**Grade 7 Core English, 2019-20**

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Hello students and parents! Welcome to another fun and interesting year at Ashbrook! I am very excited and motivated about our study of Language Arts/English. In this course *we will read, we will write, we will talk, and we will learn*.

In 7th grade we will think critically about a variety of themes. We’ll achieve this by reading novels, plays, short stories, poems, newspaper articles, and non-fiction pieces, by watching films, by having discussions, and by expressing our thoughts in written and verbal form. **This year we will focus on human rights, animal rights, the environment, identity, and social justice in the vast majority of our literature study and writing. The beginning of the year will feature an essay assignment titled “This I Believe” which will encourage students to name and articulate a value that they hold to be true and aim to live.**

We will also improve our grammar, speaking skills, vocabulary acquisition, understanding of literary devices, oral presentation style, reading levels, writing abilities, and more! We will pursue organized note-taking and notebook organization, handing work in on time, learning MLA style for citations, and having being effective communicators. Our goals and objectives will draw on the Common Core Standards adopted by Oregon, but will also be broader and more reflective of the students’ interests and areas of strengths and areas that need improvement. To become acquainted with the Oregon ELA standards, visit:<http://www.corestandards.org/wp-content/uploads/ELA_Standards1.pdf> and scroll down to page 34 for grades 6-12. Note that our school uses standards as a guideline for responsible and informed teaching, but we also have the freedom to adapt to our needs. Some of the standards will have more emphasis than others in my classroom, based on our school’s mission and my own pedagogical emphases.

\*My preferred salutation(s) is Ms. or Dr. (not Mrs. or surname only).

**Materials:**

Note: *I do not let students go to their lockers to get materials that should have been brought to class.* It is a safety issue and getting organized is a worthy goal. Students have to borrow or otherwise make do when they’ve forgotten materials. Assignments written in highlighter or red pen will not be graded.

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| 1 spiral English notebook (provided) | -bring this to class every day  -ONLY English should be included, since I collect them from time to time |
| Pencils, erasers, and pens (provided at the beginning of each term) | -bring this to class every day |
| Textbooks and Vocab books (8th-grade level Prentice Hall *Literature*  and Wordly Wise 3000, 4th edition, level 8, provided)  \*at times I will use “they” rather than “he/she” for singular to promote non-binary language, as recommended by the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) | -these stay with the student in their\* binder  -whole-class novels and lit. circle novels are numbered; you are responsible for your number. -individual books may be signed out with our classroom library sign-out sheet for approximately 3 weeks.  -please care for all books; wear and tear really adds up over time and books fall apart! |
| -miscellaneous handouts | -one hard copy will be given to each student; if lost, a student must borrow from a peer, or print out at home from the website IF it’s posted; I am trying to vastly reduce paper use |
| Novels and various classroom library books | -these stay with the student in their binder  -whole-class novels and lit. circle novels are numbered; you are responsible for your number. -individual books may be signed out with our classroom library sign-out sheet for approximately 3weeks.  -please care for all books; wear and tear really adds up over time and books fall apart! |

**Grading breakdown**

The below categories use *averages in those areas*, not an accumulation of points.

The MS grading scale is A= 90 or higher, B=80-89, C= 70=79, D= 60-69, F=59 or lower

Scores and/or letter grades will be posted on MSP in timely manner, generally within one week. I’d suggest looking at MSP once a week, perhaps on Thursdays so that Friday can be used to ask teachers for clarification if needed and the weekend used to catch up. Please note that it takes multiple grade postings in each category to accurately reflect overall achievement. (My class uses weighted categories.) I try to annotate scores when explanations are needed.

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| **Writing**  Informal and formal writing opportunities which may be essays, stories, quickwrites, journals, reports, timed responses, reviews, etc.  We will focus on the 6 traits (organization, ideas, voice, conventions, sentence fluency, and word choice) and 4 writing modes (Narrative, Imaginative, Persuasive, Expository). The expectations of quantity grow with each grade level, i.e. 8th graders write the most overall. | 25% |
| **Reading**  Quizzes on reading, keeping to schedule (when appropriate), in-class sustained reading, independent reading units, etc.  \*Note that due to the nature of this subject, some quizzes may have points that are categorized as writing and reading both. | 25% |
| **Projects and Presentations**  Possible projects include research oriented, creative, collaborative, and individual. Emphasis on the content, not artistic merit. Presentation may be formal, informal, memorized or not, individual or group, etc. | 20% |
| **Grammar and Vocabulary**  Exercises, quizzes, grammar-specific writing assignments, application to writing assignments and verbal usage. | 20% |
| **Participation and Class Contributions**  Joining in to ask and answer questions, being prepared, engagement in class endeavors. This does NOT include citizenship, which has a separate grading scheme of N (needs improvement), S (satisfactory), and O (outstanding). | 10% |

**Communication**

Students are always encouraged to inquire about individual scores on assignments rather than parents. This should happen before class (not as the bell is ringing), as class is ending, during passing time, or by email. In 7th grade I expect most students at most times to communicate with me directly. It’s within reason for parents to also make inquiries. However, by 8th grade I would like to see 99% of communication about class work and grades to take place directly between me and the students. Anything concerning bigger-picture issues or along along behavioral lines I encourage parents to communicate about, but again, if possible, a direct conversation between the student and me is best, with follow up between parents and me. Encourage your student to talk to me and I will also remind them they can always approach me. If your child does not have an email account, please consider letting them use yours to write me.

**Homework**

Please see the family handbook for general guidelines (p.36-37). For English in 2019-20, I plan to minimize homework to the extent possible. The vast majority of what we need to achieve for high school readiness can be achieved during class hours. I plan to strive for ample preparation time in class for projects, papers, and readings. However, when we are in the midst of a literature unit, there will likely be some additional reading nightly. Note also that some fluctuations are natural to this subject, particularly before a paper or project is due, or if we are reading a lengthy novel. (Papers and novels are part of high school reality.) Please get in touch if the homework load specific to English is feeling too light or too heavy, because we can come up with flexible solutions! Also note that I expect students to *use their class time diligently* to minimize left over work for their evening hours.

\*The 7th grade designated assessment day is Tuesday, which I will try to adhere to as long as it makes reasonable sense.

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| **Grade 7 Core English**  (this list is representative, but not an exhaustive or unchangeable) |
| ***NOVELS***  *The Call of the Wild* by Jack London  *The Giver* (and the following three related novels) by Lois Lowry  *House of the Scorpion* by Nancy Farmer  *Fahrenheit 451*  by Ray Bradbury  **Literature circles choices** such as: *Refugee* by Alan Gratz, *The Sun is Also a Star* by Nicola Yoon, *Out of My Mind* by Sharon Draper,  *I am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter* by Erika L. Sánchez,  **Independent novel choices:** approved by teacher  ***NON-FICTION***  *Diary of a Young Girl* by Anne Frank  *The Soul of an Octopus* by Sy Montgomery |
| ***POETRY***  Various collections and poems by Kwame Alexander, Maya Angelou, Robert Frost |
| ***STORIES***  “When Mr. Pirzada Came to Dine,” by Jumpa Lahiri; “The Lottery” by Shirley Jackson; “To Build a Fire” by Jack London, and others! |
| ***DRAMA***  A play TBD. At the very least, “A Midsummer Night’s Dream” in the Shakespeare elective, which is only 7s. |
| ***FILM***  “White Fang” and others as they relate to our studies |

Regarding attendance, late work, plagiarism and/or academic dishonesty, we will follow the Family Handbook.

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I have read and understand the syllabus :) Sign and print please, then return to Ms. Gottlieb.

Student: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Parent: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_