6-8th Grade Reading/Language Arts Syllabus*

Mrs. Hagy - 8th and 6th Grade
NBCT
www.learnforjoy.com
E-mail: syhagy@cps.edu
Conferences scheduled upon request
(773) 534-2045

Mr. Westfall - 7th Grade
www.mrwestfallsclassroom.weebly.com
E-mail: cwestfall@cps.edu
Conferences scheduled upon request
(773) 534-2045

Ms. Wengren- 6th Grade
E-mail: aewengren1@cps.edu
Conferences scheduled upon request
(773) 534-2045

Grade Components-Reading Class

35% Class Participation/Projects (ex. warm-ups, board work, annotations, DEAR time, participation in class discussions)
60% Assessments (ex. tests, quizzes, novel-based projects, book reports, class presentations, etc.)
5% Homework (ex., nightly assignments, long term assignment check-ins, word within the word assignments)

Grade Components-Writing Class

35% Class Participation/Projects (ex. warm-ups, peer editing, board work, essay assignments)
60% Assessments (ex. tests, word within the word quizzes, class discussions, essay assessments-final draft, ex. class presentations, poetry, essay drafts)
5% Homework (ex., word within the word assignments, editing essay assignments, nightly writing assignments)

Texts

Holt McDougal Literature
Various different novels
Teacher websites
Handouts
Content Overview

Each quarter, students will continue to work on developing vocabulary through the Word within the Word program. Word within the Word teaches students how to use word stems to figure out the meaning of words. Grammar skills will be covered through the writing and editing process. Students will focus on synonyms and antonyms, analogies and context clues. We will be working on writing narrative, expository, argumentative, literary analysis and poetry genres. In addition to mastering narrative, expository, argumentative, literary analysis and poetry, students will continue to develop their editing skills.

Students are required to complete several novels throughout the year. In addition, each grade level will be reading Shakespearean sonnets and plays. The novels and plays will be available for students and each student will receive a copy. Students are expected to complete the reading of the text, annotate it and complete the assigned work both in class and as homework. As always, students may ask if they have any questions regarding the assignments. Specific project requirements will be detailed in a separate handout which will be posted on our teacher websites.

Expectations for the Parent/Guardian

Communication is the backbone of a good teacher/ student/ parent relationship. Not only do you need to know if your child is struggling with a particular topic or concept, but you also want to know when your child is experiencing success. Please review your child’s language arts assignments in the student agenda, on teacher websites and on parent portal to monitor progress and to see how each grade was earned. It is the parent’s responsibility to monitor their child’s progress. A progress report will be sent at the five week period. Progress reports must be signed and returned regardless of the student’s grade.

It is important to look over progress reports when they are sent because they are of a timely nature. It is the student’s responsibility to return the signed progress report on time. Please help your child with their homework and make sure they are ready for class on a daily basis and encourage your child to read during their free time.

The quickest, most efficient way to communicate with me is through e-mail. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

Expectations for the Student

• You are expected to bring the materials listed below to class every day.
• All assignments are to be completed on time and to reflect your best effort.
• You are to be well-behaved and obey all school and room rules.
• You are expected to be respectful towards your teacher, your classmates, and yourself.
• Students will have homework almost every night
• Students will be reading novels in class – please discuss the novels with your child! Students will also have to annotate the daily independent reading – watch for due dates in which the annotations will be collected. The more your child reads the better (see guidelines below).
• Students will have vocabulary stems each week (from the Word within the Word curriculum), with a vocabulary test at the end of the week. Please help your child study. Students will also have frequent grammar assignments and quizzes.

**Materials**

- Pens (dark blue or black)/pencils, markers/colored pencils/crayons
- Post-its
- One three ring binder (two inch) or accordion folder
- Student agenda
- One set of five dividers
- Loose leaf paper (to be replenished through the year)
- Textbook (will be passed out in class if needed, but will only be needed on specific days)
- Novels (assigned at various times through the year, novels need to be brought to class daily)
- Three composition notebooks (for your annotations and Board Work and class notes - please label each notebook clearly with your name)
- 2 pocket folders-one for reading and one for writing, label both with your name

**Late Work/ Makeup Work and Printing**

Homework must be turned in at the beginning of the period on the day it is due. Assignments left in lockers, at home, on the bus, or anywhere else are still considered late. Students will not be allowed to call home for assignments, nor will students be given a locker pass to retrieve assignments. Major long-term projects are always due on the assigned date, even if the student is absent. If there is an extreme emergency, please contact me and make an alternative arrangement. Computer problems do not constitute extreme emergencies.

6-8th graders may turn in class work/homework one day late with a 15% point penalty. Any work more than one day late will not be accepted. Any late assignment must be turned in to the teacher, it is the student’s responsibility to turn it in to the teacher no later than one day past the due date. If an assignment needs to be printed, the student is responsible for making arrangements to print prior to the due date.
Students are allowed one day only per excused absent day to make up assignments. It is the students’ responsibility to get make-up work. If absent, students are expected to check teacher websites, email teachers for handouts and ask a classmate for missed class notes.

Any quizzes or tests missed should be made up before or after school or by arrangement by the student and teacher so students do not miss any additional instruction. Upon returning to school, students have a maximum of three days to make up quizzes or tests.

**Academic Honesty**

Students are expected to earn grades honestly. Cheating will not be tolerated. Any occasion of academic dishonesty will result in a zero for the assignment, as well as any disciplinary action. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, copying another student’s work, allowing another student to copy your work, receiving answers prior to a test, using a “cheat sheet” without expressed consent from the teacher (a written sheet of answers or notes), downloading essays off the internet, and/or plagiarizing (copying another person’s work without acknowledgement of source). Please note: Teachers will not bump grades, grades must be earned honestly.

**Loss of Books**

Your child will be given novels, plays and textbooks to use for this class. They also have access to a classroom and school library. Students are responsible for the return of these materials in the same condition in which these materials were received. If a novel/textbook is lost, the cost will vary and payment for the lost materials must be made in the office. Please advise your child to be responsible and not lose or damage books.

*This syllabus is subject to change.*

**Please remember that students are expected to complete their assignments in dark blue or black ink. Class work/ homework/ writing assignments completed in any other color will receive a point deduction.**
Reading/Language Arts Parent & Student Agreement

Please fill out and return the following: I have read the 6-8th grade Reading and Writing Syllabus. I am aware of the grading weights the academic honesty policy and the homework policy. I have read the procedure for completing nightly annotations, reading logs and quarterly independent book reports. I am aware of the make-up work policy and the expectation for making up missed tests and quizzes. I am aware that if I am unsure of what the homework is, I can check the teacher website for clarification. I am also aware of how to get a hold of teachers if unsure of an assignment, its due date or any other concern.

STUDENT NAME (PRINT): ___________________________

ROOM: __________

STUDENT SIGNATURE: ___________________________

PARENT NAME (PRINT): ___________________________

PARENT SIGNATURE: ___________________________

*TWO PHONE NUMBERS WHERE PARENT MAY BE REACHED (DAY & EVENING):

Day Phone: ___________________        Evening Phone: ___________________
Quarterly Independent Reading Project (Book Report)

Novel/Book must be approved prior to reading. Project are due two weeks prior to the end of each quarter (presentations take place during the last two weeks of the quarter). You will complete a reading log to track daily pages read. This will be checked every Friday for a project grade and must be signed by a parent to receive credit.

NOVEL PROJECT OPTIONS

1) **Descriptive writing.** Find the best example of descriptive prose found in the book you are currently reading. You should write an essay explaining why the excerpt(s) are a particularly good example of descriptive prose. The essay might include some of the adjectives the author used to set the scene, set the tone and set the mood.

2) **Thumbs Up, Thumbs Down.** Write a review of the book he or she just finished reading -- in the style of a movie review. The student concludes by awarding a thumbs up or thumbs down on the book. This activity could be even more fun if two students read the same book. They could plan a lively interaction, a la and Ebert and Roeper, about the book, which could be videotaped for all to see!

3) **Character Trait Diagram.** Create a Venn diagram to illustrate similarities and differences in the traits of two of the main characters in a book just completed (you might elect to create a Venn diagram showing similarities and differences between the book's main character and yourself)

4) **Surfing the Net.** Where did the story take place? When did it take place? Surf the Net to research five Internet sites that others might check out before they read the book so they will know more about the book's setting or time period. List them, create a presentation on the setting of the book.

5) **Write a Letter to the Author.** After reading a book, share reactions to the book in a letter written to its author. If a student writes to an author who is still alive, you might actually mail the letter. The letter must be typed, 12 point font and be at least one page in length.

6) **Sell It.** Pretend to be a publicist for the book that's just been read. The student writes and then delivers a 60-second speech that will persuade other students that they should read the book. Writing and speaking persuasively will be especially difficult if you didn't like the book. If that's the case, you can share that fact *after* completing the speech.

7) **Create a Card Catalog.** After reading a book, complete an index card with information about the book. The front of the card includes details such as title, author, and date published along with a two- to three-sentence synopsis of the book. On the back of the card, the student writes a paragraph critiquing the book. Students might even rate the book using a teacher-created five-star rating system. Example: A five-star book is "highly recommended; a book you can't put down." Completed cards are kept in a card file near the classroom bookshelf or in the school library.

8) **Interview a Character.** Compose six to eight questions to ask a main character in a book just completed. The student also writes the character's response to each question. The questions and answers should provide information that shows the student read the book without giving away the most significant details.

9) **Ten Facts.** Create a "Ten Facts About [book title]" sheet that lists ten facts you learned from reading the book. The facts, written in complete sentences, must include details you didn't know before reading the book.
10) **Script It!** Write a movie script for a favorite scene in a book just read. At the top of the script, the student can assign real-life TV or movie stars to play each role. The student might also work with classmates to perform the favorite scene.

11) **Concentration.** You will need 30 index cards to create a Concentration-style game related to a book just finished. The student chooses 14 things, characters, or events that played a part in the book and creates two cards that have identical pictures of each of those things. The two remaining cards are marked Wild Card! Then the student turns all 30 cards facedown and mixes them up. Each student can choose a partner with whom to play according to the rules of Concentration.

12) **What Did You Learn?** Write a summary of what he or she learned from a book just completed. The summary might include factual information, something learned about people in general, or something the student learned about himself or herself.

13) **Glossary and Word Search.** Create a glossary of ten or more words that are specific to a book's tone, setting, or characters. The student defines each word and writes a sentence from the book that includes that word. Then the student creates a word search puzzle that includes the glossary words. Students can exchange their glossaries and word searches with others in the class.

14) **In the News.** Create the front page of a newspaper that tells about events and characters in a book just read. The newspaper page might include weather reports, an editorial or editorial cartoon, ads, etc. The title of the newspaper should be something appropriate to the book.

15) **Create a Comic Book.** Turn a book, or part of it, into a comic book, complete with comic-style illustrations and dialogue bubbles.

16) **Characters Come to Life.** Create a life-size "portrait" of one of the characters from a book just read. The portrait should include a written piece that tells about the character. The piece might also include information about events, traits, or conflicts in the book that involve that character. Hang the students' portraits in a class gallery.

17) **Prove It in Five Minutes.** Give a 150-second (2-minute) oral presentation in which he or she shares information about a book's plot and characters. The student closes the presentation by offering an opinion and recommendation about the book. Then students in the audience have 150 seconds to question the presenter about the book. If the presenter is able to prove in five minutes that he or she read the book, the student is excused from filing a written report about it.

18) **Picture Books.** After reading a book, create a picture book version of the story that would appeal to younger students. The students can then share the picture books with a group of young students.

19) **Resume Writing.** As a tie-in to your career education program, create a resume for a book character. The student should include in the resume a statement of the applicant's goals and a detailed account of his or her experience and outside interests.

20) **Character Trait Chart.** Create a chart with three columns. Each column is headed with the name of one of the book's characters. As the student reads the book, he or she can keep a record of the traits each character possesses and include an incident that supports each trait.

21) **Theme Report.** Select a concept or a theme from the book just finished and to use library or Internet resources to explore it further. The student then writes a two-page report that shares information about the topic.

22) **Setting.** To learn more about the setting of a book, write a one-page report explaining how that setting was important to the story.
Quarterly Independent Reading Project (Book Report) Rubric

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<td><strong>Plot</strong></td>
<td>The plot or conflict / resolution was clearly stated and summarized. Main characters are thoroughly developed and described.</td>
<td>The plot or conflict/resolution was clearly stated and summarized. Main characters are adequately developed and described.</td>
<td>The plot or conflict / resolution is briefly, but clearly stated. Most main characters are described, but not developed.</td>
<td>The plot was not clearly stated or the conflict / resolution was not clearly stated. Some main characters are described, but not developed.</td>
<td>Information covered does not describe the plot, conflict or resolution. Main characters are not developed or described.</td>
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<td><strong>Summary / Character Development</strong></td>
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<td>All necessary information was presented logically and recorded properly. Maintains clear focus. Follows the guidelines described above</td>
<td>Necessary information was covered logically and recorded in the proper paragraphs. Maintains clear focus.</td>
<td>Some necessary information was covered, but not presented logically or recorded in proper paragraphs. Maintains adequate focus.</td>
<td>Minimal necessary information was covered but not in a logical sequence or recorded in the proper paragraphs. Attempts to focus.</td>
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<td><strong>Content/ Organization</strong></td>
<td>All general information is included and completely accurate.</td>
<td>All general information is included and mostly accurate.</td>
<td>Some general information is included and accurate.</td>
<td>Some general information is included, but inaccurate.</td>
<td>General information is missing several parts and inaccurate.</td>
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<td><strong>General Information</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Mechanics Usage Grammar Format</strong></td>
<td>There were no errors or evidence of corrections in the report. Paragraphs were properly indented. Words were well chosen and sentences were concise.</td>
<td>A couple errors occurred in capitalization, punctuation, word usage, sentence structure. Paragraphs were properly formatted. Proofreading evident.</td>
<td>A few errors occurred in capitalization, punctuation, word usage, sentence structure. Paragraphs properly formatted. Proofreading evident.</td>
<td>Some errors occurred in capitalization, punctuation, word usage, run-on sentences, and sentence fragments. Paragraph formatting inconsistent. Proofreading questionable</td>
<td>Numerous errors in spelling, capitalization, punctuation, word usage, run-on sentences, sentence fragments. Paragraphs not indented. No evidence of proofreading.</td>
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<td>Presentation</td>
<td>The student spoke confidently about the novel/book contents, student makes eye contact with audience</td>
<td>The student somewhat spoke confidently about the novel/book contents, student makes some eye contact with audience</td>
<td>The student rarely spoke confidently about the novel/book contents, student makes little eye contact with audience</td>
<td>The student does not speak confidently about the novel/book contents, student makes no eye contact with audience</td>
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Quarterly Independent Reading Project (Book Report)

Reading Log

You will complete a reading log to track pages read. This will be checked every Friday for a project grade and must be signed by a parent. You are required to keep a record of your reading using this log. A total of three entries with a minimum of 30 minutes each are required per week and can be broken down however you prefer. *A parent signature is required to receive full credit. This will count as a project grade. Happy reading!

Student Name: ___________________________________ Goal: 90 Minutes Per Week

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