectives by listening and reading

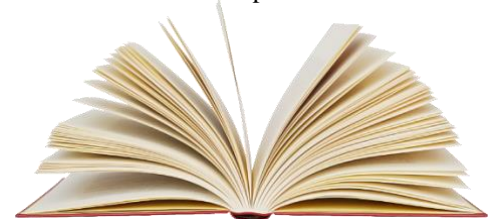
“Books are sometimes **windows**, offering views of worlds that may be real or imagined, familiar or strange. These windows are also **sliding glass**

doors, and readers have only to walk through in imagination to become part of whatever world has been created or recreated by the author. When lighting conditions are just right, however, a

window can also be a **mirror**.

Literature transforms human experience and reflects it back to us, and in that reflection we can see our own lives and experiences as part of a larger human experience. Reading, then, becomes a means of self-affirmation, and readers often seek their mirrors in books.”

— Rudine Sims Bishop



Helpful Links

- Our school's homepage: <https://www.normanpublicschools.org/longfellow>
- Our school library's homepage: https://pion.ent.sirsi.net/client/en_US/NPSMIDDLESCHOOLS/
- Canvas (our district's learning management system): <https://normanpublicschools.instructure.com/>
- Student portal (your view of the online gradebook): <https://normanok.infinitecampus.org/campus/portal/norman.jsp>
- Parent portal (your parent or guardian's view of the online gradebook): <https://normanok.infinitecampus.org/campus/portal/norman.jsp>
- Teacher website: <https://alacyscott.edublogs.org/>

Late Work

Each day that an assignment is late, 10% will be reduced from the assignment's score. For example, an assignment that is 3 days late will have its score reduced by 30%. The maximum a late assignment will be reduced is by 50%. If you know that something will be coming up that will make it hard for you to meet a deadline (a family member is very ill, your family is in the middle of a move, etc.), please communicate this to me before the deadline, so we can discuss an extension. If there is an unforeseen emergency that keeps you from turning in an assignment on time, please let me know, and I may waive the late penalty.

Absence Policy

If you are absent, you will have the number of days you were absent to make up your missed work. In the case of an extended absence (3+ days), please see me, so we can plan out a schedule that will help you catch up. In most cases, the absent work will be in a digital format. If you are absent but well enough to work from home (for example, you are contagious with an illness but without symptoms), locate and complete your assignments in Canvas, so you can return to school already caught up.

How Will You and I Measure Your Understanding and Growth?

- **Participation:** 20% of your grade will be based on your participation in class. This includes completing bell work, engaging in class discussions, engaging in independent reading, putting your full effort into tasks, and contributing positively to the classroom culture.
- **Classwork:** 30% of your grade will be based on classwork, including written responses, note-taking, activities on class readings and topics, exit tickets, reflections, and more.
- **Projects:** 20% of your grade will be based on the final drafts of your writing projects—which include response to literature, argumentative, expository, narrative, poetry, and more—as well as other projects, such as research.
- **Quizzes and Tests:** 20% of your grade will be based on quizzes and tests. Each unit will have a final test at the end, and you will respond to quizzes systematically throughout each unit. These quizzes will cover learning such as vocabulary, reading comprehension, language arts skills, etc.
- **Midterm and Final Exam:** 10% of your grade will be based on a midterm exam in December and a final exam in May. Both exams will be comprehensive, which means they will cover everything we learned throughout the semester.

Academic Integrity

“Integrity” is the quality of being honest and making honorable choices. “Academic integrity” means you are honest about your schoolwork; you turn in your own assignments, do not copy from others, give credit when you refer to someone else’s research or ideas, etc. In this class, we will talk about plagiarism, which is the stealing of someone else’s work. Surprisingly, a lot of plagiarism is accidental! Here are a few examples of plagiarism, so you can make sure to avoid them:

- **Complete or direct plagiarism:** “Complete plagiarism” is turning in an entire draft of someone else’s work. “Direct plagiarism” is copying lines or paragraphs from another’s work; even if the rest of the paper is your own writing, that copied line or paragraph is plagiarism.
- **Paraphrasing plagiarism:** If you change some of the wording but still use another’s ideas, it is plagiarism if you do not credit the source. I will show you how to use citations to give credit to other people in your writing.
- **Self-plagiarism:** Wait, this is a thing? Yup! If you wrote a paper for another class and turn it in to this class too, that is self-plagiarism, unless you inform me, your teacher, and for some reason I say this is okay. I probably won’t, though, because I want you to practice and improve your skills!

What are the Consequences for Academic Dishonesty?

If you have plagiarized, and it appears to be accidental, we will have a discussion on how to fix the problem, and I will give you an opportunity to revise your work. (For example, this would be our procedure if you mistakenly cited a source incorrectly.) In cases of purposeful plagiarism (like copying/pasting parts of another’s writing), you will be given a chance to re-write your piece of writing from scratch and resubmit your work for half credit. In most cases, I will also make a phone call home to notify your parent or guardian of the situation. If this problem occurs again, I will notify administration about the problem.