

8th Grade English 2017-2018
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Course Goal: The eighth grade core English course is designed to help students master skills in diverse areas such as: text-analysis of fiction and non-fiction genres, active reading and comprehension strategies, vocabulary acquisition and usage, proper grammar and mechanics usage, visual communication analysis, multi-media development, critical thinking and logical argumentation, effective presentation and persuasive techniques, efficient writing techniques, and quality research methods in preparation for their freshman year of high school. I look forward to working with your students to help them achieve their very best!

Course content will be presented through textbook readings, lectures, class discussions and individual study in the form of projects. Students should pay close attention and actively participate by answering questions, taking notes during class, and completing written assignments to the best of their abilities.

Student grades are comprised of scores earned for homework assignments, class work, projects, tests and performance assessments. To earn full credit on homework assignments, students must complete the task neatly, submit it on the due date and have the assignment written down in their assignment books. This will help students become more responsible and organized at this critical age. Parents should check the assignment books regularly to make sure students are completing their work. Parents and students should also use ParentsWeb as a means to check current class grades, assignments, and other information. Discipline procedures and homework policies can be found in the Parent/Student Handbook.

Required Materials: Students will be issued *Holt McDougal Literature 8 (red hardcover)*. Students should come prepared to class every day with their textbooks, assignment books, black or blue pens or pencils, a green folder, and a three-subject composition notebook. A single subject will be used in class for journals. Chromebooks will be provided.

Other Books: *Sadlier-Oxford Vocabulary Workshop Level C* – (orange workbook); *Writer’s Choice textbook and Grammar and Language Handbook* (Green).

Monthly Focus / Assessments: Each week students will utilize revision and editing skills with daily grammar exercises and write 1-2 journals a week for class and homework. Vocabulary units are covered over a two week period: spelling tests are Fridays of the first week and vocabulary tests are Fridays of the second week. Regular months include a focus on reading and literary analysis the first week, grammar the second week, and writing 3-5 paragraph essay formats the third week. The fourth week is used to assess monthly skill-sets, provide time for AR and mini-research projects, and extend revision and editing practice. One to two online IXL grammar and writing quizzes may be given for weekly or monthly homework for enrichment and remediation as needed. Students are required to work on a given skill for 20-30 minutes or until they reach 100%. No grade below 80 will be accepted on IXL tests. Time, accuracy, and number of questions completed will be monitored by the teacher.

- **IXL assignments** will be counted as either a quiz grade or homework grade (determined by the teacher) using the following scale:

91% - 100% on IXL = 100 in the grade book

80% - 90% on IXL = 95 in the grade book

Less than 80% = students must see the teacher for a re-teaching session, then redo the IXL assignment during enrichment or recess

Exams: Midterms occur in December and finals in May. Both exams count for 20% of the respective semester grades. We proctor a timed, hand-written five paragraph essay assessment in April for Knoxville Catholic High. Eighth graders also will participate in an annual essay contest at the end of the year offered by the Paulist Fathers.

Independent Reading: One of the best ways for students to achieve success in any subject area and improve vocabulary acquisition, writing skills, and reading comprehension is to read regularly on their own for at least 30 minutes a day. Each student should carry a personal book of his or her choice to classes every day. STAR reading benchmarks are given three times a year (Aug/Jan/May) which help provide a snapshot of student strengths and goals. Accelerated Reader will be assessed as two grades for Literature/Library class and English: average of quiz grades and total points.

Outline of Content:

First Quarter

Daily Revision & Editing
Weekly Journals
Responses to literature
SAT-prep Vocabulary
Descriptive, Creative, & Narrative
Short stories and plays
Grade level grammar

Third Quarter

Daily Revision & Editing
Weekly Journals
Responses to literature
SAT-prep Vocabulary
Persuasive & Technical writing
Continued fiction, non-fiction, poetry
Grade level grammar

Second Quarter

Daily Revision & Editing
Weekly Journals
Responses to literature
SAT-prep Vocabulary
Expository & Persuasive writing
Fiction, plays, novellas
Grade level grammar

Fourth Quarter

Daily Revision & Editing
Weekly Journals
Responses to literature
SAT-prep Vocabulary
Persuasive & Argumentative writing, debate
Research projects
Drama, fiction
Grade level grammar

Links

Daily Middle School Homework Board: <http://sjsmiddleschool.weebly.com/homework.html>

SJS Middle School English Resources Page: <http://sjsmiddleschool.weebly.com/language-arts.html>

Holt McDougal Online Textbook & Resources: <http://my.hrw.com/>

SJS Library Page: <http://sjsknoxlibrary.weebly.com/>

Vocabulary Words Online: http://www.sadlier-oxford.com/vocabulary/levels_a2h.cfm?sp=student

IXL: <https://www.ixl.com/ela/>

Joe Aboumoussa, Middle School Religion and English, 8th Grade Homeroom, Video Production & Social Media

Mr. Aboumoussa is a professionally licensed teacher and holds a B.A. in English Language and Literature with a minor in Cinema Studies from Syracuse University, a graduate certification in Secondary Education and Teaching from Lincoln Memorial University, and a professional certification in Religion from Aquinas College & the Diocese of Knoxville. He has twelve years teaching experience and begins his tenth year here at St. Joseph School. Mr. Aboumoussa also serves as a member of the RCIA team and Pastoral Council at Immaculate Conception Parish where he and his family are members. His wife, Amy, works for the Department of Human Services, and they have a beautiful seven-year-old, Nathaniel, "Nate", who is the joy of their lives.