

Welcome to Language Arts!

Course Description:

The middle school language arts course is designed to integrate four critical areas of language arts: reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Lessons in grammar and usage, literature and vocabulary and a variety of writing styles weave through these critical areas. A primary goal of the language arts curriculum is to encourage students to become more effective language users by integrating basic skills and higher level thinking skills. While language arts is the focus of this course, our Catholic faith is the foundation for all that is taught in the classroom.

Contact Information:

Communication is essential to a positive learning environment, and I encourage you to contact me with questions or concerns as they arise. The best way to reach me is by email. If you wish to contact me by phone, please call the school office during school hours and leave a message. I will return your call as soon as possible.

School e-mail address: rgribbin@stmaryofthemills.org

Weebly webpage: www.mrsgribbinela.weebly.com

School Phone Number: 301-498-1433

Grading

Students receive 3 separate grades in Language Arts – English, Reading, & Spelling. Grades will be determined as follows:

Tests & Quizzes: 30%

Book Reports/Major Writing Assignments/Projects: 30%

Homework: 20%

Classwork: 20% (includes class participation grade)

Grading Scale:

Numerical Grades	Letter Grades
93-100	A
85-92	B
77-84	C
70-76	D
Below 70	F

Homework Policy:

Homework is an integral part of the instructional program. Assignments are designed to reinforce concepts, prepare for future activities, and expand instruction. Homework provides opportunities for independent work and discipline and helps students develop good study skills. Homework will be assigned daily unless otherwise noted. Nightly reading is still expected as part of the homework responsibilities.

Late Assignments:

Assignments are to be turned in on time. The grade for any late assignment will drop a minimum of ten points for each day that the assignment is late for up to two (2) days unless otherwise determined. After the second day, the assignment will have a failing grade; but it must still be completed for the sake of mastery.

Make-up Work (Illness, Excused Absence):

All work missed because of an absence must be made up. For excused absences, students are allowed the same number of days as they were absent to complete the work. If a student misses class due to an appointment and returns to school that day, the student must complete all required assessments that day or at a time mutually

agreed upon by the teacher. Students who miss school for an unexcused reason are to take any make-up tests/quizzes on the first day upon returning to school. Tests/quizzes will not be administered in advance. Make up tests and quizzes will not be given during class. Students must make arrangements before or after school or during lunch/recess to complete make up tests/quizzes.

There will be a folder labeled “While You Were Out” containing your missed assignments on the exit table of the classroom. Each student will be assigned an “Absent Buddy”, who will complete a “While You Were Out” form that details your missed work. The Buddy will also put any worksheets or handouts in this folder. It is your responsibility to locate this from the container and finish any assignments that you missed while you were absent.

Class Resources:

Literature:

The Reader’s Choice by Glencoe Literature

Spelling and Vocabulary:

Writer’s Choice by Glencoe

Students should be prepared with the following materials in class:

textbooks, agenda, pencils, pens, highlighter, language arts binder, index cards, composition book and post it notes.

***At teacher’s discretion, supplemental resources will be used to further enhance instruction and to support learning objectives.

Quiz, Test, Paper, and Project Schedule

The students will be informed of any unit tests with a **minimum** of 5 days to prepare. Study guides will be provided for large unit tests. Any long-term assignment will be assigned well in advance with periodic check in’s. Handouts will include written directions, a grading rubric and due dates. **Vocabulary/spelling tests will be given every Friday.**

Outside Reading and Literary Presentations:

Students are encouraged to read independently throughout the year in addition to regular assigned class novels. Book selections and suggestions will be made by the teacher and should be books of enjoyment, interest, fun, and include a variety of genres, especially a mix of fiction and non-fiction.

8th grade only: Upon completion of independent reading, students will produce complex, high quality literary presentations that reflect originality and creative thought. The teacher will supply a list of potential topics; however, highly motivated students may create an original project idea with teacher approval.

Writing:

Over the course of the semester, each student will complete various pieces of writing. These assignments require students to write in an organized, clear manner while also incorporating appropriate grammar. The teacher may individualize writing topics based on student strengths.

Research Project:

Students will be required to complete a research project. The criteria for this major project will be given to the students during the 3rd quarter. The purpose of this project is to evaluate the student’s ability to apply the grammar and the literary usage skills they have learned to real life situations. Project completion will occur during the 4th quarter.

Quality of Work:

Each language arts student is responsible for turning in assignments that exhibit a high quality of work. This means that the work should be neat, include proper headings, contain complete sentences, and maintain

appropriate grammatical structure. This quality of work expectation is necessary for continued improvement of student grammar and writing. At all times student work should reflect work worthy of God.

Student Expectations & Code of Conduct:

As students of St. Mary of the Mills School, we acknowledge that our Catholic school education is an opportunity to grow in love and knowledge of our God, ourselves, and our world. To do this we will:

1. Be respectful of others at all times.
2. Follow the directions of our priest, principal, assistant principal, teachers, school staff, and parent volunteers who help us learn.
3. Greet everyone in a polite and courteous manner.
4. Take care of our learning materials, our school, and our Church property.
5. Be responsible for our own actions and practice self control.
6. Understand that we are students of St. Mary of the Mills School at all times and if we engage in behavior, whether inside or outside the school, that is detrimental to the reputation of the school, we may be disciplined by the school administration.

Classroom Policies

- Students are expected to be on time and prepared for class each day.
- Students are to treat their teacher and their peers with respect.
- If a student is being disruptive:
 - First offense – verbal warning
 - Second offense – verbal and/or written warning
 - Third Offense – Student will spend lunch or recess time with the teacher.
 - This will be accompanied by a note home to the parent/guardian
 - If it is a severe disruption, the student will be sent to the principal and a note will be sent home to the parent/guardian.

Assignment Headings:

Student assignments should have appropriate headings at the top right hand side of the page. They should be formatted as follows:

Student's First and Last Name

Date

Grade and Subject

Assignment

Example:

Rachel Gribbin

August 25th, 2014

6th grade L.A.

Writer's Choice, p. 25

CLASS MOTTO:

*I am prepared to learn, excited to learn, and willing to learn!
In the language arts classroom we are filled with **JOY** as we **Journey** through words,
Open our minds, and Yearn to do our best!*

We have read and discussed the class responsibilities and requirements for Mrs. Gribbin's Language Arts class.

Student's signature:

Parent's signature:

Date: _____