

LITERATURE & COMPOSITION 7/8
AIM ACADEMY ONLINE
Syllabus

Instructor: Mrs. Natania Cook

Email: Canvas email preferred or ncook@aimacademy.online

Cell: 972-742-5364 call/text

Office Hours: Fridays 9:00-11:00 AM (EST)

Class Description & Objectives:

Middle School is the opportune time to begin more rigorous course work as students prepare to transition into high school. Literature and Composition 7/8 offers a challenging yet engaging one-year, literature-based, complete English class that allows middle school students to continue to build upon the foundational skills acquired in *Literature and Composition 6/7* (not a prerequisite).

Students continue to practice and perfect their skills in spelling, reading comprehension, literary analysis, grammar, writing, vocabulary, listening, speaking, and critical thinking. The skill of annotation is regularly practiced and reinforced as students read a variety of texts and genres. Critiquing and analyzing literary works and engaging in meaningful discourse are also essential components of this class. Through organized discussions called Socratic seminars, students seek a deeper understanding of complex ideas through asking questions. Beyond literary discussions, students, through carefully crafted essays and thoroughly researched arguments, also practice the art of persuasion and oral communication by participating in informal debates.

This class helps students respond to literature through a variety of methods, including thought-provoking questions, story summary charts, essay-writing, group assignments, online discussion boards, journaling, oral reports, and creative projects.

Direct instruction in writing is taught beginning with a review of basic elements of a sentence and proper paragraph construction and culminating with the creation of multi-paragraph essays. Conducting research, developing a thesis statement, summarizing a variety of texts, critiquing literature, and responding to a given prompt are some of the composition skills practiced throughout the year. The literature and informational texts read in this class serve as models to assist students in improving their writing skills. Students will mature in their ability to write through practicing expository, narrative, descriptive, creative, and persuasive writing.

HONORS TRACK OPTION: For students who desire more of a challenge or wish to pursue a more in-depth study and analysis of literature, an honors level for this course will be offered. Students participating in the honors level will have the option to complete additional thought-provoking, creative, and analytical writing assignments and projects. To participate in this extra learning opportunity, student need to register separately. There is an additional fee.

Required Supplies & Books: Students read nine books as well as several short stories and poems. All of the **Internet links to the short stories and poems will be provided by the teacher.** Books, however, need to be purchased in advance and brought to class as needed. Because an important component of this class is learning how to provide textual evidence when writing about or discussing literature, it is helpful for all students to acquire the same editions of each book. Please refer to the ISBN numbers below when ordering.

**“Some books are to be
tasted, others to be
swallowed, and some few
to be chewed and
digested.”**

–Sir Francis Bacon

The following titles can be acquired on Amazon.

***Please purchase:**

- *The Princess Bride* by William Goldman ISBN-10: 9780156035217
- **Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl* ISBN-10: 9780553296983
(Please do not purchase the definitive edition. We read the “classroom” version.)
- *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens (Any unabridged version is fine.)
- *And Then There Were None* by Agatha Christie ISBN-10: 0062073486
- *How They Croaked: The Awful Ends of the Awfully Famous* by Georgia Bragg
ISBN-10: 0802727948
- *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* by William Shakespeare (Folger version) ISBN-10: 0743477545
- *Treasure Island* by Robert Louis Stevenson ISBN-10: 1847494862
- *The Lord of the Flies* by William Golding ISBN-10: 0399501487

Students also choose an instructor-approved, realistic, historical, or science fiction novel to read on their own. They will use this book to craft a written critique and also to present an oral report/presentation to the class.

Other Basic Supplies:

- a 2-inch, three-ring binder
- set of dividers, preferably with pockets (5-6)
- lined notebook paper for binder
- a composition notebook or spiral for journaling
- highlighters--yellow, green, blue, pink, orange
- Post-It Notes (various sizes, colors, shapes)
- pens and pencils, erasers
- white, unlined copy paper

Technology Requirements:

- High speed, broadband Internet
- Headset and microphone (for live sessions)
- Streaming video capabilities to watch online videos and recorded lectures

- Microsoft Word and PowerPoint are extremely helpful. *If using a different word processing program, the document should be saved or exported as a pdf in order to submit it on Canvas.
- Printer with ink and paper
- Tablet or cell phone for game review days

Grading Policy & Class Expectations:

Aim Academy General Policies:

Please be sure to review the Aim Academy's policies and handbook.

<https://debrabell.com/policies-faqs/>

Participation & Behavior

In order to receive the maximum benefit from this class, it is important for every student to participate; therefore, a **participation grade** will be assigned each quarter. Students are expected to come prepared to discuss the assigned literature and homework assignments. In addition, students are expected to treat the teacher and fellow classmates in a respectful and kind manner. Class disruptions will not be tolerated. A verbal warning will be given and an email or phone call home will then be the next course of action, when necessary.

Online Policies & Cell Phone Use:

Cell phones should be silenced and put away during class unless they are being used as part of class instruction.

Students are expected to:

- to log on to Zoom 5 minutes before class begins
- have their cameras turned on for the duration of each class period
- to be fully prepared with all supplies in front of them
- to be fully engaged throughout class

Attendance/ Tardiness & Late/Make-Up Work

Please plan to attend every class. Since this class only meets once a week, there is much to cover in the 1-hour period. Should it be necessary to miss class, please email Mrs. Cook and plan to watch the class recording. Links for recordings can be found on Canvas on the course homepage. Missed assignments should be turned in no later than **one-week after the absence**. *Students are expected to be responsible for obtaining make-up assignments after their absences.* All assignments can easily be accessed via Canvas. A deduction of 10 points will be made for each week an assignment is late. All assignments, unless otherwise noted, are due via Canvas by 11:59 PM (EST) each Friday. Please note that missing assignments will automatically receive a 0 in Canvas *until* replaced with a makeup grade. Finally, please also be on time. Habitual tardiness will result in a lower participation grade.

Honesty: Plagiarism & academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Students are encouraged to think about possible answers on their own before seeking assistance from other sources. Answers in literature are generally not incorrect if they can be proven through quotes and examples.

**“Honest people don’t hide
their deeds.”
-Emily Bronte
*Wuthering Heights***

Grading Scale

98–100 = A+

93–97 = A

90–92 = A-

88–89 = B+

83–87 = B

80–82 = B-

78–79 = C+

73–77 = C

70–72 = C-

60–69 = D No credit from Aim on official transcripts

Below 60 = Failing. No credit.

Students will be graded as follows:

| | |
|-----|--|
| 35% | Writing Assignments |
| 25% | Homework, In-Class Assignments, Quizzes |
| 35% | Tests |
| 5% | Class participation |
| 5% | Extra Credit |

Canvas

An account and dedicated login link in for Canvas has been set up for each student. Students are encouraged to change their password after logging into the Canvas the first time. Students need to keep up with their username and password. Grades are recorded in Canvas. Please be sure to keep up with assignments and grades using this program.

Communication

Communication is an essential component of any educational endeavor. With that in mind, I encourage all of my students to contact me whenever they need assistance with an assignment, and I make it a priority to promptly respond to student inquiries. I also send a weekly “wrap-up” email outlining the learning objectives accomplished in class as well as reminders about upcoming assignments.

Beyond email correspondence, I have set aside an additional hour each week to assist students with writing and grammar. To participate in this additional learning opportunity, students need to register separately. See *Language Arts Lab 7/8* for details and to register.

Parental inquiries are also welcomed and encouraged as parental involvement is essential to student success. To best serve parents, I have established **“office hours” on Friday mornings from 9:00-11:00 AM (EST)** for responding to emails and phone calls. I consider it a great privilege to be able to walk alongside parents and assist them in educating their children.

Providing consistent feedback is imperative for student growth and success especially with writing. For this reason, I provide a detailed critique of each major writing assignment as well as general comments on all other assignments. In addition, I schedule individual writing

conferences periodically throughout the year where students and I meet one-on-one to address their specific writing needs.

Use of Technology and Apps

A variety of apps and online resources are utilized in this class to enhance learning, engage students, and communicate effectively with students and parents. Below is a list of the most frequented resources:

- Khan Academy and YouTube videos
- Kahoot!
- Glogster (digital posters)
- Flipgrid
- Pixton (comic strip maker)
- Quizlet
- Word Art (word cloud generator)
- MS Word and PowerPoint
- Audible, Kindle

Homework:

“Reading furnishes the mind only with materials of knowledge; it is *thinking* that makes what we read ours.” -John Locke

Homework is assigned every week through Canvas. Assignments are broken down into daily, manageable tasks. All assignments, unless otherwise noted, are due on Fridays by 11:59 PM. Students are expected to complete homework assignments and turn them in **on time**. Because

this class meets only once a week and entails several subjects (reading, writing, etc.), a great deal of work needs to be accomplished throughout the week. With this in mind, plan for homework to consist of **approximately 1½-2 hours of study time per day, five days a week**. Plan ahead and work diligently throughout the week. Please see Canvas for a suggested schedule.

Weekly homework includes practice in spelling, vocabulary, grammar/punctuation, and writing. Quizzes and tests are also assigned periodically. In addition, students are expected to annotate while reading assigned novels, short stories, poems, and articles. Students must prepare for class and be ready to ***participate actively*** during discussions. Homework assignments also include responding to the literature through a variety of methods such as comprehension and thought-provoking questions, story summary charts, essay-writing, group assignments, online discussion boards, and journaling. Special projects and oral presentations are also assigned throughout the year.

Listening to Literature Recommendation:

Purchasing a subscription to audible.com is recommended because listening while annotating simultaneously significantly improves comprehension as well as increases an appreciation for literature, especially challenging literature. For many students, involving multiple senses while reading also reduces their distractibility, especially when wearing noise-cancelling headphones. This is merely a suggestion and is not a required purchase for this course. Many novels and short stories can also be found on the Internet free of charge.

Thank you for being involved and active in your student’s educational experience and for allowing me the privilege of walking alongside you to teach your teen. My desire is for each student to have a successful and enjoyable year!