

English Language Arts & History

Ms. Shelby Stringer
sstringer@madisonprep.org

Course Description

James Madison Preparatory School has integrated the English Language Arts (ELA) and History curriculum for the sixth grade. This course offers a foundation for the first step of secondary education. During this year, students will hone their reading, writing, listening and speaking skills. Our school's Code of Conduct is taken seriously. Starting in the sixth grade, we will introduce students to all seven aspects of our code. Thematic units will guide students from the foundations of democracy to critical events in modern American history.

Supplies - DUE MONDAY, AUGUST 15th

If students brings in supplies early, please make sure that names are located on/in the binder and notebook.

- ❖ One 5-Subject, College-Ruled Notebook with at least 200 pages (for History Interactive Notebook)
 - They sell smaller sizes of the notebook. Please make sure to get the full size 11" x 8-1/2".
- ❖ 1 Package of White (lined) Index Cards
- ❖ 1 Package of Colored Index Cards
- ❖ One 1.5 - 2.5 inch binder with three divider tabs
 - Vocabulary, Grammar, and Literature
- ❖ Blank College-Ruled Paper
- ❖ Black/Blue Pens, Pencil with an Eraser that must brought to class each day

Literature

The Lightning Thief by Rick Riordan

Sophia's War: A Tale of the Revolution by Avi

Island of the Blue Dolphins by Scott O'Dell

Number the Stars by Lois Lowry or *the Giver* by Lois Lowry*

The Watsons Go To Birmingham - 1963 by Christopher Paul Curtis

*During our unit on the Holocaust, we will have Literature Groups. In the class, students will read one of the two books. In order for their student to read *the Giver*, parents will have to give written consent. More information will be available when the time comes.

Grammar / Vocabulary / Spelling

Grammar is an oft-overlooked component of English education. This year, students will not only learn the rules, but they will apply their knowledge directly into their writing. Students will complete grammar work almost every day. Students will earn participation points for completing this work. After each unit test, we will send home a checklist that details the student's progress on each skill.

So many English words are derived from Greek and Latin roots. Being able to recognize these roots in unfamiliar words can help students discover the meaning. Each vocabulary lesson will contain around 10 words and a handful

of roots. Students will be responsible for studying these vocabulary words and their spelling at home. In class, we will complete exercises that will aid in vocabulary acquisition. Generally, spelling quizzes will take place on Friday, and the vocabulary quiz we be on the following Tuesday. However, this can change, which is why students are responsible for copying the weekly agenda in their planner. This agenda is also available on my website. After three lessons, students will be tested on vocabulary for those three units.

Penmanship

Scientific studies show that good handwriting leads to stronger academic performance. In today's education system, many students are not even taught cursive as a form of writing. During the beginning of school year, we will learn or re-teach these skills. Cursive writing is a lost art form, and writing in cursive is critical in the development of fine motor skills. Furthermore, cursive writing can help students with learning disabilities, specifically dyslexia. In both English classes in seventh and eighth grade, students must write in cursive on all of their work. To prepare students for this, all vocabulary and grammar work must be completed in cursive to earn credit.

History

Throughout the course of the year, students will create an interactive notebook. An interactive notebook is a place where students can take information and merge it with their own thinking. Interactive notebooks differ from traditional note taking, in that they allow students to stop and interact with the new information and receive feedback from the teacher and classmates about their understanding of the new information, instead of just copying down notes from a book or the board. Interactive notebooks will generally remain in class. Students are strongly discouraged from bringing notebooks home each night, unless they are studying for a test.

Over the course of the year, we will move through the following units:

- Trimester One
 - Ancient Greece
 - Settling in America
- Trimester Two
 - Native Americans in the Southwest in Arizona
 - American Revolution
- Trimester Three
 - WWII in America and the Holocaust
 - Civil Rights in America

Grading

Both English Language Arts and History are determined by points. For example, a spelling quiz is worth ten points and a vocabulary quiz is worth fifteen points. The cumulative vocabulary tests are worth 40 points. Projects can be worth up to 150 points. Apart from participation grades on morning work and class work, students will receive all of their graded work back. If a student wants a general idea of what they have in the class, students can add the total number of points earned by the total number of points assigned.

I also post student grades anonymously in the classroom for students to see. If students want to know more detailed information about their grades (in addition to their grade checks and progress reports), students may attend office hours or schedule a time to meet and discuss their grades. To protect the confidentiality of students, I do not discuss grades during class.

Late Work

Late homework will not be accepted. If absent, students will be given additional time (the number of days absent) to turn in a short-term assignment. A short-term assignment is one that takes less than three days to complete. If an assignment is assigned on Monday and due on Friday, this homework is considered a long-term assignment. Long term assignments will be docked one letter grade for each day late. If a student is absent the day a long term assignment is due, they need to email the teacher documentation of completion to earn credit.

Students are given two late homework passes a trimester. One late homework pass will excuse a short-term assignment. Two late homework passes may be used to turn in a paper a day late. These may not be used for presentations, rough drafts, or creative projects. Late homework passes may be submitted for 1% of extra credit each.

Classroom Policies and Behavior

I expect students to abide by the Code of Conduct when in my classroom. I have follow five P's in my classroom, which are clearly displayed in the classroom.

1. PROMPT

- This means showing up to class on time. This does not mean rushing through the door with seconds to spare every single day. Students enter and exit the classroom quietly. When class starts, students should already be following the directions on the board. No students should be out of their seat at the sound of our class chime.

2. PREPARED

- Students should always have the following supplies: pen, pencil, eraser, college-ruled paper, Language Arts binder and Interactive Notebook. Students need to complete homework every single day. Students who are filling out homework at the start of class will not be given credit. Students must check the board each day and copy down homework into their planners.

3. PRODUCTIVE

- Students must maximize their learning by staying on task and engaging in class discussions. Students must remember to keep questions and comments on task. When lecturing, "when is lunch?" disrupts my train of thought and interferes with the learning of others. If students finish their work, there is always something else to do! Students may visit the classroom library, write scholarship essays, or pull an "I'm Done" stick for an idea of what to do next.

4. POLITE

- Respect others, yourself, and the classroom. There is absolutely **no** talking when someone else has the floor. Raise your hand to be recognized. Follow the hand signal chart to indicate a comment or question, bathroom, etc. When doing independent work, students are free to sharpen pencil their pencils and gather supplies, but all other times students must remain seated unless given permission. At the start and end of class, students must be in their seats. Students may not leave their seat when someone has the floor.

5. POSITIVE

- No whining, complaining, or arguing! Be kind or neutral with everyone. Be patient. Gossip is not tolerated.

If students violate any of these rules they will be given a warning. The second violation will require a behavior reflection. The third violation will result in a lunch detention, referral to Mr. Grant, and/or a Code of Conduct ticket. Students may move to steps two or three at the discretion of teacher; severity and frequency of misbehavior will be taken into account.

Behavior Reflection Sheet

A behavior reflection sheet helps students consider how their actions may have affected themselves, other students, and the teacher. It also requires students to think about why they may have acted out in the way that they did. Were they hungry? Did they receive a bad grade? Did they not sleep a lot last night?

Depending on the severity, behavior reflection sheets may require a parent signature. If students fail to receive a parent signature, students will be given a Code of Conduct ticket.

Classroom Library

During the first couple weeks of school, I will give students an informal reading assessment. As a parent, if you have your student's Accelerated Reader range from a previous school, I would be happy to take that into account. Books in the classroom library are labeled according to difficulty. Students will be given a color of books that are at their level, as well as the color of books that would be a lighter or more challenging read.

Students are required to bring a book to school to read each day. Students are welcome to check out one book from the library at a time, but students are responsible for returning the books in the same condition. Students will be charged for damaged books.

Extra Credit

Each trimester, students have the ability to earn a four percent boost on their final grade. For every book and recommendation form a student completes, one percentage point will be added to their final grade. Student must select books that tie into the units we are studying during that trimester. Students have the option of selecting from the books on a list, or students may find their own books and get my approval. Because the books change each trimester, I will pass out extra credit information in class as well as post it on my webpage.

If selecting your own book for first trimester, please consider that it should have a hero's narrative, relate to Greek and Roman times, or early colonial life in America. When students submit their recommendation, I may or may not ask them basic comprehension questions to ensure that the student read the book.

**Students may not turn in more than two extra credit recommendation forms in one week. During the last three weeks of the trimester, only one form may be turned in per week.

Attendance

When students are absent, they are responsible for completing the work they missed in class. Because vocabulary and grammar units are given out in advance, students must check my web page and complete the pages that they

Behavior Reflection Sheet

Within each box, please write at least one complete sentence. This form must be filled out respectfully and properly. It needs to be signed by Ms. Stringer by the end of the school day. If Ms. Stringer requests a parent signature, students must return completed form with a parent signature by the next day. Not following any of the above directions could result in a lunch detention or a Code of Conduct ticket.

Student Name: _____
 Student Signature: _____
 Date: _____
 Teacher Signature: _____
 Parent Signature Required: YES NO
 Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Reasons for Misbehavior	Description of Action	Consequences of Behavior
1.	Plan for Improvement What will you do differently next time? Why is good behavior important in school?	Describe how your behavior may have affected your classmates.
2.		Describe how your behavior may have affected your teacher.
3.		Describe how your behavior may have affected you and your learning.

missed from class that day. Students are expected to make up tests and quizzes immediately upon return. Students should speak with me when they return from an absence to submit work or receive materials. Students should know exactly what they need based on the detailed agenda posted in class and online. "What did I miss?" should be replaced by, "May I have the work on . . ."

Cheating / Plagiarism

I have a zero tolerance policy for plagiarism. Students should know that copying homework answers or discussing test questions with another class is considered cheating. Students who engage in any form of plagiarism or cheating will be given a "Felony" ticket and be reported directly to Mr. Grant.

Parents/Guardians: Please provide your contact information below and sign indicating you have read over the syllabus.

Students: Please sign the syllabus indicating that you have read and understand the expectations detailed above.

Student Name: _____ **Student Signature:** _____

Parent/Guardian Name: _____ **Email:** _____

Phone Number: _____ **Parent Signature:** _____

Parent/Guardian Name: *(optional)* _____ **Email:** _____