

# 8th Grade English Language Arts

**Mrs. O'Neill**  
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## Course Description

Welcome to 8th grade English language arts (ELA)! This year you will all face many academic and social challenges. We will use the New York State Common Core standards as guidelines to help improve your reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills. The goal of this course is to prepare you for high school.

Therefore, you will be reading various forms of literature, including books, short stories, poems, articles, and plays. Additionally, you will learn about and complete many writing assignments including, essays, poems, projects, and letters.

## Required Supplies

- Composition Notebook (not spiral please)
- Pocket Folder
- Blue or Black Pens
- Pencils
- Post It Notes
- Highlighter
- Package of Pencils (to be donated to class)
- Tissues (to be donated to class)

## Grading

You will earn grades based on your reading and writing classwork, assessments, papers, and projects. Your grades are all based on a total points system.

## Want to know what your grade is?

Have your parents sign up for parent portal and you will have access to your grades as soon as they are updated in my gradebook!

## Independent Reading

In this class you will ALWAYS be reading an independent reading book of your choice. This book should be carried with you from class to class each day. Yes, that means you should have it in math! You will be spending a minimum of 50 minutes a week reading this book IN class and a minimum of 40 minutes a week reading OUTSIDE of class. Most work you do in ELA will require you to use your independent reading book to complete the task. In addition to the assignments I will monitor your progress during one on one and small group conferences!

### Daily Procedures

Each day what we do in class will be different, but the schedule of the period will remain the same.

**Do Now:** Every day when you enter the room a Do Now will be posted on the board. You are expected to enter the room, complete the Do Now, & then sit quietly & wait for instructions.

**Mini-Lesson:** Most days I will spend the next 5-10 minutes teaching a lesson on the skill, concept, or topic you will be focusing on that day.

**Class Work:** During this time you will complete a task (most often using your independent reading book) based on the lesson taught that day.

**Conferencing:** While you are doing classwork I will be conferencing with students one on one or in small groups to help improve your reading & writing skills.

**Wrap Up:** To end the period we will come back together as a group and spend 1-3 minutes reviewing the material covered during the period or clearing up any confusion you may have.

### School Year at a Glance

- **Welcome Back**
- **Dystopian Book Clubs:** Read a dystopian book with a book club to examine character in order to write your own dystopian short story
- **A Deep Study of Conflict:** Examine conflict in your IR books & in the real world, ending with the creation of a PSA
- **Compare & Contrast:** Write a compare and contrast essay where you analyze the author's craft of two texts you have read this year
- **The Art of Argument:** Examine many argumentative texts & have an opportunity to earn 1 point toward the civic seal by writing a letter to enact change in our community
- **Test Taking Skills:** explore test taking tips in this mini test prep unit
- **Beautiful Language:** Read & analyze many different types of poetry in order to write your own poems using beautiful language

### Behavior

All students are expected to be both physically and mentally prepared for class. In order to make ELA a fun and successful learning environment, students need to follow the following rules:

- RESPECT
  - STOP, COLLABORATE, & LISTEN
  - DON'T STOP BELIEVING
  - ARE YOU READY FOR IT?
  - WE'RE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER
- If you do not follow these rules, you may receive a verbal warning, a phone call home, or a written referral to the assistant principal.

### If You Are Absent

If you are absent it is up to you to read over the lesson that will be posted in Google Classroom and complete the assignment for the day ON YOUR OWN. All work is due the day after you return to class.

### Homework

1. Review this Course Contract with your parent(s)/guardian(s). Both you & your parents must sign this & return it to me by tomorrow for your first homework grade.
2. Have your parents use the QR Code provided by your 1st period teacher to complete all required forms.

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_