Course Outline

Below you will find a general outline of the Jr. Scholars English Language Arts course. Included are the novel selections for each quarter and the essential questions that we will be focusing on throughout the entire course. It is recommended that students purchase the required reading novels. If you cannot purchase them try your local libraries.

7th grade ELA Year Long Essential Questions

- What are the defining characteristics of childhood, adolescence, and adulthood?
- What are the rites of passage of different cultures and why are they important?
- How do our choices affect outcomes for ourselves and others?
- How can we use written and oral language to explore the events and ideas that shape our lives?
- How does culture influence our identity?
- How does oral, written, and visual language help us recognize and develop empathy?

Quarter 1 – Unit 1

Unit 1 – Regionalist Literature/Informational Text

Theme: “Language and literature help us understand and face the challenges that await us in a diverse and changing world”.

Reading Focus: Regionalist Coming of Age Novel – American – Informational Text

Writing Focus: Response to literature, reflective writing, and personal narrative.

Grammar Focus: compound subjects/verbs, complete subject/predicate, pronoun usage

Required Reading: “Travels with Charley: In Search of America” by John Steinbeck

Supplemental short stories, poetry, and non-articles.

Quarter 2 – Unit 2

Unit 2 – Introduction to Coming of Age Novels

Theme: “We use language to celebrate and give voice to the events and experiences that move us from childhood to adulthood”.

Reading Focus: Regionalist Coming of Age Novel

Writing Focus: Paragraph structure, descriptive paragraph/essay, narrative paragraph/essay, and biography

Grammar Focus: Review of the eight major parts of speech and the parts of a sentence

Required Reading: “The Dark is Rising” – Susan Cooper

Supplemental short stories, poetry, and non-articles.

Quarter 3 – Unit 3

Unit 3 – Multi-Cultural Literature

Theme: “Language and literature enable us to recognize and resolve our conflicts with others as we make choices that impact our lives”.

Reading Focus: Regionalist Coming of Age Novel – Historical Fiction
Writing Focus: Expository: cause and effect, definition, example, or compare/contrast
Grammar Focus: Prepositional, appositive, and verbal phrases, comma usage
Required Reading: “Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry” - Mildred D. Taylor

Quarter 4 – Unit 4

Unit 4 – World Literature
Theme: “Language creates, maintains, nurtures, and complicates connections among people”.
Reading Focus: Regionalist Coming of Age Novel – Greek Mythology
Writing Focus: Literary analyses, persuasive essay, expand on expository writing.
Grammar Focus: Independent clauses, subordinate clauses, semicolon usage
Required Reading: “Black Ships Before Troy: The Story of the Iliad” – Rosemary Sutcliff

Concepts and Skills

Literary Analysis
- Identify and summarize sequence of events, main ideas, and supporting details
- Analyze a character’s thoughts through words, speech patterns, and actions
- Determine the type and purpose of the organizational structure being used by the author (e.g., description, sequential/chronological, categorization, prioritization, comparison/contrast, or cause-and-effect).
- Explain the effects of literary devices
- Identify and analyze themes conveyed through characters, actions, and images

Reading Process
- Locate information using text elements to aid understanding
- Identify and summarize organization of text
- Before Reading: understand and explain the context
- During Reading: question, predict, connect, review, evaluate, visualize
- After Reading: demonstrate understanding of text in a variety of ways

Vocabulary Development
- Understand, learn and use new vocabulary taught directly through text
- Determine meaning of unknown words through use of context clues and word clues

Reading Comprehension
- Create graphic organizers to show understanding of informational text and/or summarize sequence of events, main ideas, facts, supporting details, and opinions
- Infer the main idea when it is not explicitly stated
- Make predictions and determine how events explain past or present action(s) or foreshadow future action(s)
- Make valid inferences about an author’s unstated meaning and valid conclusions about an author’s stated meaning, based on facts, events, and images.
- Identify and trace the development of an author’s argument, point of view, or perspective
- Determine the author’s purpose and how the author’s perspective influences the text.