

Eighth Grade English Language Arts (ELA)

Instructor: Betsy Gottschalk

English Language Arts

Texts:

Houghton Mifflin English

Jensen's Vocabulary Frode Jensen

References:

Modern Language Association Handbook

Write Source 2000

Random House Dictionary

Writing: Eighth grade Language Arts students will write in a variety of forms and for a variety of purposes. Students will be writing in other content areas as well as in ELA (Religion, and U.S. History classes). Grades for those papers primarily written for the other classes will also be entered in the English Language Arts section of the student's grade.

At Assumption we use the 6+1 Traits of Writing (ideas, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency, conventions, plus publishing) and include all parts of the writing process from initial concept to a published piece.

Vocabulary: Eighth grade students will continue to learn vocabulary roots and affixes from Latin and Greek.

Grammar and Editing: Eighth grade students use standard English grammar and editing.

Literature

A. Independent Reading:

1. Eighth graders are required to read 250 pages per week. Literary or informational texts are both acceptable. This can include Literature Circle books as well as the books I read aloud to students.
2. Each student needs to keep track of the books read by listing the title, author, number of pages, and the dates begun and completed. He or she will mark this in a reading log when starting each new book.
3. While reading a book, each student needs to report her or his personal response to the book each week. This will occur in these ways:
 - a. Alternate week schedules:

- i. Students will meet in a group to discuss their reading.
- ii. Students will write a letter about the book (if he/she is currently reading it) **or** create a culminating project about the book (if she/he has completed the book). Some suggestions for culminating projects are:
 - **Posters:** They need to be either on 8 1/2 x 11 or 12x18 paper. They need to include the title, author, number of pages in the book, an illustration of part of the book, and a quote or a review (of at least a paragraph in length) which relates to the image.
 - **Dioramas and mobiles:** They need to follow the poster informational content.
 - **Book Reports:** They need to be at least 250 words in length and written in the first person. Take the stance of a character in the book-either animate or inanimate-and tell the story from that character's point of view.

B. Literature Circles (Book Clubs)

Literature circle sessions are a chance to discuss books in depth. The Literature Circle group will gather at least once per week during the time they are reading to discuss the book. Each student will be responsible to read the section of the book, and come with written information on sticky notes in the book on the page referenced and evidence from the text written in a small notebook.

C. Read-aloud

I will read books and poetry aloud to you. Lucky you!

Extra Credit: Read more than required!