

2011 Eighth Grade ELA Challenge Course Syllabus

1. Teacher Contact Information

Name: Merle Faulk

Room number: G113

Phone number: 355-7959

Email: mfaulk@greenville.k12.sc.us

Website: <http://teachers.greenville.k12.sc.us/sites/mfaulk/default.aspx>

2. Required Textbooks

Prentice Hall Literature, Grade 8 Penguin Edition

Prentice Hall's *Writing and Grammar: Communication in Action*, Silver Level

3. General Course Overview

The Challenge Language Arts curriculum is responsible for covering the same units and standards as the grade-level and advanced eighth grade classes plus a specialized curriculum that is based on the needs of the gifted and talented student. There will be more focus on content advancement, analysis of abstract themes/concepts, development of complex thinking processes, and transformation of learning into creative products. Instructional strategies for the gifted and talented will include inquiry-based learning, group and individual problem solving, and questioning that encourages critical and creative thinking. The pace of the course is accelerated. There may also be more frequent and lengthier writing assignments. The overall expectations for reading outside of class and culminating projects will be more stringent.

In an overall sense, eighth-grade students apply and expand the skills they have acquired in the earlier grades as they become increasingly more sophisticated readers and writers. Both on their own and with their peers, they read a variety of informational **texts** as well as four major types of literary **texts**: **fiction**, literary **nonfiction**, poetry, and **drama**. Adolescents continue to develop their own areas of reading interest. Informational **text** is analyzed for the purpose of discovering how **texts** reflect the backgrounds, attitudes, and beliefs of the authors. Students compare/contrast different perspectives on similar topics or **themes**. They evaluate elements of the **author's craft** (for example, the use of **tone** and **imagery**) to create emotional responses in the reader.

Possessing a rich and authentic vocabulary allows any individual to be a skillful and appreciative reader. In order to read fluently, adolescent students use word analysis and other interpretive strategies. As they learn to master **texts** that use complex vocabulary, they transfer that knowledge of language into their own writing and speaking.

Writing for a variety of purposes and **audiences**, eighth graders increase their control over the written language. They blend elements of description into other modes of written works (for example, narrative, **expository**, and persuasive). They plan, draft, **revise**, **edit**, and publish their writings. They learn to pay careful attention to the **author's craft**—examining the content and development, the organization, the quality of **voice**, and the

use of language conventions in their own writing and the writings of others. They also learn to use a variety of sentence structures to express their thoughts in both oral and written form.

In the eighth grade, students continue to read and write for pleasure and to expand their knowledge. The research process offers them the opportunity to be actively involved in learning about topics that are relevant to their lives and that appeal to their interests. Eighth graders access information in print and electronic forms and use both primary and **secondary sources** as reference materials. They distinguish between their own ideas and the ideas of others in their research and in their writing. Using evidence to support the ideas they examine, they properly credit the work of others by documenting the sources they use. They deliver oral presentations about issues and show evidence to support their views and solutions. Through research, students learn how to access, to analyze, and to evaluate information and thus equip themselves for a lifetime of learning.

4. Learning and Developmental Goals (Standards)

South Carolina state standards for eighth grade English-Language Arts:

- Standard 8-1: The student will read and comprehend a variety of literary texts in print and non-print formats.
- Standard 8-2: The student will read and comprehend a variety of informational texts in print and non-print formats.
- Standard 8-3: The student will use word analysis and vocabulary strategies to read fluently.
- Standard 8-4: The student will create written work that has a clear focus, sufficient detail, coherent organization, effective use of voice, and correct use of the conventions of written Standard American English.
- Standard 8-5: The student will write for a variety of purposes and audiences.
- Standard 8-6: The student will access and use information from a variety of sources.

Additional Gifted and Talented Curriculum Goals

- Goal One: To support mastery of core areas of learning at a pace, complexity, abstractness, and depth appropriate for gifted learners.
- Goal Two: To develop understanding of concepts, themes, and issues which are fundamental to the disciplines as well as society and to develop an appreciation for interrelationships among the disciplines.
- Goal Three: To develop inquiry skills at a level of complexity, abstractness, and depth appropriate for gifted learners.
- Goal Four: To develop the skills of critical thinking, problem solving, and decision-making at a level of complexity, abstractness, and depth appropriate for gifted learners.
- Goal Five: To develop proficiency in communicating abstract and complex ideas, relationships, and issues.

~SC State Department of Education web address that explains ELA standards.

<http://ed.sc.gov/agency/Standards-and-Learning/Academic->

5. Instructional Units and Sequencing

The Greenville County Schools' Eighth Grade ELA Curriculum Map is comprised of 12 units of study. These units of study are created in such a way that they are non-sequential and therefore may be moved about as each educator deems necessary for his or her individual classroom needs. Also, these units focus on the teaching of standards and skills, not particular texts. Therefore, each teacher may choose age level appropriate novels and stories from the district's approved book list that fit the need and interest of his or her classroom. Please note: all Gifted and Talented Curriculum Goals are incorporated into the core units of study.

A. Author's craft in literary nonfiction (memoir)

- Standards 8-1 (all indicators), 8-3.1, 8-3.3, and 8-3.4
- Skills and content taught: narration, imagery, symbolism, irony, figurative language (simile, metaphor, personification, and hyperbole), diction (word choice), point of view, tone, flashback and foreshadowing, allusion, idioms/euphemisms, literary elements (plot, character, setting, theme, and tone)
- Students will read a variety of memoirs included in their Prentice Hall text.

B. Writing Process through Expository Writing

- Standards 8-4 (all indicators), 8-5.2, and 8-5.3
- Skills and content taught: prewriting techniques, adding sentence variety (simple, compound, complex), multi-paragraph with central idea and supporting details, transitions, revision to improve clarity, and proofreading for grammar and mechanical errors
- Students will write a memoir based on a memorable event in their lives.

C. Drama

- Standards 8-1.1, 8-1.3, 8-1.4, 8-1.5, 8-1.6, 8-3.1, 8-3.3, 8-3.4, 8-5.2, and 8-5.3
- Students will experience the genre of drama through active involvement in a play taught in class.
- Students will respond to text in reflective and analytical journal entries.
- Students will create a narrative written from the perspective of historical persona

D. Research Process

- Standards 8-2.1, 8-2.2, 8-2.3, 8-2.4, 8-4 and 8-6 (all indicators)
- Skills and content taught: clarify and refine topic, construct inquiry questions, use print and electronic sources, use of direct quotes, paraphrase, and summary, organize information, summarizing, select appropriate graphics in print or electronic form, create list of sources with information necessary to credit and document source which include author's name, title of source, and full publication details
- Students will create written work, oral, and/or visual presentation as a culminating product of research.

E. Author's craft in poetry

- Standards 8-1 (all indicators), 8-3.1, 8-3.3, and 8-3.4
- Skills and content taught: speaker (narrative voice), imagery, symbolism, irony, figurative language (simile, metaphor, personification, hyperbole), extended metaphor, oxymoron, diction (word choice), tone, allusion, idioms/euphemisms, sound devices (alliteration, onomatopoeia), stanza, rhyme, and repetition / refrain
- Students will write original poetry to model specific poetry forms and elements of author's craft taught in the unit.

F. Writing process and persuasive writing

- Standards 8-4 (all indicators) and 8-6 (all indicators)
- Skills and content taught: prewriting techniques, adding sentence variety (simple, compound, complex), multi-paragraph with central idea and supporting details, transitions, revision to improve clarity, and proofreading for grammar/mechanical errors
- Students will write a persuasive essay on a social issue they support. Writing process will include research into the social issue, and the essay should reflect research with expert opinions, quotes, and information synthesized from the research.

G. Author's bias

- Standards 8-2.3, 8-2.8, 8-3.1, 8-3.3, 8-3.4, 8-4 (all indicators), and 8-5.4
- Skills and content taught: identifying bias in editorials, essays, and speeches through by looking for omission of relevant facts, unsupported opinions, testimonials. bandwagon techniques, word choice, inclusion/exclusion of particular information. glittering generalities, name calling, card stacking, plain folks, and transfer.

H. Author's craft in literary fiction

- Standards 8-1 (all indicators), 8-3.1, 8-3.3, and 8-3.4
- Skills and content taught: narration, imagery, symbolism, irony, figurative language (simile, metaphor, personification, hyperbole), diction (word choice), point of view, tone, flashback and foreshadowing, allusion, idioms/euphemisms, and literary elements (plot, character, setting, theme, tone)
- Students will respond to author's use of figurative language, imagery, and symbolism in an essay analyzing the effect on the reader.

I. Persuasive Writing/Research

- Standards 8-2.1, 8-2.2, 8-2.3, 8-2.4, 8-4 (all indicators), 8-5.4, and 8-6 (all indicators)
- Students will have the opportunity to research a topic of personal interest and present the information in a persuasive speech.
- Student researches topic, chooses a position, and delivers a speech to persuade others to his/her point of view.

J. Author's Craft in literary fiction or nonfiction

- Standards 8-1 (all indicators), 8-3.1, 8-3.3, and 8-3.4
- Skills and content taught: narration, imagery, symbolism, irony, figurative language (simile, metaphor, personification, hyperbole), dialogue, diction (word choice), point of view, tone, flashback and foreshadowing, allusion, idioms/euphemisms, and literary elements (plot, character, setting, theme, tone)
- Students will respond to text in reflective and analytical journal entries.

K. Greek and Latin Stems

- Standards 8-3.2 and 8-3.5
- Minimum stems to be taught: ad-, de-, mal-, astro, chron, helio, hetero, homo, neo, paleo, syn/sym, bene, fer, flex/flect, ject, pend, rupt, sol, stella, temp/tempo, voc, -al, -ism, -ize
- Students will review lessons 1-10 in Michael Clay Thompson's *Word within the Word* book.
- Students will have individual and cumulative assessments of all stems.

L. Grammar

- Standards 8-4 (all indicators)
- Skills and content taught: conventions of grammar (parts of speech and usage) and mechanics of editing (capitalization, punctuation, and spelling)
- Students will have mini-lessons and/or starters based on different grammatical areas of study. Students will also complete exercises in Prentice Hall's *Writing and Grammar: Communication in Action* workbook.

6. Materials and Resources

The Word Within the Word by Royal Fireworks Press (teacher resource)

The Gifted Kids' Survival Guide: A Teen Handbook (Student resource—challenge)

Eyes of the Emperor by Graham Salisbury (student resource--all)

Nothing But the Truth by Avi (student resource--all)

Oliver Twist by Charles Dickens (student resource-- challenge)

Much Ado about Nothing by William Shakespeare (student resource-- challenge)

7. Assessing Evaluating, and Recording Student Progress

Assessments:

Assignments will be divided into two categories: minor and major. Minor Assignments will count 50% towards the overall average. This includes, but is not limited to, classwork, homework, stem quizzes, draft work on papers, etc. Major Assignments will count 50% towards the overall average. This includes, but is not limited to, projects, major tests, final drafts of papers, grammar quizzes, etc.

Long Term Projects and Papers:

All classes will be creating eight independent novel projects this year. Each one will be due on the last school day of the month (September through May, excluding December).

Students will receive detailed written instructions and a grading rubric when each project is assigned (during the first week of each month). This information will be linked to my website.

Assignment Grading Policy:

These are guidelines to be followed by everyone. If a student has a special situation occur, he or she should speak to the instructor personally.

Starters should be completed within the first five to ten minutes of class. These starters will include grammar or stem assignments. Students should have a book with them every day to read when they finish their starter.

In order for you to receive full credit, assignments must be satisfactorily completed and turned in on time. Homework is due at the beginning of class. Minor assignments (homework or daily work) turned in one day late will receive a 30 point deduction as the highest possible grade—before grading. Minor assignments turned in two days late will receive a 50 point deduction. After that, school homework recovery will be assigned.

Projects and papers are also expected to be turned in on time. If these assignments are late, a ten-point per day deduction will be made. If the child is out the date the assignment was due, it is due the day he or she returns to school. Otherwise, ten points will be deducted. These are long-term assignments; therefore, an acute onset of illness should not affect their completion. Students are encouraged to start projects and papers ahead of time.

Grading Scale:

- A 93-100
- B 85-92
- C 77-84
- D 70-76
- F 0-69

Records:

Grades are recorded in the Powerschool computer program. Periodically, a copy of each individual score and average will be sent home. This is for verification purposes. The students will have one week to present any discrepancies to the instructor. Any “NHI” grades Need to be Handed In during this period, or they will become zeroes.

8. Rules and Procedures

Classroom Rules of Behavior:

All rules as conveyed in the student handbook apply in all classrooms. My personal classroom rules group these into six concise policies:

1. Be Patient
2. Be Polite
3. Be Positive
4. Be Prepared

5. Be Productive

6. Be Prompt

Consequences for Violating Class and School Rules:

Riverside Middle School has established a Five-Step Discipline Plan. The plan's steps are as follows:

Step 1: Verbal warning

Step 2: Teacher consequence; parent contacted

Step 3: Teacher consequence; parent contacted

Step 4: Parent conference

Step 5: Referral

~Students will be asked to stay briefly after class to sign their individual plan if their behavior has earned them a "step."

Procedural Routines:

1. Wait outside in a line if previous class has not exited the classroom or if the instructor is not present.
2. Sharpen pencils before class instruction begins.
3. Put name, date, and class period on each assignment.
4. Be Polite:
 - a. Raise hand and wait to be acknowledged.
 - b. Do not speak while others are talking.
 - c. Participate when asked or when you can contribute to the discussion.
5. Honor the Quiet Signal (in my classroom this is lights being cut out).
6. Keep your area clean.
7. Wait for teacher dismissal at the end of class.

9. Communicating with Parents

~The Parent Portal will be up and running after the first nine weeks. Please make sure that you have a log-in name and password to access this important information.

~All graded papers will be sent home weekly.

~Notes will be mailed home or sent with student.

~Phone calls to parents (Main office #355-7900; my voice mail #355-7959) will be made as needed.

~Scheduled conferences will occur as needed.

~Correspondence through student assignment notebooks may be used.

~My web page is updated daily with assignments and long-term project information:

<http://teachers.greenville.k12.sc.us/sites/mfaulk/default.aspx>

~E-mail : mfaulk@greenville.k12.sc.us

~Progress Reports

~Report Cards