

ENGLISH

In English we will use the essential questions below to explore identity and ground our reading, writing, and discussion. These essential questions connect directly to the Learning for Justice Social Justice Standards.

- How does one's perspective or individual and group identities change or inform their understanding of the world around them? (Identity)
- What can literature's "windows and mirrors" reveal to us about characters, our individual identity, our diverse community, and the world? (Diversity)
- How does power (or lack thereof) shape people's lives and inform their understanding of justice? (Justice)
- What tools does an author use to create a unique narrative and voice, and how can we use these tools to inspire our voices and lead us to be change-makers? (Action)

GRADE 7

In seventh grade students practice becoming creative, curious, and confident English students. Reading and writing well is hard work. It is essential that students slow down, demonstrate persistence, give and receive feedback, and take advantage of revisions. Students read literature from a wide variety of genres, and our aim is always to examine language closely and appreciate its artistry. Students write frequently. We emphasize thorough idea development, organization, and precision of expression. Throughout the year, students will practice and deepen their close reading and analytic skills by studying and considering thematic ideas in short stories, novels, and poems.

Skills

Seventh-grade English students develop skills in order to be effective readers, writers, and communicators. Short-term assignments, frequent reading quizzes, and an emphasis on class participation help students to practice careful and prompt preparation. Long-term writing assignments and more open-ended projects allow students to explore their creativity while they learn to plan and execute their ideas responsibly. Students will also refine grammar skills and build vocabulary in context through writing revisions. Weekly assignment sheets, Canvas, and Google Classroom help students organize their time and work.

Reading

Students study short stories, poems, and novels. Through class discussion and activities and their own writing, students analyze authors' choices. Students practice and deepen their close reading and analytic skills and seek to uncover and consider underlying thematic ideas in each work. In addition to close reading and exploration of thematic ideas, activities include frequent writing, both imaginative and analytic, and project work.

Writing

Students write frequently and practice their writing skills in a variety of genres, including creative non-fiction, memoir, poetry, and formal responses to the reading. During seventh grade we begin to lay the groundwork for more analytical, persuasive essays. We value precision in language, thoughtful structure, and thorough idea development. We also emphasize correct

spelling and punctuation. Throughout the year, students engage in longer writing assignments culminating in the Voices Sketchbook, a long term personal creative writing project.

Anticipated Texts

Summer Reading Selection

Look Both Ways

Troublemaker

The Outsiders

Animal Farm

Before We Were Free

Voices Sketchbook Reader

GRADE 7

Equipped with close reading skills from the seventh-grade curriculum, eighth-grade English students consider ideas in increasingly abstract terms and make exciting leaps in understanding relationships within and between readings. Students read literature from a wide variety of genres, and our aim is always to examine language closely and appreciate its artistry. Students write frequently. We emphasize thorough idea development, organization, and precision of expression. Throughout the year, students will practice and deepen their close reading and analytic skills by studying and considering thematic ideas in short stories, novels, and poems. Students learn to develop flexibility in seeing readings as discrete pieces and in making connections between pieces, to generalize, and to think comparatively. Through discussion, writings, and activities, students find parallels within literature and between these works and their own lives.

Skills

Short-term assignments, frequent reading quizzes, and an emphasis on class participation help students to build confidence in their developing reading, writing, and thinking skills. Long-term writing assignments and more open-ended projects allow students to explore their creativity while they learn to plan and execute their ideas effectively. Weekly assignment sheets, Canvas, and Google Classroom help students organize their time and work. Students will also refine grammar skills and build vocabulary in context through writing revisions.

Class time is devoted to discussion, group work, writing workshops and peer editing, short writing exercises, grammatical analysis, and other activities that provide students with a variety of strategies to hone their reading, writing, and thinking skills.

Reading

Building on the foundational skills established in seventh grade, students study a variety of genres including short stories, poems, novels, nonfiction selections, and a play. Through class discussion and activities and their own writing, students analyze the authors' choices. Students practice and deepen their close reading and analytical skills and seek to uncover and consider underlying thematic ideas in each work.

Writing

Students write frequently and practice their writing skills in a variety of genres, including fiction, memoir, poetry, and analytical writing. Writing assignments range from formal to informal

reading responses. We hope to extend the power of the expression of their ideas as we introduce the beginning strategies and conventions of analytical essay writing. Writing assignments, whether stories, poems, paragraphs, or essays are designed to teach each student the potential of their own voice when language is used thoughtfully, effectively, and precisely. Through frequent assignments, including a ten-page story project, in-class workshops, revisions, as well as teacher and peer evaluations, students practice honing their voices and expressing their rich imaginations on the page.

Anticipated Texts

The Rock and the River

A Midsummer Night's Dream

Short Story Reader, anthology

12 Angry Men