

Eighth Grade Language Arts 2009-2010

This course is designed to help students examine literature, vocabulary, speech communication, the writing process, and research through novels, short stories, plays, and poetry. In addition, the course will occasionally use segments of films rated PG or PG-13 to enhance the lessons.

Literature

Students will read the following books over the course of the year:

<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream*</i>	by William Shakespeare
<i>The Outsiders</i>	by S.E. Hinton
<i>A Raisin in the Sun</i>	by Lorraine Hansberry
<i>A Separate Peace</i>	by John Knowles

*Play changes from year to year as a class trip to the Shakespearean Festival in Stratford culminates their study with a live performance.

Through these novels, students will recognize the main elements of literature, including setting, plot, character, conflict, climax, resolution, tone, theme, personification, irony, alliteration, and epiphany.

Monthly book reports, given as book talks, require students to read an additional 8 to 10 novels per year. Students select as a group what genre to read each month.

Vocabulary

Students will learn 20 college preparatory words each week. They will understand the meaning of each word and how to use it effectively in the English Language.

Speech/Communication

Students will deliver speeches on a regular basis. As a minimum they will present:

- A personal speech
- An information speech
- A persuasive speech

Forensics is available as an extracurricular activity for interested students.

The Writing Process

Students will write on a daily basis throughout the year. The primary focus is on how to effectively write the classic five-paragraph essay. In addition, students will submit:

- Poetry
- A Play
- In-Class Essays
- Short Stories
- Business Letters

Research

Lastly, students will undertake a collaborative language arts and social studies research project on their ethnic heritage. The research focuses primarily on the push/pull factors that contributed to their ethnic group coming to America. They will give an oral presentation and submit a final paper, 8 to 10 pages in length, complete with sources, note cards, outlines, rough drafts, MLA citations, and a works cited page.