8th Grade Language Arts
Mr. Brad Davis

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Course Description:
English **language arts** education incorporates the teaching and learning of reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing. Integration of **language arts** occurs in multiple ways. ... Process includes skills and strategies used in listening, speaking, reading, writing, and viewing.

Themes and events covered include:

Quarter 1

Short Stories Unit: Readings from Gary Soto's *Broken Chain*, W.W. Jacob's *The Monkey's Paw*, Roald Dahl's *The Landlady,* Joan Aiken's *The Third Wish,* and Saki's *The Open Window.*

Literature Circles: Students will work collaboratively to read a novel in groups of 3-5. During this time, each student will be responsible for reading independently and completing a job in preparation for each meeting.

The Notorious Benedict Arnold Unit: Students will read Steve Shinkin's *The Notorious Benedict Arnold.* During the course of this unit, students will focus on reading for pleasure, reading for comprehension, strategies, vocabulary, plot, conflict, character development, and foreshadowing.

Edgar Allan Poe Unit: Readings include biographical information about the author and works including *The Tell-Tale Heart*, *The Raven*, *The Masque of the Red Death*, and *The Fall of the House of Usher*

Focus on vocabulary development, literary terms, foreshadowing, elements of plot, parallel episodes, irony, figurative language, personification, author's style, suspense, and active reading strategies.

Review of dialogue punctuation, sentence variety, capitalization, and the writing process.

Full Length Essays:
Imaginative (*Edgar Allan Poe*)

Quarter 2

Short Story Unit: Daniel Keyes' *Flowers for Algernon*

The Outsiders Novel Unit: Students will read S.E. Hinton's *The Outsiders*. During the course of this unit, students will focus on reading for pleasure, reading comprehension strategies, vocabulary, theme, point-of-view, and character development.

Music as Poetry Unit: Students will listen to and analyze various types of music looking for elements of poetry such as simile, metaphor, personification, theme, and symbolism.

Creative Writing Unit: Students will create a personal portfolio that will contain multiple pieces of creative writing. The contents of the portfolio will include original pieces of art, poetry, songs, letters, and stories.

Literature Circles: Students will work collaboratively to read a novel in groups of 3-5. During this time, each student will be responsible for reading independently and completing a job in preparation for each meeting.

Coordination, subordination, and appositives.

Full Length Essays:
Literary Analysis (*Flowers for Algernon*)
Personal narrative (*The Outsiders*)
Imaginative (*The Outsiders*)

Quarter 3

Persuasive Writing Unit: Students will read examples of persuasive writing and learn effective persuasive techniques, identify and avoid fallacious reasoning, employ effective paragraph transitions, and identify audience and purpose.

Business Writing Unit: Students will read sample business letters and resumes. Each student will learn to format a formal business letter and write his/her own resume.

Macbeth: Students will read Shakespeare's play and act out certain scenes. Students will learn comprehension strategies for complex reading and learn about aspects of theater and drama. Students will write a compare/contrast essay after watching the filmed version of the play.

Full Length Essays and Assessments:
Expository essay (Literature Circle book)
Final project (*Macbeth*)

Quarter 4

Literature Circles: Students will work collaboratively to read a novel in groups of 3-5. During this time, each student will be responsible for reading independently and completing a job in preparation for each meeting.

Tom Sawyer Novel Unit: Students will read Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*. Students will focus on reading for pleasure, reading comprehension strategies, vocabulary development, theme, dialect, author's style, and characterization. Students will write a final essay analyzing elements from the novel.

Full Length Essays and Assessments:
Persuasive business letter
Literary analysis, compare/contrast OR final project (*The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*)

Required Materials:
1. Textbook (brought DAILY): The American Journey
2. Novel (If reading in class)
3. 2 Spiral Notebooks
4. A sharpened PENCIL, and an eraser

Classroom Expectations:
In addition to the High 5 expectations, there are two more expectations in Mr. Davis' classroom.
1. Try your BEST
2. Help others do their BEST

Grading:
The grading in the class will be scored on both proficiency and behavioral achievements. Meaning I will evaluate students based on their academic assignments such as test, quizzes, and essays. As well as reading logs, weekly warm ups, and in class worksheets. Student's grades will be based on their ability to demonstrate their knowledge through assessment.

You will see two grades on the report card; the overall will be both academic and behavioral grades, while the second will be strictly academic. The academic grade lets you know if your child is meeting the 8th grade state standards for language arts.

Assessments will be varied and include:

Projects (Individual/Group)
Essays
Tests (Varied Formats)
Speeches

Class Policy:
1. Students can turn in work at any time leading up to a grading period. Once the grading period has passed I will no longer accept late work. This means work needs to be turned in before progress reports are due and at the end of each quarter.
2. If you are absent for a test, expect to take it on the day you return.
3. No backpacks in the classroom.
4. Students will take an Unprepared to leave the classroom for personal reasons.

Student Responsibilities:
1. Complete all assignments on time.
2. Keep up your notebook
3. Participate in all activities

To maximize student learning, there needs to be a partnership between teachers, students, and parents. Parents can help their son/daughter by providing support in the following areas.

1. **Encourage your student to seek help regularly**. Parents usually know when their son/daughter is having difficulty with the subject matter. Please take the opportunity to encourage your student to get extra help before or after school.

2. **Check the school website.** As assignments are graded you can access them on our class calendar.

3. **Encourage your student to read and write on a regular basis outside the classroom.** We will set aside a portion of each class to either free read or write and I would encourage students to continue reading and writing as often as possible. The only way to get better at these skills is to practice them often.

This school year is going to be a lot of fun, I guarantee that your student will enjoy this class and make large gains in their abilities if they give their best effort and follow classroom expectations. If you have any questions or concerns at any point during the school year feel free to contact me. I believe strong communication between teacher, student, and parents is a vital part of this class.

This syllabus does not need to be turned in; it is only for informational purposes. Feel free to contact me at any time and I will be quick to respond.

I have read and understood the classroom procedures and expectations.

Student name (please print): _____

Student signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent/Guardian name (please print): _____

Parent/Guardian signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent/Guardian phone number (daytime): _____

Parent/Guardian phone number (evening): _____

Parent/Guardian email: _____

Please take time to fill this survey out. This survey will help me communicate better with you during the year.
1) The two important things that teachers should communicate with parents are:
    1.

    2.

2) Please rank these modes of communication 1 - 8 (1=most preferred method, 8= least preferred method). Please do not use a number twice.

_____ Phone call at home	_____ Phone call at work
_____ Email	_____ Note in Planner
_____ US mail	_____ Newsletter
_____ Class website	_____ Other: _____

3) When teachers communicate with me about my child, I wish they would…

4) Communication between home and school could be improved by …