

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## 8<sup>th</sup> Grade ELA Syllabus

Instructor: Miss Angel Belcer

**Course Description:** This course is designed to build foundational skills in English, fully prepare students for their 8<sup>th</sup> Grade NYS ELA exam, and begin preparing students for their 11<sup>th</sup> grade Regents exam. The main focus of this class will be on learning the elements of literature, reading and analyzing complex texts, and writing multiple part essays with different purposes.

**Objectives:** Students will leave this course with a deeper understanding of and appreciation for literature. Students will be able to understand and analyze texts to find the true meanings and purposes of the texts. Students will be able to make connections between the literature we read and their own lives. Students will be able to express their ideas in writing in an informative, organized, and clear manner.

**Expectations and Rules:** I expect students to come to class with an open and learning-ready mindset. I expect students to be on time and prepared for my class (this includes having laptops charged and any assignments completed and ready to hand in). I expect students to treat others with respect. **No cellphones will be allowed in my classroom. If brought in, they must be kept in students' lockers for the entire school day. Any cellphones in class will be confiscated and brought to the office for pick up at the end of the day.**

**Assignments:** In this class, you should expect reading checks, quizzes, journal entries, in-class assignments (which will become homework if not completed in class), essays, annotations, worksheets, short-answer assignments, and reading comprehension packets. These assignments will be clearly communicated to students as we get to them. The only time students should expect to have homework is if they miss class or do not finish their classwork in the allotted timeframe.

### Grading Policies\*

**Essays, tests, and projects (25%):** There will be one essay, test, or project assigned at the conclusion of each unit. Expectations for these assignments will be clearly communicated to students, and students will have sufficient class time to work on these assignments. Some will count as a project grade AND a midterm/final grade.

**Classwork (45%):** Classwork can include outlines for essays, single paragraph responses, rough drafts, chapter summaries, peer reviews, worksheets, reflection responses, and annotations of texts. All of these assignments should be completed in class but can be taken home and finished for homework, if necessary.

**Journal entries (15%):** These are low-stakes writing assignments that will be graded weekly based on effort. Prompts will be assigned by me, and students' entries will be recorded in their classroom notebooks.

**Reading/listening checks and quizzes (15%):** These will consist of questions that gauge students' understanding of the material, as well as reading comprehension questions. Most, if not all, quizzes will be open-book.

### Units of Study\*

- 1.) Fairy Tales
- 2.) Argument – Should juvenile killers face life behind bars?
- 3.) The Outsiders by S. E. Hinton
- 4.) The Boy in the Striped Pajamas by John Boyne
- 5.) Bad Boy: A Memoir by Walter Dean Myers
- 6.) The Benefits of Being an Octopus by Ann Braden

### Reading and Viewing Materials\*

Please check the bubbles of the texts or movies you do **NOT** want your child to read or watch.

- ☐ Short stories by the Brothers Grimm, Lewis Carroll, Charles Perrault, Edgar Allan Poe, Evan Hunter, and other authors
- ☐ Access to *Sports Illustrated*, *Game & Fish East*, and *Time* magazines. It will be up to each student's discretion and personal interests as to what articles they choose to read in any free time they may have during class.
- ☐ A variety of informational articles and literary excerpts by Richard Cavendish, Gwendolyn Brooks, NPR staff, Robert Frost, Elie Wiesel, Ira Sher, Nina Totenberg, Caroline Garrison, Carl Sandburg, and other authors meant to supplement units.
- ☐ Short film adaptation of "The Tell-Tale Heart" by Edgar Allan Poe:  
<https://youtu.be/eSr226cNhlc?si=4xjVZPupozXr3jL>
- ☐ *The Outsiders* – Novel by S. E. Hinton
- ☐ *The Outsiders* (PG) – Movie directed by Francis Ford Coppola
- ☐ *Bad Boy: A Memoir* – Novel by Walter Dean Myers
- ☐ *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas* – Novel by John Boyne
- ☐ *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas* (PG 13) – Movie directed by Mark Herman
- ☐ *The Benefits of Being an Octopus* – Novel by Ann Braden

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Parent/Guardian Signature

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Date

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Student Signature

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Date

If this syllabus is returned signed and dated by a parent/guardian, you will be awarded extra credit in the form of a 100% homework grade.

\*Subject to change at instructor's discretion.