

Fisher Middle School: English 8 | 2013-2014 Syllabus

Mrs. Acosta Landry

“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.”

- Nelson Mandela

Welcome to the eighth grade! Please read this document with your parents and return the signed acknowledgement form to school by Monday, August 26th.

Course Description:

In this class, you will be challenged to broaden your ability to comprehend, synthesize, and evaluate literature. Students will become better writers and develop their analytical reading skills through writing assignments, readings of non-fiction articles, short stories and novels, vocabulary and spelling development, and the study of grammar conventions. Students will also develop their listening and speaking skills with regular class discussions, debate, and speech presentations.

Supplies:

DUE by Monday 8/26/13:

- Independent reading book (must be in backpack at all times)
- English binder
- Six (6) dividers titled as follows:
 - Roots & Spelling
 - Grammar
 - Nonfiction Texts
 - Essays/Writing
 - Indie Reading
 - Miscellaneous
- Package of sheet protectors (to use in binder for important documents)
- Dry erase pen
- Post-its (2 or 3 inch, any color)
- Two purple pens for correcting and editing
- Index cards (to make flashcards for studying)
- Pens and pencils
- High-lighters
- Flash drive (may use one you already have)
- Loose-leaf binder paper
- Earbuds

Textbooks and Novels:

Literature: Timeless Voices, Timeless Themes, Prentice Hall
The Outsiders by S.E. Hinton
Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry by Mildred Taylor

Grading:

Grading will be on a point system. Your quarter grade will be based on a running total. The larger the assignment, the more points it will be worth.

Please see me should you ever have a question regarding your grade. I am more than happy to explain a grade to you or talk about ways to improve your grade. Remember, open and honest communication is the key to a successful relationship with your teachers.

Homework & Late Work:

All assignments are due at the beginning of the period on the date due unless otherwise noted by Mrs. Landry. Work submitted late will not receive full credit and will be scored according to the Fisher Homework Policy.

Category One Assignments: These are generally of a lower point value and are needed for full participation and/or assessment on the due date. Late Category One Assignments can receive a maximum of 50 percent credit. A late pass may be used once per quarter to turn in a completed Category One Assignment by the next class meeting for potential full credit.

Category Two Assignments: These are generally of a greater point value and have extended timelines for completion (such as essays and projects). Late Category Two Assignments will be reduced one letter grade (10%) of earned credit for every day late.

Homework will be assigned regularly and will be written on the whiteboard in class. Students are expected to record the homework in their planners and should not rely solely on the website for information. I will also do my absolute best to post homework daily on my class website.

Make-Up Work:

In the event of an EXCUSED absence it is the STUDENT'S responsibility, not the teacher's, to find out what assignments were missed during the absence. The most valuable resource will be my class website. The student should speak with Mrs. Landry about how to make up the work in accordance with Fisher's policy.

Attendance/Tardy Policy:

Consistent attendance is necessary to be successful in this class. Students must be seated in class ready to begin work when the bell rings.

Acceptable Work:

When submitting an assignment (essay, homework, project, etc.) that has been typed using a word processing program, the assignment **MUST** meet MLA (Modern Language Association) formatting requirements. Each student will be given MLA formatting guidelines to file in her English binder. Assignments not submitted following the MLA rules for heading and formatting will not be accepted and may be considered late when turned-in corrected.

All submitted work must also meet the following qualifications:

- Acceptable fonts: Times New Roman size 12 or Calibri size 11. These are the **ONLY** two acceptable fonts.
- Submitted as a hard copy. Assignments will **NOT** be accepted via email or flash drives unless otherwise noted by Mrs. Landry. If a student attempts to submit an assignment in this format he/she will be asked to print the document on his/her **OWN** time and then bring in the printed document. The assignment will then be considered late.
- Handwritten work: must be legible and written neatly enough to read in **BLUE** or **BLACK** ink **ONLY**. Only standard binder paper will be accepted. Paper with torn or frayed edges will not be accepted.

Classroom Conduct

Below are examples of expected classroom behavior. Classroom expectations are also posted on the classroom wall:

- 1) **Be Respectful.** Treat everything and everybody with care. Use positive language to encourage one another.
- 2) **Be Responsible.** Come to class prepared to work, think, participate and share your ideas with all necessary materials.
- 3) **Be a Good Citizen.** Do the right thing! Contribute to the positive climate of our classroom, school, and community. Act with integrity, honesty, and contribute to equality and social justice. Make a difference!

Consequences:

First Time: Warning, either verbal or visual from teacher
Second Time: See you after school (may also occur as a first time consequence if student is talking when requested no to do so).

Third Time: Send out, Referral, Parent/Teacher conference
Severe offenses are immediately referred to administration per the Fisher Middle School Rules.

Independent Reading:

The single most important predictor of academic success is the amount of time students spend reading books. People who read for pleasure are able to make connections to the world around them and eventually grow to understand themselves on levels they never thought possible. For this reason, students will be required to read a total of 8 independent books this year (an average of 2 per quarter).

Students are expected to have a book of choice for reading in class at all times. Textbooks and magazines are not appropriate material because the goal of the independent reading philosophy is to inspire a love of pleasurable, self-chosen literature that allows students to leave the “real world” and escape to the fantasy world in their book. Any student who is unprepared for independent reading time in class without their book will receive a consequence.

Please review the “Expectations for Independent Reading” document with your parents so as to be aware of what I expect of you and what you can expect from our class this year when it comes to reading for pleasure.

Mrs. Acosta Landry’s Contact Information:

Email: slandry@lgusd.k12.ca.us

Phone: (408) 335-2000 ext. 2326

Website: www.rjfisher.lgusd.k12.ca.us/staff/slandry/

Your success is important to me and I look forward to working with you to improve your reading and writing skills this year. My goal is to prepare you for high school and life beyond. I promise to dedicate myself to this mission.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Sarah Acosta Landry

Expectations for Independent Reading

- Read as much as you can, as joyfully as you can.
- Read at home for at least a half hour every day, seven days a week.
- Find books, authors, subjects, themes, and genres that matter to you, your life, who you are now, and who you might become.
- Try new books, authors, subjects, purposes, and genres. Expand your knowledge, your experience, and your appreciation of literature.
- On the “Someday Page” under the “Indie Reading” divider in your binder, keep a running list of the titles and authors you’d like to try, especially in response to booktalks and recommendations from your peers and me.
- On the “Reading Record” page of your binder, record each book you begin, abandon, and finish.
- Complete a total of three (3) booktalks this year for three different books you’ve recently completed and would like to recommend to your peers.
- Complete a total of three (3) written “It Says, I Say, & So…” analyses for three different books you’ve recently read. (These titles must be different from any and all of the titles for your booktalks.) The “It Says, I Say, and So…” assignment is an important part of your reading and writing grade in our class and should demonstrate your ability to think critically about literature. Use the writing to go back inside your book and consider what you read—how the book made you think and feel, what the author did, what worked, and what needs more work. These assignments are also an important tool in preparing you for expository and argumentative writing for high school.
- Develop and articulate your own criteria for selecting and abandoning books.
- Each quarter, establish and work toward significant goals for yourself as a reader.
- Take a *deliberate stance* (Harwayne, 1992) toward engaging and responding with your whole heart and mind. Enter the reading zone and stretch your imagination, live other lives and learn about your own, find prose so well written it knocks you out, experience and understand problems and feelings you might never know, find stories that make you happy and feed your soul, consider why authors have written what they have, ask questions, escape, think, travel, ponder, laugh, cry, love, and grow up.
- ****Note:** Books must be a minimum of 150 pages to count as a single book. Books of 400 pages or more may count as two.

GOAL: READ A MINIMUM OF 8 INDEPENDENT BOOKS THIS YEAR AND TRY FOR EVEN MORE ☺

**“A capacity and taste for reading gives access to whatever has already been discovered by others.”
- Abraham Lincoln**

Student Name: _____

Student Expectation and Acknowledgement

I have read, discussed, and understood the information presented in this syllabus for Mrs. Landry's English Course. I assume responsibility for my actions, my work, and my grade. I understand that the degree of my success is my choice and I accept all results—whether good or bad—which are the outcome of my choices.

Student Name:

Student Signature:

_____ Date: _____

Parent/Guardian Name:

Parent/Guardian Signature:

_____ Date: _____

Communication Information

Communication between parent, teacher, and student is crucial to your child's success. As students continue to mature this year, they will be encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning and contact me themselves either before or after school or by email regarding questions and points of clarification. The goal is for students to become the conductors of their own learning experience, which makes it critical for your child to advocate for himself/herself. Nonetheless, there may be times when direct communication between the teacher and parent is vital. Your child's education is my top priority. Please fill out the following information and return it to school so that we may be able to effectively communicate.

Parent/Guardian #1:

Parent/Guardian #2

Name:

Name:

Home ph. #: _____

Home ph. #: _____

Cell ph. #: _____

Cell ph. #: _____

Work ph. #: _____

Work ph. #: _____

Email Address:

Email Address:
