**Ms. McNeeley’s Middle School Language Arts Syllabus**

*“Literature is no one’s private ground, literature is common ground; let us trespass freely and fearlessly and find our own way for ourselves.” –Virginia Woolf*

*“Writing is an exploration. You start from nothing and learn as you go.” –E.L. Doctorow*

Welcome to Middle School Language Arts! The content of this Language Arts course is focused around ideas—thinking and learning through writing, reading, listening, and talking. In this course, you will read and write a lot. Probably more than you are accustomed to; however, my goal this year is to invite you to enjoy reading and writing by pursuing your individual interests and ideas through reading and writing workshops. Workshops are designed to uniquely suit students of every ability level and help them grow and succeed not only as a class but as individual readers and writers. What does this mean? It means that you, as a student and a unique learner, have a choice in what you read and write in this class and will be working very closely with me and your peers as you engage with the writing process. While the bulk of this curriculum is tailored to the individual student, we will also be reading several novels, short stories, poems, and informational texts together as a class. Arizona’s College and Career Ready Standards – English Language Arts 6–8 – are followed and utilized to their fullest potential in this teaching and learning approach.

**SUPPLIES:**

Here is a list of what you will need to bring to class in order to be successful in Language Arts.

* Composition notebook—College rule and at least 100 pages
* 1 inch binder—this binder will be collected every couple of weeks and should only contain items from this class
* 5 labeled dividers—we will label and place these in a specific order in the 1 inch binders in class
* Pencils and pens—I don’t mind if students write in pen if that is their preference; however, a pencil with an eraser is best
* Loose leaf college rule notebook paper—three-hole punched
* Homework folder: If you would rather leave your binder in your locker or in the classroom instead of travelling back and forth with it, I would suggest getting a homework folder to transfer work back and forth between home and class.

**OVERVIEW OF COURSE MATERIAL:**

**INSTRUCTIONAL STRATAGIES**

1. Whole and small group discussions
2. Interactive class activities
3. In-class film analysis/reflection
4. Daily writing
5. In-class reading
6. Group projects/presentations
7. Multimedia projects
8. Independent reading and analysis

**PRIMARY GOALS (Defined by Arizona’s College and Career Ready Standards):**

To enable students to:

* demonstrate independence
* build strong content knowledge
* respond to the varying demands of audience, task, purpose, and discipline
* comprehend as well as critique
* use technology and digital media strategically and capably
* come to understand other perspectives and cultures

**POLICIES, RULES, AND PROCEDURES:**

**Breaking any of the below policies, rules, or procedures can result in points. See the Student Handbook for further regulations and policies.**

Food and Beverages:

* Water bottle with a secure lid
* Only water

Tardiness and Absences:

* Tardiness will be handled in accordance with the school policy and will not be tolerated.
* If you are absent, check the calendar in the back of the room; missed work will be in your class folder found beneath the calendar.

Electronics:

* I don’t want to see any cell phones, Ipods, MP3 players, or any other electronic out during class time. See the Student Handbook for school policy regarding electronics. If I see them, they will be confiscated, turned into the office, and students will receive points.

Classroom Conduct:

* Do not vandalize anything in this classroom. This includes writing on the desks or any other surface in the classroom.
* Be respectful and responsible with the classroom library. You must check books out with me before they leave the classroom, and they should be returned in the same condition you checked them out in.
* Be responsible for your own learning. If you are absent, check the calendar and the absent folder before you come to me with questions. Once you have done this, I will be more than happy to clarify any questions you have.
* In order to earn full participation points for the day, come to class on time, prepared, and with the appropriate course materials. You do not get points just for showing up; be an active presence, even when only listening.
* Part of becoming a good writer is learning to appreciate the ideas and criticisms of others, and in this class our purpose is to come together as a writing community. Remember that you will often be expected to share your writing with others, so avoid writing about topics that you may not be prepared to subject to public scrutiny or topics you feel so strongly about that you are unwilling to listen to perspectives other than your own. This does not mean that you are not entitled to an opinion but that you adopt positions responsibly, contemplating the possible effect on others. Also, please know that if you write about any criminal activity that you are involved in, have been a victim of, or a witness to I am required to report it.

Entering the Classroom:

* Please enter the classroom quietly, sit in your assigned seat, and begin working on your daily writing (bellwork). If you’re not in your seat when the bell rings, you will be marked tardy.

Leaving the Classroom/Hall Passes:

* If you absolutely need to leave class for any reason, you must ask permission. I will then sign your agenda and give you a hall pass. When using passes you are expected to return to class as soon as possible. Students who abuse the pass system will no longer receive passes in my class.

Exiting the Classroom:

* Please stay in your seats until the class is dismissed. Please do NOT line up at the door. I will dismiss you, not the bell.

Late Work:

* All work is to be turned in on the day it is due. One letter grade will be deducted each day it is late.
* If you are absent, for any reason, homework must be turned in within 2 calendar days for full credit.
* Be responsible for your own grade. If you are absent due to a sport or club activity, please plan ahead. Extracurricular activities are not an excuse to fall behind in class.
* Please come see me for any concerns; my goal is to be fair to you, but in order for this to happen, you have to communicate with me.

Extra Credit:

* I usually do not give extra credit opportunities, but in the rare occasion when they present themselves, I will let you know.

Plagiarism and Cheating:

* Plagiarism is a form of theft and will not be tolerated. Plagiarism occurs when a writer uses someone else’s phrasing, sentences, or distinctive insights without giving proper credit. Be sure to acknowledge your sources! In this age of downloadable papers, remember that turning in work that, in whole or in part, is not your own is also plagiarism. When in doubt about quotation, citation, or acknowledgment of sources, ask me. Please also be aware that there are multiple sources available to check for plagiarism, so proper citation of sources is essential! Be proud of your own opinions, thoughts, and work—DO NOT USE SOMEONE ELSES!
	+ Students who plagiarize will receive a zero for the assignment, parents/guardians will be notified, and they will receive points for cheating.
* **Note**: Having a parent, sibling, friend, or anyone else complete work for you is cheating. I encourage you to work with others, to collaborate, and share ideas; but there is a significant difference between getting help and having someone else do your work. Please know that I do compare the work you do in class with the work you do out of class, and I am aware when there are inconsistencies. Be proud of your own accomplishments and abilities. And, remember, mistakes are part of the learning process.

**GRADE BREAKDOWN:**

Students will receive individual assignments that outline texts, goals, major assignments, due dates, and grade details as the quarter progresses. Parents will also have access to these detailed assignment handouts through e-mail or on the class website. Below is the general grade breakdown for the first quarter. Specific handouts will be passed out as they are needed. Again, this is only a general overview; students will receive detailed instructions and guidance for each and every assignment as we progress through the semester.

***Note to Parents/Guardians*:**

Please contact me with any topic, theme, or content concerns you have so that I may take those into consideration when selecting texts for the class. Students will also be selecting novels to read independently; again, if you have concerns about book selections or content please talk to myself and your child so everyone is on the same page.

Students are required to read 30 minutes every school night for homework starting on August 10th. I will be collecting Reading Logs four times a quarter—which are worth points—so please take time to sign your child’s log every night once they have finished reading. Independent Reading is a large part of this year’s curriculum, so it is very important that student complete the nightly reading homework. We will be incorporating what they read independently in in-class assignments and reading conferences, so it will be very apparent if they are not reading at home.

Absolutely feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns that you may have; my door is always open.

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| **First Quarter Grades (1500 points total)****August 3rd- October 2nd**  |
| **Independent Reading Assignment** | 400 points total possible |
| Weekly Reading Letter (8) | 10 points each, 80 points total possible |
| Pages/Rave Assignments | 250 points total possible |
| Reading Log (4)  | 10 points each, 40 points total possible |
| Conferences (2) | 15 points each, 30 points total possible |
| **Weekly Spelling Assignment (8 weeks)** | 30 points a week,240 points total possible |
| Vocabulary Cards (8) | 5 points each, 40 points total possible |
| Sentences (8) | 5 points each, 40 points total possible |
| Spelling x3 (8) | 5 points each, 40 points total possible |
| Spelling Test (8) | 20 points each, 160 points total |
| **Binders (Collected Twice)**  | 180 points each,360 points total possible |
| Daily Writing  | 50 points each, 100 points total possible |
| In-Class Assignments | 100 points each, 200 points total possible |
| Reading Workshop Material | 10 points each, 20 points total possible |
| Writing Workshop Material | 10 points each, 20 points total possible |
| Other Returned Work | 7.5 points each, 15 points total |
| **Quarter Writing Assignment (2 Projects)** | 300 points possible |
| First draft  | 10 points each, 20 points total possible |
| Peer Review  | 15 points each, 30 points total possible |
| Second Draft | 10 points each, 20 points total possible |
| Writing Conference | 15 points each, 30 points total possible |
| Final Submission | 100 points each, 200 points total possible |
| **Participation** | 200 points possible |
| Student’s participation in class and engagement with the curriculum. - Returning the Syllabus and Library Policy slips- Staying on task during class- Coming prepared to class (having a book during SSR)- Participation in class discussions and lessons- Turning in homework- Etc.  |

**Syllabus Signature Sheet**

Students: Please read the course syllabus and share it with your parents. Please return this sheet, signed, by Friday, August 7th.

Parents/Guardians: Please sign below to acknowledge that you have read the Syllabus. Your student will return this portion to me, it is worth 10 points.

I have read the policies and expectations for **Language Arts** and understand them. If I choose not to meet these expectations, I am willing to accept the consequences.

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| Student Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |     | Parent/Guardian Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |   |
| Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |   | Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |   |
| Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |   | Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |   |

Parents/Guardians:

If you have an email address or a phone number you would like me to use to communicate with you about your child's progress, please include it here:

E-Mail:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Comments/Concerns: