

English 8 Syllabus

Grade Level 8 Type of Course (AP, Honors, or General) General

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| <b>Office</b>     | Room 26  |                     | *Other times are available by appointment  |

**Description:**

The curriculum consists of several interwoven strands: literary analysis, grammar and composition, reading, and vocabulary. As they read varied works of literature, students will discover literary elements and devices that will deepen their understanding of what they read while preparing them for Upper School coursework. At the same time, new vocabulary is introduced and highlighted within the selections. Constant attention to grammar will enhance students' writing mechanics while laying solid foundations for both Upper School English and foreign language study. Students practice writing regularly, critique and correct their writing periodically, and receive expert coaching in developing and expressing their ideas. Additionally, each student will strengthen reading comprehension at his or her reading level through the Accelerated Reader program. Students will sharpen their critical thinking skills not only through reading and writing practice, but also through frequent class discussions. As the year concludes, diligent students have honed their five-paragraph essay skills considerably, showing visible - and sometimes dramatic - improvement in both content and mechanics of their writing.

**Class Goals:**

**Academic Preparation:** Fundamentally, students must leave this course with a mastery of basic grammar and its application to their writing mechanics. They must also acquire a working knowledge of basic literary elements and devices which they will encounter in Upper School literature. In addition, they will continue building their vocabularies not only in literary contexts, but also through limited practice with analogies. Finally, they must be thoroughly familiar with the M.L.A. (and C.A.T.S.) guidelines which govern the writing of papers at B.G.A. and at most universities.

**Intellectual Development:** Students will learn to articulate and support a thesis, not only in writing but also orally. In the process, they will separate facts from opinions and relevant information from irrelevant information. As they progress, they will also learn to organize their ideas: to draw general conclusions from specific observations and to sequence their ideas for maximum effectiveness in presentation. Finally, students will come to understand plagiarism as they learn how to cite others' ideas.

**Behavioral Development:** First, students will learn to participate in respectful and constructive class discussions, building on other students' ideas when possible but also challenging them where appropriate. They must also learn to exercise a high degree of responsibility for their own work while meeting many simultaneous short and long-term commitments, from daily homework to papers to quarterly A.R. projects

**Social/Affective Development:** From both literary study and class discussions, students will learn to recognize and respect a well-supported argument, even if it diverges from their own opinions. From the study of To Kill a Mockingbird, The Diary of Anne Frank, and Night, students will come to realize the dangers of prejudging others and the cruelty that can follow such assumptions. Students who strive to meet the expectations outlined above will also gain increased confidence in their developing abilities.

**Necessary Resources:**

**Texts**

*Elements of Literature Second Course.* Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 2007.

*Night*

*To Kill a Mockingbird*

*Merchant of Venice*

**Materials**

Ruled notebook or loose leaf paper

Composition books

Pen or pencil

Dictionary

**Grading Formula:**

An English class actually covers many different subjects, including grammar, literature, vocabulary, and writing. Keeping up in all of these areas requires a consistent daily effort, as reflected in the homework (15%) and quiz (25%) grades. As they progress, students must not only demonstrate mastery of the material itself (tests: 35%), but must also apply it to improving their writing (papers: 25%).

**Homework (15%):**

We normally have homework every night in order to practice what students are learning in class. It is due at the beginning of class the next day.

**Quizzes (25%):**

When given, quizzes will be in one of two formats: 25-point pop-quizzes and 100 point quizzes. Pop-quizzes - students will generally have a pop-quiz every day. The pop-quiz will have around 5 questions, be taken at the beginning of class, and help keep us honest and diligent in class participation and homework.

Full-quizzes - worth 100 points, full-quizzes will cover several pop-quizzes' worth of material. Students will be given fair warning ahead of time so that they can be as prepared as possible.

**Tests (35%)**

We will generally have a test every one or two chapters (approximately every 2-3 weeks). Review sheets will be given two days before the test and should be used as a supplement to help students study.

Note: Accelerated Reader and memory work also count as test grades.

**Accelerated Reader:**

Each fall, every student is tested to determine his or her reading level. 8th grade students are required

to read and take quizzes on two A.R. books\* at or above their reading level. These two books must total at least fifteen points. The average of the quizzes counts as a test grade. In addition, students compose at least one paper over one or both of the books, which will count as a paper grade.

\* A.R. reading is independent reading. Students may NOT receive A.R. credit for a book being read for English or for any other class without special prior permission from the teacher. If a student wishes to read a book below his or her reading level, prior teacher permission is required as well.

#### Memory Work:

Memory work is usually assigned once per quarter, at least a week before it is due. It normally counts as a test grade, and is usually graded by the word as students recite it. There is a strict late policy on memory work: Ten points are deducted if the passage is recited later the same day, and no credit is given after that.

#### **Papers (25%):**

Most papers receive two separate grades; one for form and one for content. The most common form mistakes students make are listed in a handout students have in their notebooks. The content grade is determined by a detailed rubric usually passed out in class approximately a week before the paper is due. Students who proofread their papers using these two sources and read their papers aloud often improve their grades dramatically. In preparation for the Upper School, there is also a strict late policy on 8th grade English papers: Ten points are deducted (from BOTH the form and content grades) if the paper is turned in later the same day, and no credit is given after that.

#### Exams:

Exams are not part of the quarter grade. For eighth-graders, exams count 1/4 of the semester grade.

To help students review, a detailed review schedule of homework, quizzes, and possibly tests will be given out one to two weeks before the end of classes. By following this review program, the conscientious student can avoid much last-minute cramming, raising his or her quarter grade while studying for the English exam early.

#### **Academic Expectations:**

All assignments must be completed to the best of your ability. Homework and papers are due at the beginning of the class period. Make-up work is the STUDENT'S responsibility; the teacher WILL NOT remind the student of missed work.

#### **Behavioral Expectations:**

Students are expected to follow all rules stated in the Student Handbook.

#### Classroom Rules

1. Students will be in their seats with materials ready before the bell rings.
2. Students will not eat, drink, or chew gum during class.
3. Students will raise their hand to request permission to speak or leave their seat.
4. Students will listen when someone else is speaking without interrupting.
5. Students will show respect to oneself and others at all times.

\*Extra Help/Assistance is offered 7:45-8:05 A.M. Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. Additional help is available by appointment.