

# GRADE 8 LANGUAGE ARTS

*Team 8C – Mrs. Kathy Nagaji*

English classes in Grade 8 address the Common Core State Standards as well as the Hawaii Content and Performance Standards in Language Arts. This includes standards for reading, writing, and oral communication (speaking and listening).

## READING:

Moanalua Middle School uses the state approved *McDougall Littell Literature Anthology*. This textbook is filled with a variety of high quality literature and will be used to introduce and familiarize students with the reading strategies necessary to construct meaning from text. In addition, students read classroom novels and are also required to read a self-selected book independently on a **daily** basis (SURF = Sustained Uninterrupted Reading for Fun).

Students will be required to read one book per month. Most titles will be students' choice, but should meet these criteria:

1. Books should be 150+ pages long (exceptions will be made according to individual needs)
2. Books from a genre that you don't usually read (see list)
3. Books should be NEW to the student (please do not use books you have already read)
4. Books that have been made into movies are not allowed, even if the student has not seen the movie

To reinforce and provide practice in reading **nonfiction text**, as well as practicing test taking skills, students will be assigned online articles to read at a website used school-wide called **Teen Biz (Achieve 3000)**. Students are pre-assessed to determine their reading levels, and any articles assigned by their teachers will be delivered to your child at his/her readability level. A short, multiple-choice activity will measure students' comprehension of the article, and these scores will be counted as graded assignments. Students are always welcomed to do other articles of their choice to help hone their skills.

## WRITING:

**6 Trait Writing** rubrics are used to develop students' writing skills in six different areas (ideas, voice, organization, word choice, sentence fluency, and conventions). In addition, **Thinking Maps** (Circle maps, Bubble maps, Double-Bubble maps, Tree maps, Flow maps, Brace maps, Multi-flow maps, Bridge maps) are integrated into lessons to make student thinking visible. The maps help students to organize their thoughts to communicate them more clearly through writing. This year there will be an added emphasis on **argumentative writing** as it will be one of the writing genres that will be required of students in the years to come. This genre includes persuasive and analytical essays. Other types of writing include narrative, informative/explanatory essays, poetry, response to literature citing evidence, making personal connections, summaries, annotating text, and notetaking.

**The TEAM BLOG** will also be used as a tool to practice the conventions of writing (grammar, punctuation, spelling) as well as practice the correct usage of new vocabulary, publishing responses and writing, and responding to the writing of peers. This year, a private **Edublog** will be used for Team 8C students and will only be accessible to our team and their parents. Computers are available for student use before and after school for those students who do not have a computer or internet access at home.

## ORAL COMMUNICATION:

Students will be required to apply their knowledge of verbal and nonverbal language to communicate effectively in various situations: interpersonal, group, and public. This includes class discussions, small group interaction, and presentations. Critical listening is essential to communication and will also be addressed through these activities.

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Opportunities for performance will be provided through role-playing, skits, and video/Powerpoint slideshows. Presentations can also take the form of Author's Chair, small group sharing, and Elbow groups (writing critique groups).

## **HOMEWORK POLICY:**

Homework will be assigned on **most nights**. Students are expected to complete homework independently as assignments are reviewed in class and time is given for students to copy down the assignments in their Planner. They are also given the chance to ask questions. Daily homework assignments are also available on the Moanalua Middle School's website under Team 8C, Language Arts, Mrs. Nagaji: [www.monalumiddle.org](http://www.monalumiddle.org)

## **Late work (same as procedures listed in the Team 8C Handbook):**

Homework that is not turned in on the due date will be subject to the Team 8C Homework Policy, which requires student to complete **a handwritten letter** explaining why the work is late, what will be done to avoid this from occurring again, and be **signed by both student and parent** before the late work will be accepted for grade. The letter should be attached to the late homework.

## **GRADING POLICY:**

Grades are posted through <https://jupitergrades.com> on a regular basis. Students and parents are able to see grades on assignments and tests in English, as well as which assignments are still missing. (See attached letter for login and password).

| <b>GRADING: Based on Common Core State Standards Rubrics</b> |   |    |   |
|--|---|----|---|
| Advanced Proficiency   | 4 | +  | A |
| Proficient   | 3 | √  | B |
| Partially Proficient   | 2 | √- | C |
| Novice   | 1 | Δ  | D |
| No Evidence  | 0 | 0  | F |

Student classwork/homework/tests are graded using a four point number scale to indicate proficiency. At times, symbols are used. Students are welcomed to revise their work and re-submit as their understanding of concepts becomes clearer. Classroom tests may also be re-taken within a given time frame. Letter grades are only used for reporting purposes on quarterly report cards.

**Please Note:** Some assignments will be graded for completion. These assignments include homework assignments for practice or work that needs to be used in class as part of our lesson. For these assignments, students will receive a mark for completion. If you check JupiterGrades, students with PCs will show an "ok" and students with Mac computers will show a check mark (√). If students do not complete these assignments in time for class use, students will receive a zero grade.

Although most of our students make a solid transition to Middle School, and the freedom that comes with it, there are a few for whom report card grades will serve as a wake-up call. This is especially true for those who have not been turning in assignments on a regular basis. Regular visits to the JupiterGrades website will help students to become responsible for their own learning.

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## DISCIPLINE:

Our TRIBES Agreements serve as our behavior compass.

| TRIBES AGREEMENTS                  | INFRACTION   |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Attentive Listening                | Distracting others or self   |
| Mutual Respect                     | Talking when someone else is speaking, laughing at others instead of with others |
| No Put Downs/Appreciations         | Hurting our ears and hearts with hurtful words                                   |
| Right to Participate/Right to Pass | Insubordination  |

Students will be warned once and then receive a recess detention/counseling (10 min.) for the second offense. Parents will be notified via JupiterGrades. If the detention is not paid off within two days, it will turn into a lunch detention.

### Offenses that are not tolerated (no warning given):

- Gum chewing in class
- Inappropriate Language Use (profanity, derogatory terms)
- Put downs (in addition to detention, a sincere accolade or appreciation is made to the victim)
- Plagiarism (results in an "F" grade for the assignment and may not be made up). Parents will be notified via JupiterGrades

## WHAT TO BRING TO CLASS:

Please send your son/daughter to school prepared with the basic supplies:

- Planner (EVERYDAY)
- Loose-leaf lined paper
- Sharpened Pencil/eraser
- Pen (red and blue/black)
- Highlighter
- Composition book (one)
- Flashdrive
- An open mind and a positive attitude
- BRAVERY!

**Each student is expected to have a book to read at all times (free choice, see SURF requirements on page 1 of this syllabus).**

*We are looking forward to teaming with you to help your child meet success as a reader, writer, and communicator!*

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## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

### ***How can I get extra help on an assignment?***

Individual help is available during break, lunch, before and after school. If you would to meet, let your teacher know the day before, or send an e-mail so we can set up a time to meet. Keep in mind that the teachers usually have meetings after school on Wednesday, so that would not be a good day to meet.

### ***What do I do when I first get to your class?***

When you enter the classroom you should:

1. Place your homework in the drawer for your class. Get your journal out.
2. Sit in your assigned seat. Put your backpack on the back of your chair.
3. Begin your journal assignment.

### ***How do I complete my journal writing?***

You will be working on your journal at the beginning of each class. You need to:

1. Write the title at the top center of your journal page.
2. Write the date at the top right of the page.
3. Completely fill in at least half the page for met (3), full page exceeds (4).
4. Write neatly and legibly.

### ***How do we label work we turn in to you?***

1. Write your full name, date, and period at the top right of the page.
2. Write the title at the top center of the page.

### ***What if I need to leave during class time?***

I expect you to take care of your personal responsibilities before or after class. However, I understand that sometimes you may need to leave the classroom. If you do:

1. Fill out your planner pass.
2. Raise your hand and show me your completed Planner pass.
3. Wait for me to sign your Planner and let you know it is okay to leave class.
4. Sign out on our classroom sign out log.

**5. Make a note in your Planner to make up missed class time during break or lunch.**

### ***Can I eat in the classroom?***

Living in Hawaii includes living with bugs, and eating or having food in the classroom will attract them. It's best to keep the food **outside** of the classroom. However, you may bring a water bottle to class with you.

### ***What do I do when I'm absent? CHECK the school website: Moanaluumiddle.org***

1. **Check the school website** for homework assignments as I update it daily. Any handouts will be attached to the website so you can print them out at home. **You are responsible for work that was covered when you were absent.**
2. Come to see me as soon as you return to class to get any additional handouts/instructions.
3. Turn in any work that was due while you were absent. No homework note is needed if the assignments are turned in within two days of your return.
4. If you know that you will be out for a prolonged absence, please let me know in advance.

### ***How can I get in contact with the teacher outside of school?***

You can e-mail me directly at: [Kathy\\_Nagaji@notes.k12.hi.us](mailto:Kathy_Nagaji@notes.k12.hi.us)

E-mail can also be sent through JupiterGrades, or the school website links to teacher email addresses.

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Student's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Dear Parents/Guardians,

To better facilitate our communication with each other, please complete and **initial** each of the items below. This form should be returned to school no later than **Friday, August 3, 2012.**

\_\_\_\_\_ I have received and read the **Grade 8 Language Arts Syllabus**

\_\_\_\_\_ I have received and read the **JupiterGrades Login/Password Letter**

Parent Signature (to be kept on file): \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Name (please print): \_\_\_\_\_

Best way to contact parent (**please check the preferred contact in box**):

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Best time to call: \_\_\_\_\_

Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Best time to call: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Best time to call: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Email (please print neatly): \_\_\_\_\_

## COMPUTER at HOME (Please select one)

\_\_\_\_\_ Our child has access to an online computer at home

\_\_\_\_\_ Our child has access to a computer at home but no online service

\_\_\_\_\_ Our child does not have access to a computer at this time

Please Note: There are computers available to students on campus: in the computer lab (before school), and in the classrooms. Students who do not have access at home are welcomed to make arrangements with the teachers to work for longer periods of time after school.