

## **MIDDLE SCHOOL ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS – OVERVIEW**

### **Language Arts/Literature Enrichment 5**

This reading/language arts course is a fully integrated literature-based program. Students use an instructional text, the anthology, and read a variety of pieces which include short stories, poetry, drama and non-fiction. Novels, newspapers, periodicals and non-print media are also used. Specific literary terms and vocabulary are addressed within the context of their reading. Students are taught to be strategic readers and encouraged to read for different purposes. Activities include sharing and talking about books and responding to information.

Students engage in the writing process, and special emphasis is given to answering open response questions in preparation for the MCAS test. Much of the writing focuses on classroom readings, and students also write several types of essays throughout the year. Grammar, usage, mechanics and spelling are taught in connection with the writing. All students have a writing portfolio, and these records are passed on to grade 6 teachers.

This program provides structure, a community learning experience, and support for **all** students - strong independent readers, students who are working towards independence, and students who still require support.

### **Language Arts/Literature Enrichment 6**

This reading/language arts course is a fully integrated literature-based program where reading, writing, speaking and listening are taught. Students use an instructional text, the anthology, and read a variety of pieces which include short stories, poetry, drama and non-fiction. Novels, newspapers, periodicals and non-print media are also used. Specific literary terms and vocabulary are addressed within the context of their reading. Students are taught to be strategic readers and encouraged to read for different purposes. Activities include sharing and talking about books and responding to information. Students are required to participate in the summer reading program.

Students engage in the writing process, and special emphasis is given to answering open response questions in preparation for the MCAS test. Much of the writing focuses on classroom readings, and students write several types of essays in response to the literature. Grammar, usage, mechanics and spelling are taught in connection with the writing. In addition, students may experience journal and diary writing and other free writing opportunities. Creative writing in prose, poetry, drama, and writing for fun are other alternatives students may explore. A special project, *I Search*, is assigned in grade 6. Students are taught research and speaking skills and in a culminating event, they present the research report to their peers. All students have a writing portfolio, and these records are passed on to grade 7 teachers.

This course is a continuation of the grade 5 program. It provides structure, a community learning experience, and support for **all** students - strong independent readers, students who are working towards independence, and students who still require support.

### **Grade 7 English/Language Arts**

This course is designed to meet the needs of all students. Students read challenging classical and contemporary pieces in an anthology which include short stories, poetry, drama and nonfiction. Novels that appeal to the adolescent are also used. Specific literary terms are taught, and vocabulary is addressed within the context of their reading. Since seventh grade students should not be hindered by problems in reading or basic comprehension, the curriculum often centers on independent study assignments requiring original, logical thinking and an inquiring mind. Students are required to participate in the summer reading program.

Students engage in the writing process and special emphasis is given to answering open response questions, analytical writing and the personal essay which help prepare students for the

MCAS test. Spelling and grammar are taught in connection with the students' writing. Students maintain a classroom writing portfolio in an effort to measure their growth and development in composition. At the end of the year this portfolio is sent to the 8<sup>th</sup> grade English teachers. Speaking skills are addressed through recitation of poetry, reading original writing pieces, and participating in literature circle discussions.

Students are expected to complete much of the work on their own with a minimum of direction, reserving class time for discussion and analysis of topics under scrutiny. Students should expect homework several times per week. Many class lessons will be contingent on homework completion. Therefore, due to the type and amount of work covered, students must exhibit maturity and self-discipline in order to succeed. It is important to note that students need to maintain high grades and meet several other criteria to be placed in English 8 Honors.

### **Grade 8 English/Language Arts - Honors**

The eighth grade English honors program is designed for the highly motivated student who has mastered the basic skills of grammar and composition. Participants should be reading well above grade level and should possess a vocabulary reflective of this acceleration. In addition, students should demonstrate a facility with and a special interest in both language and reading. Since students should have already developed their basic comprehension skills in literature, class time is devoted to analysis of literary works. Students are required to participate in the summer reading program.

Students engage in the writing process and special emphasis is given to answering open response questions, analytical writing and the literary analysis essay, all in preparation for grades 8 and 10 MCAS tests. The honors level moves quickly, deals with more difficult works, and delves more deeply into the writing process. At the end of the year this portfolio is sent to the 9<sup>th</sup> grade English teachers.

Homework is to be expected nightly. It is not uncommon for students to be balancing both long and short range assignments at the same time. Thus, students in this class need to be well-organized and willing to devote the extra time needed.

Criteria for entrance will include such items as the student's language arts portfolio, teacher recommendation, seventh grade performance, former MCAS scores, and a writing assignment completed in a controlled setting. Students successful in the grade 8 honors program will automatically advance to the high school honors English program. Students who, for whatever reason, are not in honors at grade 8 may apply for the grade 9 honors program and criteria for acceptance is listed above.

### **Grade 8 English/Language Arts**

This course continues student development in curriculum areas from grade 7. Students should exhibit an inquiring mind, think logically and creatively, and work well on their own, producing well organized work that is punctual and accurate.

Students read challenging classical and contemporary pieces in an anthology which include short stories, poetry, drama and nonfiction. Novels are also used. Specific literary terms are taught and vocabulary is addressed within the context of their reading. Students are required to participate in the summer reading program.

Students engage in the writing process and special emphasis is given to answering open response questions, analytical writing and the literary analysis essay, all in preparation for grades 8 and 10 MCAS tests. Spelling and grammar are taught in connection with the students' writing. The students maintain a portfolio in an effort to measure growth and development. At the end of the year this portfolio is sent to the grade 9 English teachers.

Speaking skills are addressed through recitation of poetry, reading original writing pieces, participating in literature circle and classroom discussions, performing scenes from plays, and presenting projects to the class. Teachers employ a variety of assessments to monitor student growth and development.

Students should expect homework nightly. Many class lessons will be contingent on homework completion and therefore, students must exhibit maturity and self-discipline in order to keep up with classroom discussions. To be considered for grade 9 honors English, students must take an honors exam and meet several other criteria.