



Year 7/8 Language Arts Syllabus

Unit 1: Personal Stories Students prepare and deliver an oral commentary about four significant items that define them as individuals. Their presentation is delivered using power point as a prompt and they are encouraged to change mood, pace and tone of their delivery to fit the objects chosen. All students will reflect on skills and strategies used and developed.

Unit 2: Poem as Story Students will read a variety of narrative poems, ballads and dramatic monologues from the 12th century to the present day. They will be encouraged to consider structure, rhyme, rhythm, scansion, use of metaphor and simile, and dialogue. Assessment will include performing poems to a younger audience, writing their own pieces, devising a ballad recipe and writing a critical commentary.

Unit 3: Short Story Form Students will identify the key elements of a short story by comparing novel and short story openings. Study will then focus on how an author reveals character and setting in a short story. Finally students will read and discuss *The Gift of the Magi* by O .Henry and *The Necklace* by Guy de Maupassant, before planning and writing a comparison/contrast essay on the two central female characters.

Unit 4: Research Writing Using material from their social studies modules on the American Revolution, each student will write a 2/3 page paper on a

significant figure from this era. Sources must include: primary sources such as letter ,speeches, or eyewitness reports, and secondary sources such as biographies and histories. Students will be taught to understand available resources, select a topic, write source cards, formulate a thesis statement , create an outline, take notes, write a rough draft integrating evidence and quotation, edit, and prepare a works cited page. Emphasis will be placed on deadlines and independent study.

Unit 5: Media and Drama Scripts. Students will compare the methods used by film and stage directors as they build suspense on screen and stage. Students will begin by analyzing strategies used to raise audience suspense during the final scenes of *Apollo 13* and then look at and employ the strategies a stage director can use in the moments after the murder of Duncan in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. This will form a bridge to our Shakespeare text.

Unit 6: Shakespeare's *Macbeth* A study of this play will focus on the central character and how a director can manipulate audience sympathy for or against him. Our work will involve analyzing contrasting productions, studying Shakespeare's language and performing key scenes. Students will also be encouraged to hone summary skills as we go through each act.

Unit 7:Descriptive Writing Workshop Using poetry and narrative to highlight techniques, students will focus on verbs, adjectives, metaphor, simile and personification as they develop their own descriptive writing. Using photography to help develop ideas, they will write a final piece describing a favorite winter scene with the paragraph structure of three different times of day.

Unit 8: Argument and Persuasion: Using two preliminary texts that explore the question of raising the driving age to 18 in first words and then pictures, the group will explore the elements of an argument and techniques of persuasion.. Next we will explore online material, an article, and use a field trip to explore the value of zoos. Students will use their ideas to construct a full persuasive essay that integrates the argumentative and persuasive techniques they have explored .

Unit 9: Class Novel To Kill A Mockingbird We will focus on the idea of justice and the power of the individual to bring about change. Using reading response journals to inform class discussion, the group will explore themes including the idea of what makes a hero and how Scout, Jem and Atticus embody courage. We will study the language of the novel and the use of idiom and allusion and how these inform character. Finally, we will focus on the character of Scout and why Harper Lee chooses to use her as narrator before developing a five paragraph essay on the device of an unreliable narrator.

Grammar/ Mechanics Teaching will be integrated into the above units and will focus on the following:

- combining clauses into complex sentences, using the comma effectively as a boundary signpost;
- exploring the impact of a variety of sentence structure;
- making good use of the full range of punctuation including colons and semi colons;
- integrating speech, reference and quotation effectively into writing;
- comparing and using different ways of opening, developing, linking and completing paragraphs.

Spelling and Vocabulary Teaching will be both integrated and lesson based and will include:

- experimenting with different ways of learning and remembering difficult spelling;
- drawing on analogies to known words, roots, derivations and word families;
- reviewing and consolidating conventions covered in 6/7 grade to include: correct vowel choices, plurals, suffixes and prefixes, homophones and the use of the apostrophe;.
- securing the spelling and knowledge of literary terms and vocabulary;
- making use of a range of dictionary, thesaurus and spell checker.

