**2016-17**

**8th Grade Language Arts**

**Mrs. Young**

Welcome to 8th Grade Language Arts! I am excited to have the opportunity to teach your child this year. The study of English Language Arts is primarily a skills acquisition and application course. There is substantive content, but it is directed at raising the level of comprehension, analytical, collaboration, and communication skills the individual possesses and can use to ensure a deeper understanding of and therefore, more effective participation in the real world. The level of these skills has a profound effect on the personal, social, and economic aspects of one’s life. Your child’s experience will be both challenging and rewarding, and I look forward to helping them develop along the way.

This sheet is intended to provide you with some essential curriculum and contact information. I post all daily assignments and homework on my Google calendar, which can be found on the main page of my website. Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns throughout the year.

**Email:** Catherine.young@gmsdk12.org

**Website:** [http://cyoungresgmsd.weebly.com](http://cyoungresgmsd.weebly.com/)

**School Website:** <http://www.gmsdk12.org/riverdaleelementary_home.aspx>

**School Phone:** 901-756-2300

**Planning Time:** 2:45-3:30

**Textbook:**

None (Students will always be reading an Accelerated Reader (AR) book, and assigned excerpts and novels for class.)

**Grading Scale (Individual Quarter Grades):**

Tests/Projects – 50%

Quizzes/Classwork – 40%

Homework 10%

**Semester and final grades are determined as follows:**

**8th Grade Language Arts**

S1= Q1 is 50%, and Q2 is 50%

S2= Q3 is 50%, and Q4 is 50%

\*\*\*Please check PowerSchool often to keep up with your student’s grades.

**PowerSchool login:**

<https://gmsdk12.powerschool.com/public/home.html>

**Homework:**

* Students are required to read (AR) 20-30 minutes daily. (Total 2 ½ - 3 hours a week)
* Studying will be needed for assessments.
* Minimal homework will be given and is always listed on my Website/Schoology.

**CFA/CSA:**

At least two Common Formative Assessments (CFAs) and two Common Summative Assessments (CSAs) will be administered each Quarter.

* **CFA** data will be recorded in PowerSchool; however, **THIS SCORE IS NOT INCLUDED IN THE AVERAGE.**
* Each **CSA** score will count as a test grade and will be recorded in PowerSchool.

**Course Basics:**

* Accelerated Reader (AR) program or alternative assignment (Quarterly grade)
* Essays and Term Paper
* Vocabulary Program/Assessments
* Literacy, Writing, and Grammar Skills
* Analyze texts
* Debates/Oral Presentations
* Collaborative groups/activities
* Digital assignments

**AR tools:**

**AR book search:** <http://www.arbookfind.com> and <http://www.whatshouldireadnext.com>

**AR Home Connect:** <https://Hosted196.renlearn.com/3474954/HomeConnect>

**Late work:**

Most assignments receive a 10-point deduction for each day late.

**Tutorials:**

I am available most mornings to help students. To ensure my availability, please prearrange a time with me. Note: I never turn away a student in need.

**Course Goals:**

The eighth grade English Language Arts program is a true integration of literacy skills: reading, writing, creating, communicating (listening, speaking, and presenting) and collaborating. In this course, students will learn and practice critical reading, thinking, and writing skills through a variety of genres, including short stories, novels, poetry, non-fiction essays, articles on current events, cultural trends, and/or issues about particular student interests. Students will learn and apply a variety of strategies to uncover hidden layers of meaning in literary texts and to examine sophisticated literary techniques to strengthen their abilities to use language purposefully and skillfully. Acquisition and application of 21st Century Skills, including global awareness and Digital Media Literacy, will be fully integrated into the curriculum.

While the goal is to produce a rigorous program of learning for increased student ability and achievement, the ELA course also strives to provide an engaging and relevant environment that values the individual student both regarding need and interest without regard to present ability or past performance. Our goal is to raise the level of student ability and achievement, period! We begin where the student is and work from there for ALL students. The only failure is not to try or to give up. Through genuine and constant effort, unflappable persistence, and an attitude of resiliency ALL students will find success!

**Other Information:**

1. Please encourage your student to take thorough notes on a daily basis.
2. Please help them develop the habit of recording assignments (long-term and short-term) in agenda pad and making them accountable to these due dates.
3. I will provide methods/suggestions to help stop procrastination habits. Please encourage students to plan accordingly and adhere to the long-term strategies. This will benefit students both academically as well as reduce stress levels.
4. Please help in emphasizing the importance of reading not because of an AR goal/grade. Reading is essential to all academic areas. My one true wish is for all students to develop a passion for reading not just for my class but also for their future. Reading is the key to success!
5. I encourage all students to ask questions if they do not understand a concept or if additional help is needed. The only way we can both be successful is by communicating throughout the year.

Thank you for allowing me to have the opportunity to teach your child this year. I look forward to working with you and your student towards a fruitful and enjoyable eighth-grade experience.