



8th Grade Language Arts

Mrs. Derr

brandiderr@frankstonisd.net ★ 903-876-2215



8th Grade Language Arts - The English language arts and reading Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) embody the interconnected nature of listening, speaking, reading, writing, and thinking through the seven integrated strands of developing and sustaining foundational language skills; comprehension; response; multiple genres; author's purpose and craft; composition; and inquiry and research. The strands focus on academic oracy (proficiency in oral expression and comprehension), authentic reading, and reflective writing to ensure a literate Texas. The strands are integrated and progressive with students continuing to develop knowledge and skills with increased complexity and nuance in order to think critically and adapt to the ever-evolving nature of language and literacy.

Class Supplies:

Pen/Pencil

Notebook paper (please replenish this throughout the year when necessary)

Folder reserved for Language Arts for storing homework and graded assignments

Highlighter (if desired)

Textbook:

We will use a literature textbook in class at times. The textbooks will not be sent home. If students need access to the literature at home, I will either give them a paper copy or provide a link to access the literature online.

Cell phones:

Cell phones will **not** be used in class.

Class Routine and homework expectations:

We will generally follow a weekly schedule so that you will know what kind of homework to expect for each night of the week.

Tuesday – This is usually our literature day. We will read some literature in class and may have an assignment over it that we work on in class and/or for homework.

Wednesday – Wednesday is another literature day. We will usually read and discuss in class, and there may be an assignment that needs to be finished for homework if it is not finished during class.

Thursday – We will have a vocabulary test over the words received on the previous Friday. For the vocabulary test, students will need to be able to spell the words and choose which sentence they best fit into. After the test, there will usually be an independent assignment to work on, although occasionally we will have independent reading time or a group activity.

Friday - We get new vocabulary and work on a vocabulary worksheet in class for about 15 minutes. Some students finish during class, and some do not. If the assignment is not finished in class, it is due on Tuesday. After vocabulary time, we will usually have another activity, often grammar or literature, that we work on in class only.

Unit test weeks will be slightly different. During unit test weeks, we will usually not have new vocabulary words, but will have a list of review words from the unit, which will be included on the unit test. There will usually be a writing assignment for the week. The unit test will be on Thursday. Unit tests are mainly skills tests, in which the students will have several passages to read and standardized test-type questions to answer about the passages. The tests will also include the review vocabulary words and usually bonus questions about the literature that we read during the unit.

When students enter the classroom each day, they will be expected to work on the bellringer activity. They will have until about 5 minutes after the bell rings to complete the short assignment, and then they can either turn in their work or save it to turn in the whole week's bellringers on Friday. Each day's bellringer is worth 25 points, so by Friday, they will have 100 possible points for their bellringer grade for the week. If the bellringer answers are not all correct, they will lose some of their 25 points for the day. I do grade the bellringers daily and enter them into the grade book, so you may see on Skyward on a Wednesday that the grade for the week's bellringers is a 25. That means that they turned in their Tuesday bellringer and got everything correct. I keep the bellringer assignments set so that they are not calculated into the students' averages until I have graded the whole week's bellringers.

Communication:

Please sign up for my Remind to get messages about homework and tests. (I often attach the assignment to the message so you can see what it looks like or have access to it if it has gotten lost before it got home.) Students are encouraged to sign up for Remind as well. **To sign up, text @bd8la to the number 81010.**

I also use the Skylert (through Skyward) system to send messages that are more specific to individuals (to inform about good/bad behavior in class or missing work, etc.). Please make sure that your contact information is current for this system.

Tutorial Days and Times:

I will be available for tutorials (extra help, homework questions, test retakes or make-ups) on Wednesday afternoons from 4:10 – 5:00, and Wednesday - Friday mornings from 7:15 – 7:35. (Please know that there will NOT be time in the mornings to make up or retake a unit test, but a weekly vocabulary test can probably be finished within that time frame for most kids.)

Grading Policies:

You can expect to have at least 11 daily grades and at least 3 test grades (which will include vocabulary tests, unit tests, some essays, and projects) for each nine weeks.

Daily grades will count for 40% of your grade, and test grades will count for 60%. Assignments must be turned in on time. The highest grade that can be received for a late daily assignment is 70. For each day after that, the student will lose 10 more points off their grade. To avoid losing points for late work, students must complete the late assignments under **my** supervision outside of regular classtime. The student will receive a 0 for assignments that have not been turned in. I do provide itemized progress reports to the students several times per nine weeks. These progress reports show the student's average for the class, plus the grade received for each assignment and test and a list of missing assignments. I will try to send a Remind or Skylert message to let parents know when one of these progress reports has been provided.

Plagiarism, or copying someone else's work (including artificial intelligence, or AI) and passing it off as your own, is not acceptable. If plagiarism or another form of cheating is detected, the student will receive a zero for the assignment and the opportunity to redo the assignment or complete an alternate assignment. They will keep the zero until the assignment is turned in again; if the redone assignment has been turned in after the original due date, it will be considered late and will have points deducted accordingly.

Test Retake Policy:

If you are unhappy with your test grade, you may retake your test (the test will cover the same material but may not be exactly the same as the original test). Please make arrangements with me to come before school, after school, or possibly during Power Hour to retake your test. I recommend coming to tutorials before retaking the test to make sure you have mastered the material.

Independent Reading Requirement:

Independent reading is important! Each six weeks students will be assigned a book to read individually outside of class. They will receive a schedule for completing the book in the allotted time. They will be required to answer 5 - 10 questions each week over the assigned chapters. The questions will either be online on Wayground (formerly Quizizz) or another platform, or will be asked and answered orally during Power Hour. The questions will be a daily grade in Language Arts each week and must be completed by the end of that week. If they are not completed that week, students will receive a zero for the assignment and will not be able to alter that grade. When students have finished the book, they must take a short reading quiz on <https://whooosreading.org>. This will be a test grade. There will be YouTube videos on Google Classroom of the books being read aloud (by me - basically a free audiobook version) if students find it beneficial to listen to the book as they read it. Students may read ahead of the schedule if they like and can take the reading quiz as soon as they finish the book. If they let me know, I will make the weekly questions available to them when they are needed. In addition to this, students may also read a self-chosen book (appropriate to their age and reading level) and take a Whooo's Reading quiz to receive an extra test grade to replace their lowest vocabulary, writing, or project test grade. Students who do not take an extra quiz will not get to replace their lowest test grade.

Absences

When students are absent, assignments and materials will be available on Google Classroom. If students are unable to access Google Classroom while they are out, they are responsible for requesting the missed assignments from me.

Classroom Rules

1. Be respectful ALWAYS!
 - a. Keep your hands (and other body parts), objects, and personal comments to yourself.
 - b. Use appropriate language.
2. Always give 100% effort.
 - a. Turn in completed work on time.
 - b. Do your own individual work!

Parents are encouraged to communicate!

You can get in touch by calling the school at 903-876-2215 or by emailing me at brandiderr@frankstonisd.net. On the next page, please provide your e-mail address and/or phone number (whichever you prefer to be contacted by) so that I can get in touch with you as well.

Please indicate your understanding and agreement to these policies by signing and returning the **attached page**.



(Returning this signed paper by Friday, August 8, will get you a free 100 to start your year off!)

Please detach this page and return, signed, to Mrs. Derr.

I understand and agree to abide by Mrs. Derr's policies.

Parent's name - printed

Parent e-mail address and/or phone number

Parent Signature

Date

Student's name - printed

Student Signature

Date



Theatre Arts



Mrs. Derr

brandiderr@frankstonisd.net ★ 903-876-2215

Students shall increase their understanding of self and others and develop clear ideas about the world. Through a variety of theatrical experiences, students communicate in a dramatic form, make artistic choices, solve problems, build positive self-concepts, and relate interpersonally. Students increase their understanding of heritage and traditions through historical and cultural studies in theatre. Student response and evaluation promote thinking and further discriminating judgment, developing students who are appreciative and evaluative consumers of live theatre, film, television, and other technologies.

Class Supplies:

Pen/Pencil

Notebook paper (please replenish this throughout the year when necessary)

Folder reserved for Theatre Arts for storing homework and graded assignments

Highlighter (if desired)

Grading Policy:

You can expect to have **at least** 11 daily grades and **at least** 3 test grades per nine weeks in this class. Some daily grades will be participation grades, some will be performance grades, and some will be paperwork grades. Some test grades will be performance grades, and some will be paper tests or project grades. Daily grades will count for 40% of your grade, and test grades will count for 60%. Assignments must be turned in on time. Students will receive a zero for assignments that are not turned in. Zeros will remain until the assignment is turned in.

You will be expected to memorize and recite poems and pieces for this class. Yes, this will be a grade! Yay! Don't worry, we'll start off small!

Everyone in the class will participate in a performance (usually for selected elementary classes) each semester. Each semester will culminate with a brief performance for the middle school (in conjunction with the school performance of the middle school one-act play in December and the middle school talent show in May).

Cell phones:

Cell phones will **not** be used in class.

Communication:

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I also use the Skylert system (through Skyward) to send messages that are more specific to individuals (to inform about good/bad behavior in class or missing work, etc.). Please make sure that your contact information is current for this system.

Absences

When students are absent, they are responsible for requesting any missed assignments from me and scheduling a time to complete any performance grades that were missed.

Classroom Rules

1. Be respectful ALWAYS!
 - a. Keep your hands (and other body parts), objects, and personal comments to yourself.
 - b. Use appropriate language.
2. Always give 100% effort.
 - a. Turn in completed work on time.
 - b. Do your own individual work!

Parents are encouraged to communicate!

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Please indicate your understanding and agreement to these policies by signing and returning this page.

(Returning this signed paper by Friday, August 8, will get you a free 100 to start your year off!)

I understand and agree to abide by Mrs. Derr's policies.

Parent's name - printed

Parent e-mail address or phone number

Parent Signature

Date

Student's name - printed

Student Signature

Date