

Course Description

Seventh grade English students will explore how words can have a powerful impact on our world and who we are. We will investigate the form and content of short stories, novels, plays, myths, poetry, video, web content, and informational texts. What we read, watch, and hear will lead us to study new words (vocabulary), and the way words fit together to make meaning (grammar). We will analyze, argue, narrate, illustrate, and explain through clear, compelling, and convincing written and oral language. We will spend the year in what we hope will be an incredible journey to discover identity in literature as well as in ourselves.

Materials

- An organized, 3 ring binder (may be shared with other classes) with plenty of loose leaf
- A pencil pouch with pens, pencils, erasers, sticky notes, and tape flags
- *Vocabulary Power Plus* & grammar workbooks
- Outside reading book (if it will not be a distraction)
- Class novel (if we are reading one): *The Miracle Worker*
- A physical or digital journal: We will talk more about this in class!

Class Expectations: Students are expected to follow the Spartan Code in the Student Handbook as well as individual class expectations. We will be discussing these more in-depth during the first few weeks.

If your actions do not meet our class expectations, you should expect the following consequences:

1. In-class warning
2. Conference with teacher
3. Parent/Guardian contact
4. Detention, Saturday School, or other consequences determined by Mr. Dearman

***Tardies:** Four tardies in nine week period will result in detention. Being on time means being in your seat ready to go when the bell rings.

***Exceptions:** Some offenses, such as disrespect, defiance, and inappropriate dress, will result in an immediate referral to Mr. Dearman.

Outside Reading: Students are expected to read **one book each nine weeks in addition to any reading being done in class.** You will demonstrate comprehension through journal entries and a one-on-one book talk with your teacher.

- **Before reading:** Get recommendations from friends, family members, our amazing library specialist, Mrs. Zana, or me! Be sure that the book you select fits the genre requirement if there is one and that it is not too easy or too difficult for you. Fill in the title and author of the book, and submit it to the teacher for approval.
- **While reading:** Annotate and/or take notes to keep track of important characters and events. Be sure to also mark or flag interesting or meaningful quotations.
- **After reading:**
 - o Complete the outside reading journal (instructions and template in Class View folder on Drive)
 - o Have a book chat with a parent or guardian, and **earn** his or signature for reading and understanding the book.
 - o Schedule a book conference through the online appointment calendar posted on Moodle and my web page. Set reminders so that you do not forget to show up!
 - o To your conference, bring your book (either in print or digitally), journal, and any other notes that you took.

***Note:** If you choose a book that has been made into a movie or TV show, understand that I will be asking you questions to be sure you have read **the book.**

Self-Advocacy & Communication: One of the biggest keys to success in school (and in life!) is to speak up when you need to. Please respectfully let me know if you think I have made a mistake or if you need some one-on-one time to work through a difficult concept. I also would love to hear if something we did really helped you! We all learn in different ways and at different speeds, so I am more than happy to meet with you if you are having trouble or just need to chat. To make sure we both show up at the same time, email me or schedule a time on my appointment calendar.

Technology: Technology is great...when it works. **Be resourceful--create a solution instead of an excuse.** The following are some of the main tools that we will use this year:

- **Moodlerooms:** This is where you can access the calendar of assignments for our class, extra practice, and online discussions. You must enroll with the code given to you in class.
- **Google Drive:** All handouts, assignments, and projects will be stored, shared, and turned in here! More to come...

- **Email:** I encourage you to email me if you have a question or concern, but please keep the following in mind:
 - Just like you, I have other interests and responsibilities outside of school, and I need to sleep. I will do my best to reply as soon as I can, but I may not have the opportunity to respond until the next day.
 - Emailing is different from texting. Anytime you email an adult, include a greeting, use complete, clear sentences, and type your name in the salutation.
 - Get in the habit of using and checking your school Gmail address (2020___@student.mtnbrook.k12.al.us). You will get messages from me often, especially if I have shared an assignment or handout with you.
- **Personal Electronic Devices:** Please read the attached letter carefully about devices in the classroom. They are permitted only when being used for educational purposes and in the manner that has been instructed. Your device will be taken up and turned into Mr. Dearman if it is being used in any other way. If you bring a smart phone to class, it must always be visible, off, and face down on the desk when not in use. You should never text during the school day.

Grading Policy: Your grade in English will be determined by your mastery of our state course standards. Each standard falls into one of five categories: Language, Reading, Writing, Vocabulary, and Speaking and Listening. Assessments will not be given one grade, but rather, a grade in each category that is being assessed. Pay more attention to your category averages than your overall grade when looking for strengths and areas that need improvement. All of the practice that you do to learn the material will be reported in iNow but will not contribute to your overall grade. Take a look at the categories in the following chart for specific details.

- **Grading Categories:**

Percentage of Overall Grade	Category	Description
15%	Language	Application of grammatical concepts in written language
30%	Reading	Informational and literary texts and multimedia
25%	Writing	Communicating ideas on paper
15%	Vocabulary	New word acquisition and usage
15%	Speaking, Listening & Viewing	Communicating and comprehending ideas orally and visually
0% (For reporting purposes only)	Practice and Progress	All of the important day-to-day activities that create learning and growth. These activities may differ for each student depending on his or her needs.

- **Retakes:** You will have the opportunity to retake any graded assignment until you demonstrate mastery of the standards being assessed. Specific tasks must be completed before you are may retake. (See “Retake Contract”). Keep in mind that in most cases, the tasks and retake will have to be completed outside of class time since we will be moving on to other concepts.
- **iNow** (online gradebook): Most assignments are updated on iNow within five school days; although, writing assignments may take longer.
iNow Codes:
 - **MA:** Missing assignment—needs to be completed and turned in as soon as possible
 - **EX:** Excused—no grade will be given
 - **0:** Student chose not to turn in the assignment
- **Testing days:** Major assessments in English are due/given on the even dates of each month and on any Wednesday or Thursday.

Make-up Policy: Nothing can substitute for the learning that happens in the classroom. I cannot recreate that experience on a screen or a piece of paper, so please make every effort to be in class. If you must be absent, it is your job to get yourself caught up. Here is what you need to do:

- Log in to your **Google Drive account**, go to our **class edit** folder, and click on the week during which you were absent. Find the day or days that you missed, and read what our class scribe wrote for that day.
- Make a note of what you need to complete, what questions you have, and when you plan to work on and turn in the assignments. You may also print and attempt handouts, notes or other items in our class folders that you may need prior to returning to class.
- Contact me or a classmate with questions, or use our appointment calendar to set up a time to meet with me.
- To make up a test or quiz, talk to me to schedule a testing day. You will report to room 327 (Mr. Sipes) at 7:00 A.M. on that day to take your test.

Late Work: Being able to manage your time wisely and complete tasks on time are very important life skills. We all have days, however, when we get behind. I am understanding of this and will allow you some “wobble room” if you will let me know when you need it. If being late becomes a habit, however, I will be happy to provide you with more time at school—such as in homework room, detention, or Saturday School—to get your work done.