**Course Syllabus: English/Language Arts 8**

*Setting the stage for becoming lifelong readers and skilled writers*

**Dillingham Middle School**

8th Grade, 2018-2019 School Year

**Teacher: Mrs. Megan Gunderson**

* *Email:* [mgunderson@dlgsd.org](mailto:mgunderson@dlgsd.org)
  + *Note: Email is the best way to contact Mrs. Gunderson. Phone calls will only be answered during prep time, and before/after school. All messages will be returned as soon as possible. In case of Emergency, please contact the school office (907-842-5221).*
* *Phone:* 907-842-5221
* *Website:* gundersonsclassroom.weebly.com
* *Classroom: Room 202*
* *Scholastic Code: QJTT2*
* *Remind: @e6647e*

**Course Description**

The 8th grade language arts course builds on the strategies and skills learned in 7th grade. Students continue to grow as individuals and select their own reading material, while applying reading and writing skills to authentic real world experiences. It is important for students to use the 8th grade year to practice and fine-tune their reading and writing skills, so they have a solid foundation to start their high school career successfully.

**Required Supplies**

Blue or black pens, #2 pencils (I highly recommend Ticonderoga brand)

Highlighters for Annotating Text

Lined Loose Leaf Paper for Binder

Take Home Folder (for homework, notes home, etc.)

**Supplies Provided by Teacher and/or School District for use on campus during the school day**

Technology: Computer (Chromebook), Internet Access

1 inch, Three Ring Binder

Subject Dividers with Tabs for Binder

Reading Material Literature (Textbook, Novels, etc)

**School Supply Notes:**

* Student binders will remain in the classroom and used daily (for both ELA and Social Studies classes).
* Student computers will not leave the school this year. Teachers will allow time for students to retrieve computers from the 8th grade cart at the beginning of any class which will use them.
* Backpacks will not enter the classroom; they are to be kept in student lockers.
* The school has *supplies available for students who need them*. Please see Mrs. Gunderson privately if you need supplies. Parents or community members interested in donating supplies to the Language Arts classroom are encouraged to contact Mrs. Gunderson or the school counselor.

**Technology**

Today’s world requires students to master technology to be successful in college, the workforce, or military service. Similarly, educational standards laid out by the State of Alaska require students to use technology and alternate forms of media to communicate and demonstrate an understanding of content area knowledge.

Students will be required to use their School District Email Address, Google Education Suite (Drive, Docs, Slides), Newsela, IXL, Remind, and other online learning sites in this 8th grade Language Arts course.

Personal devices will not be needed. Cell phones should not be visible.

**Student Expectations**

**All students will be RESPECTFUL towards themselves, others, and the school.**

* **Prompt:**
  + Be on time.
  + Enter the classroom quietly.
  + Retrieve supplies, go to assigned seat, and immediately begin opening activity.
* **Polite:**
  + Be nice or neutral to everyone.
  + Encourage your classmates!
  + Swearing, teasing, talking back, and bullying will NOT be tolerated.
  + Respect yourself, your classmates, your teacher, and your classroom.
  + Keep your hands, feet, and objects to yourself.
* **Patient:**
  + Wait respectfully and calmly for your turn.
  + Listen and stay seated when someone is talking.
  + Be patient with yourself! Learning takes time. Give yourself the grace to make a few mistakes.

**All students will be RESPONSIBLE for their own education and behavior.**

* **Prepared:**
  + Bring all materials and necessary work every day.
  + Turn in assignments on time.
  + Arrive ready for a great learning experience!
* **Productive:**
  + Stay on task.
  + Follow directions.
  + Persevere through challenges by asking questions and focusing on the positive.
  + Complete assignments on time with minimal prompting or reminding.
  + Remain seated unless otherwise instructed.

**All students will be SAFE to themselves and others.**

**Classroom Management**

**Arrival:** Students will come into the classroom quietly and respectfully.  Students will gather their materials, go directly to their assigned seat, and follow posted instructions for the opening activity.  Students will continue working until the teacher begins class.

**Leaving During Class**: Students are expected come to class prepared and ready to work from bell to bell.   The 4 minute passing time should be used for any personal errands or restroom breaks. Students are expected to stay in class the entire hour, without leaving the room and interrupting instruction.  Extenuating circumstances or exceptions will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

**Dismissal**: Near the end of class, students will be directed to clean up their desks and floor space.  When students are finished, they must sit quietly and wait to be dismissed from their desk space.  They must NOT wait at the door for the bell to ring.

**Voice Level**: The chart below will be used to determine the appropriate volume for each activity.

0:  Silent (No Voice)

1:  Whisper Voice

2:  Regular Voice

3:  Presentation Voice

4:  Outside Voice

**Food/Drink**: Only water is allowed in middle school classrooms. No other food or drink items may be consumed unless an exception is made for special lessons or classroom parties.

**Backpacks**: Student backpacks should be kept in their lockers.  If students bring them to class, they will be asked to return them to their lockers. Only necessary items for class should be kept with the students at their desks; most heavy items like books and binders will be kept in the classroom in a designated area. We want to be productive and avoid distractions, while also being safe and avoiding accidental falls.

**Distracting Items:** All personal items that are not directly necessary for school (including ***cell phones***, kendamas, fidgets, earbuds, etc) should be put away in lockers during class.  Students who repeatedly have trouble with this expectation will be required to place their distracting items in a designated area or in the office. In this case, such items will remain in the designated area until the end of class (unless instructed otherwise by the teacher).  Frequent issues of this kind could result in office referral.

**Course Overview**

**Independent Reading Requirements**

The main goal of independent reading is to provide opportunities for students to grow as readers while exploring the world of books they might not otherwise discover. In addition, students will begin to develop a deeper understanding of literary elements, text features and text structures through the books they select, while meeting state standards. The focus on reading will not only expand students’ background knowledge; students will also develop and refine written and oral communications skills. This includes growth in vocabulary, grammar and spelling.

Independent reading time will be a part of the daily classroom routine; however, *students should read a minimum of 15 minutes per day outside of the classroom* in order to meet reading requirements. All students will be expected to read a minimum of **5 books during the school year**.

**Independent Reading Selection Requirements**

Time: 30 minutes per day (15 minutes in class, 15-20 minutes at home)

Choose one book from at least five different genres:

* Traditional/Classic Literature
* Historical Fiction
* Science Fiction
* Poetry Anthologies
* Realistic Fiction
* Fantasy/Fairytales/Folklore
* Mystery/Horror
* Biography/Autobiography/Memoir
* Informational

**Book Report/Project:** Students will complete a book report or project at the completion of each independent reading selection. Specific requirements will be detailed on a separate document.

**Reading Conferences:** Students will have independent conferences with the teacher to review reading notebooks, discuss progress toward independent reading goals, and find engaging books. The teacher will provide support and guide students throughout the reading process as needed.

**Whole Class Reading Requirements**

The class will read several novels, shorts stories, memoirs, poems and speeches this year. The teacher will select the books for each novel study, often based on content currently being studied in Geography. Each book will be read aloud as the students follow along and learn to apply knowledge and understanding of literary elements, theme, making inferences and predictions. Students will also develop a deeper understanding of the craft and structure of literature as well as vocabulary and word usage.

Some of the novel studies include watching a movie based on the novel. In compliance with state standards, students will be required to complete a compare and contrast project or essay. Notices will be sent home prior to a Novel Study that includes a movie.\*

**8th grade Novel Study List**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| TITLE | GEOGRAPHY UNIT CORRELATION |
| The Epic Fail of Arturo Zamora *by Pablo Cartaya* | Latin America |
| Bound *by Donna Jo Napoli* | Monsoon Asia |
| The Long Walk to Water *by Linda Sue Park* | Africa |
| I am Malala (Young Reader’s Edition) *by Malala Yousafzai* | Southwestern Asia |
| The Diary of Anne Frank *by Anne Frank* | Europe |
| The Whale Rider by *Witi Ihimaera* | Oceania/Australia |

**Writing Requirements**

**Writing Workshops:** Students will write a minimum of three formal essays (Narrative, Argumentative, Informational) and two poems following the complete writing process guided by the teacher. Students will meet individually and in small groups throughout the writing process to receive feedback from the teacher. All writing work will be kept in the classroom in student binders and/or in their ELA Google Drive folders.

**Summary and Opinion Writing:** Students will be required to write summaries and opinions after reading a variety of short stories, articles, speeches, poems and essays. These short writing assignments will provide students with the opportunity to practice mastering state standards, as well as fine-tune their ability to summarize and to share opinions.

**Conventions of English**

Grammar, spelling, vocabulary and word usage will be studied in conjunction with writing and reading. Students will work towards meeting 8th grade Language Benchmarks, which includes demonstrating command of the English language when writing, speaking, reading and listening.

**Speaking, Viewing, Listening, and Media Literacy**

Alaska Speaking and Listening Standards will be addressed during daily activities, discussions, collaborative learning, small group presentations, and creation of multimedia projects. Reading and writing activities will provide additional opportunities for students to analyze different types of information, while sharing opinions and ideas. Students will be expected to cooperate, mediate, and problem solve to make decisions or build consensus as appropriate for productive group discussions, group projects and learning activities.

**Progress Reports**

Parents/Guardians and students are responsible for logging in to the Powerschool system to check student’s grades.  Our Powerschool website is ps.dlgsd.org. Information about how to log in to this system is available from the secretary and the counselor.

Due to time constraints, I am not able to contact parents every time a child has a missing assignment or receives a failing grade on an assignment. Please regularly check Powerschool so that you can be aware of these issues. I am always happy to answer any questions you may have about your child’s grades. While I may not contact you for every assignment, if your child’s overall grade drops to an F for more than a week, I will contact you about steps that can be taken to resolve this issue.

**Middle School Late Work Policy**

All assignments are due on the given due date that is posted on the classroom whiteboard, on Powerschool, or in Google Classroom.  If a student does not hand in work by the due date, they have **TWO WEEKS** to hand in any late work. If the student has not handed in the assignment within that time period, the grade for that assignment will become a zero and will **NOT** be changed.

**Extra Help**

Mrs. Gunderson is always available after school from 3:15-4:00 pm on Mondays to help students.  Other days and times are possible but require advance notice, as there are often meetings in the afternoon after school. For instance, Fridays are always faculty meeting days, and teachers will not be available.

\*\*Return this page to Mrs. Gunderson for 25 assignment points\*\*\*

I, Mrs. Gunderson, pledge to create a classroom that is safe, comfortable, and respectful. I pledge to do my very best to provide ALL students with the tools to learn and take ownership of their education. I pledge to hold ALL students accountable for their choices and encourage them to reach for high expectations/standards. I pledge to be open, honest, and helpful.

The 2018-19 school year is going to be an exciting time to learn and grow as readers and writers.

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Teacher Signature

**STUDENTS, please read and initial each statement:**

\_\_\_\_\_ I read the 8th grade English Language Arts Syllabus **with the class.**

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand that there are high expectations for me in the 8th grade and I need to work towards meeting my personal learning goals.

\_\_\_\_\_ I will ask questions when I need help or to clarify.

\_\_\_\_\_ I have read the syllabus with my parents/guardians. I had a discussion about the 2018-2019 school year and Mrs. Gunderson’s expectations.

\_\_\_\_\_ I will try my best to meet the guidelines outlined in the Course Syllabus (including the following Student Expectations), and understand there could be consequences for any conflicting choices or actions.

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Student Signature Date

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature Date ………. SEE REVERSE for contact info form

**Contact Information Sheet**

Student’s Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Student Lives with: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Preferred Mailing Address (for notes home, progress reports, postcards, newsletters, etc.)

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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**Parent/Guardian 1:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Relationship to Student:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Preferred Method of Contact: (Circle one) Email Phone Call: Work, Cell Note Home

Email:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Parent/Guardian 2:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Relationship to Student:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Preferred Method of Contact: (Circle one) Email Phone Call: Work, Cell Text

Email:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Do you have any special concerns about your child? (academically, emotionally, medically, etc)

Does your child have internet access at home? YES NO

Please share anything about your child you want me to know.