

Class Description for 8 Blue Humanities 2014-2015 School Year

Welcome to the 2014-2015 school year here at Stoller Middle School and Megan Owens' 8th grade Humanities class. We hope you will find this class syllabus helpful in understanding what we will be learning and how your child's academic progress will be determined and reported, both academically and behaviorally.

2014-2015 Course Outline 8th Grade English

Reading requirements include the following activities:

- Students choose books according to individual skills and interests
- Students dialogue with teacher and peers through journaling activities and discussion groups
- Students complete monthly book reviews that require synthesis and application critical thinking skills
- Students will build comprehension, inference, and analysis skills and prepare for state reading tests
- Students will participate in literature circles and whole class readings of student and teacher-selected books

Writing requirements include the following activities:

- Students will complete a variety of writing pieces focusing on mastering essay structure
- Students will reflect upon, assess, and evaluate their own and others' work, applying the Beaverton Analytical Traits (Ideas/Content, Organization, Word Choice, Voice, Sentence Fluency, & Conventions)
- Students will demonstrate the ability to meet or exceed the 8th grade benchmark in writing
- Students will write for a variety of topics and purposes

Word Within The Word Greek and Latin Roots/Language Study

Students will continue their study of Greek and Latin roots, building upon the program they may have begun last year in 7th grade. This year's program will add higher-level activities such as analogies and critical thinking questions in the areas of intuition, emotion, aesthetics, synthesis, divergence, analysis, and evaluation. This program will continue all year. Students will continue their study of English grammar and sentence structure throughout the year.

Other Units of Study

- As we study the elements of fiction and figurative language, we will read several short stories including three by Ray Bradbury that the students will use as the basis for an essay.
- We will learn about the students' learning styles and how their style preferences influence who they are. Students will present this information in an essay and a speech.
- As students read about the Civil War in a variety of historical novels, they will learn about character analysis and demonstrate their analytical skills in an essay.

To Kill A Mockingbird by Harper Lee is the one whole-class novel we will read this year. This is not necessarily a “novel study”, though we do talk quite a bit about themes and characters and symbols, etc. I read to Kill A Mockingbird to the students as a way of sharing the love of a good book. Students will participate in on-line discussions of the novel through a message board set up on my web site. I encourage you to read along with us, discovering, or rediscovering, this amazing work.

These are the key pieces to my curriculum. As student needs and interests are assessed, new ideas and activities will be implemented. The elements of Reading and Writing will continue to be a part of the Humanities program throughout the year. Students will be expected to read a minimum of 1000 pages per trimester and complete a required number of writing pieces per trimester as assigned. The academic essay will be a focus of the writing program throughout the year.

Students will be assessed in all areas through a standards-based model of assessment. You may access all Learning Targets at: <http://www.beaverton.k12.or.us/home/departments/instruction/k-12-learning-targets/6-8-learning-targets/>

2014-2015 Course Outline 8th Grade U.S. History

History -American Revolution- September / October

Before we begin the study of our government, it is important to know how our country began.

Major Projects: American Revolution Simulation. Students will role-play colonists during the time of the Revolution to experience the issues and conflicts they faced in their decision to become Patriots or remain Loyalists. Students will experience the debate over topics that concerned the colonists over 200 years ago, which culminated in the Declaration of Independence. From there we will better understand the formation and workings of our current form of government. Students will also use their knowledge of these concepts to write their first essay.

Civics- September / October / November

Key Questions we will consider from the 8th grade social studies standards:

- What is the purpose of government?
- How do we keep any one branch from having too much power?
- What is the Bill of Rights?
- Who (Branches of gov't) does what and why?
- Checks and Balances - Legislative, Executive, Judicial-what are they?
- How are courts organized?
- What are my responsibilities as a U.S. Citizen?
- How can I be part of the political process?

Major Projects: History Alive! Curriculum, “Metaphor for Government”, Supreme Court cases, mock trials

Immigration/Migration /Manifest Destiny in a Growing Nation- December / January / February

Key Questions we will consider from the 8th grade social studies standards:

- What is Manifest Destiny and how did it influence the development of our country?
- Who were the key figures in Westward Expansion?
- How did the opening of the West affect Native populations?
- Major Projects: History Alive! Curriculum, mapping unit

Civil War Era-March / April / May

Key Questions we will consider from the 8th grade social studies standards:

History of Slavery and Abolitionism

- Who are abolitionists and what did they do?
- How did African Americans cope with conditions of slavery?

Civil War/Reconstruction

- What were the political, economic, and social causes, and what was the course and impact of the Civil War and Reconstruction?
- What events led to the Civil War?
- How was the Civil War fought and won?
- How did Reconstruction affect the country?

Major Projects: “Civil War” simulation/History Alive! Curriculum

Family History Night: Thursday, April 23, 2015 5:30-6:30

<http://www.grammarface.com/resources/family-history-project/>

If you have questions, comments, or concerns, or would just like to meet, please e-mail me at megan_owens@beaverton.k12.or.us. I look forward to working with you and your student.

Please refer to my website for a variety of resources. www.grammarface.com

Academic Learning Targets (ALT) for 8th grade Humanities: This is what we will be learning and how I will evaluate your student’s progress. These targets are consistent across the Beaverton School District. Please see below for the link for these targets.

Rubrics. This is one tool we use to assess student progress on the learning targets and provide feedback to students on what must be done to improve their proficiency or mastery of the learning. Please see the rubrics associated with the learning targets for this class. You can also access the rubrics through ParentVue or the district website at: <https://www.beaverton.k12.or.us/depts/tchlrn/lts/Pages/Browse-Learning-Targets.aspx>

Behavior Learning Targets (BLT): We believe that the following behaviors are critical to academic success. I will teach and give feedback on some of the behaviors listed below during this school year.

I can manage my responsibilities as a student.

- I turn in work on time.
- I turn in completed work.
- I break down large tasks into smaller, manageable parts.
- I use my class time appropriately.
- I prepare for class with necessary materials and am ready to learn.
- I complete my makeup work in a timely manner.
- I use a system for tracking my assignments.
- I use strategies regularly to prepare for assessments.
- I follow directions accurately.
- I demonstrate quality craftsmanship in my work.

I can self-direct my learning.

- I can use rubrics to accurately assess my progress toward learning targets.
- I can identify my current academic strengths and areas where growth is needed.
- I can set and achieve goals.
- I can develop a plan to achieve my goals.
- I can implement and adjust as necessary.
- I can persist with a task that takes a great deal of effort.
- I can persist with a task over an extended period of time.
- I can persist with tasks where the answer is not apparent.
- I can utilize a variety of sources to find help or to make up for absences.
- I can articulate specific areas in which I need help.
- I can advocate for myself.

I can communicate and work effectively within a team or group.

- I show my commitment to the group goals through my active participation/engagement.
- I listen respectfully and acknowledge the contributions of others.
- I share my ideas honestly and clearly.
- I contribute to creating a safe learning environment for all.
- I respect points of view that differ from my own.
- I work within my team to break down large tasks into smaller, manageable parts.
- I work with my group to identify when changes are necessary.
- I adapt to changes in the group process with a positive attitude.

Homework Expectations

Students are expected to write their homework in their planners every day. I provide time and explicit instructions every day during the last 5 minutes of class. Please discuss your child's planner and the information listed each day with your child on a regular basis. This is one of the most important roles you can play in helping to insure success for your child.

At the 8th grade, your child should expect 80-90 minutes of homework daily. This is based on an average of ten minutes per grade level. This can / should include 30 minutes of independent reading every day. Students are required to read over 1,000 pages each quarter. This should be recorded and reported to me at the end of each quarter. 3,000+ = HP, 1,000-3,000 = Pro

Assessment/Grading Policies

The purpose of grading is to communicate with students and parents how well a student is performing.

Your child will receive a comprehensive progress report (hard copy) every two weeks. Please discuss individual assignments/assessments with your child, sign the report indicating you have done so, and return the signed report on the date indicated on the report.

Grading

The summary judgments of all Academic Learning Targets will be averaged and the following scale will be used to determine the grade:

- A: 3.4 - 4.0
- B: 2.7 - 3.3
- C: 2.0 - 2.6
- D: 1.6 - 1.9
- F: <1.6

Our best line of communication is through your child. Please encourage him or her to approach me with any questions or concerns. I also encourage your child to **email** me with questions or concerns. You may also reach me at the above contact information. I look forward to a great year working with you and your child.

Thanks!

Megan Owens

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