St. Luke School

8th Grade Language Arts

***KEEP IN LANGUAGE ARTS BINDER AT ALL TIMES***

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| **Teacher** | Ann Allen | **E-mail** | aallen@stlukeum.com |
| **Texts** | *Writing and Grammar*, Prentice Hall, 2004; *Literature*, Prentice Hall, 2000; The Giver, Lois Lowery; Animal Farm, George Orwell; The Pearl, John Steinbeck, How to Read Literature Like a Professor (for Kids), Thomas C. Foster | | |
| **Other** | Students need internet access for textbook support and for online quizzes through Jupiter Grades. To access support for our Prentice Hall texts go to [www.phlit.phschool.com](http://www.phlit..phschool.com) and choose the Silver edition. Enter codes **ECK-8001** for literature and **ECK-8002** for grammar. Students also need to be able to readily access the 8th Grade website at www.sls8.weebly.com. | | |

8th Grade Language Arts focuses on applying reading, writing and speaking skills to help you transition well to high school. We move from understanding what happened in a story to thinking about what it means and connecting it to the world. We move from practicing different types of writing to shaping our writing for different assignments. We spend a lot of time listening to others speak, and speaking in front of others.

**GRADES and ASSIGNMENTS:** Grades are based on the items below. I may drop, curve or change the weight of a particular grade depending on overall performance in a particular class. These adjustments might be made right after an assignment is completed or before progress reports or report cards.

***Participation (10%):*** All students begin with 100 points and deductions are made for things outlined in the student handbook under Middle School Conduct/Class Participation Grades. Points are also deducted for not being prepared for class. You need to have paper, pencil, a blue pen, silent reading material, completed homework or in progress assignments, vocabulary flashcards, and your Language Arts binder in class, on time, EVERY DAY. Text books, class novels and other needed materials will be posted outside the door.

***AR (10%):*** Students will be given a point goal and a reading range based on STAR testing results. If STAR results are inconsistent with past assessments, you will be asked to repeat your STAR test. You must read within the ZPD printed on your goal sheet and it is YOUR responsibility to carefully check the reading level of the AR books you choose. In addition to your AR grade, you will receive a homework grade for earning 20% of your goal points from non-fiction. For example, if your goal is 40 points, then 8 of the points you earn must be from nonfiction whether you reach 50% of your overall goal, or 200% of your overall goal.

***Homework (15%):*** Homework that is assigned to reinforce or review skills or to keep students on track for class novels and long-term projects will be checked for completion, following directions, neatness, and reasonable accuracy. I may accept homework assignments late if we have not already graded them in class.

***Reading Logs*** are worth the same as homework grades and are due on Mondays at the beginning of class – NO EXCEPTIONS. You will receive partial credit for incomplete logs, but no credit for reading logs turned in after last call or hand written on notebook paper. I do not print reading logs, but you may always print your own from the 8th grade website under Language Arts. Keep ALL graded logs in your class binder.

***Classwork/quizzes (25%):*** Graded classwork and quizzes include timed writing assignments, speaking assignments, reading comprehension checks, grammar/DOL quizzes, vocabulary quizzes, and group projects.

***Test and Major Projects (40%):*** Written tests will be given for grammar units, literature/novel units, combined vocabulary lessons, and some writing and speech projects. Final Signature Project and semester exams count as two test grades.

**CLASS BINDER:** Keep your class binder organized and you will have everything you need to study for tests and complete projects at home. Label your tabs and organize your binder as follows:

**Before the first tab:** *Keep this entire syllabus, your AR Goal sheet, and your reading log here.*

**1st TA -- DOL***: Keep all your DOL in this tab. It is a running story, so you may need to go back and look at previous entries. We will have a test every 5 sentences and it will be EXACTLY what we did in class.*

**2nd Tab -- VOCAB:** *Keep a running vocabulary journal here. Copy our roots and their meanings. Complete a word sort for each lesson. It might also be helpful to put a zipper bag in this section to hold your flashcards and blank index cards. You might also keep printouts of JUNO vocab quizzes.*

**3rd tab -- LITERATURE**: *In this section, keep handouts on understanding literature, project guides and printouts of any JUNO comprehension checks for novels.*

**4th tab – GRAMMAR**: *Keep notes we have taken in class on various grammar units, copies of assignments*

**5th tab – WRITING:** *Keep notes on writing instruction and in process writing assignments and their rubrics, and final graded assignments here.*

**6th tab -- SPEAKING**: *You should keep your Speech Guide here, as well as notes we take on how to be a better speaker, and the progress you make on your 8th Grade Speech. Also keep assignment sheets for smaller speaking assignments we have during the year.*

**If you keep the above materials in the proper sections, you should have no trouble being prepared for class and studying for unit tests and end of semester exams.**

**BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS:** Class rules boil down to respecting others and yourself and being safe. Don’t leave your seat when someone else is talking and don’t leave the class without specific permission. Don’t disrupt discussion or instruction with side comments, answers, or complaints (either to the class or a neighbor). Follow directions the first time they are given. Raise individual questions or concerns with me before or after class – don’t take valuable instructional or work time from the entire class because you are not prepared or plan to be absent. Take care of classroom and school properties and return borrowed materials in a timely manner.

**ABSENCES/TARDIES:** It is YOUR responsibility to obtain make-up work and complete it on time per the St. Luke School absence and tardy policy in the school handbook. Check the ABSENT WORK folder for things handed out in class, JUPITER grades for posted assignments and online quizzes, and the 8th Grade website for DOL, vocabulary, and notes taken in class. Then double check with me before or after class. NOTE: If a student is absent only on the day of a test or quiz, they are expected to make that up on the day of return.

**LATE/INCOMPLETE/UNCLAIMED WORK:** Work that is late or incomplete for reasons other than excused absences may be given partial credit if it is completed and turned in BEFORE the assignment has been graded or discussed in class. One letter grade will be deducted for each day it is late. **Reading logs are NEVER accepted late.** If you have an excused absence, Reading Logs are due the day you return. Work that is missing a name will be placed on the board and counted as missing until claimed and treated as late work for grading purposes.

**AFTER SCHOOL HELP:**  I will be here most Wednesdays after school and other times by appointment to help with skills, proctor makeup exams, help organize notebooks, and conference on writing. It is your responsibility to ask for help when you need it.

**EXTRA CREDIT:** I do not provide extra credit assignments to individual students but will, from time to time, provide extra credit opportunities for the class as a whole.

**ATTACHMENT:**

**The 8th Grade Writing Rubric** is for you to use as a basic checklist for everything you write. It will be used to determine your grades along with assignment specific requirements. While it is similar to the rubric you had in 7th Grade, the standards are higher this year as you might expect.

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| **EIGHTH GRADE WRITING RUBRIC** | | | | |
|  | **Emerging** | **Developing** | **Accomplished** | **Exemplary** |
| **Ideas & Content** | * There is no new thinking – paper repeats what has already been said. | * Has some original ideas. | * Has original ideas but some are a stretch or unclear. | * Original ideas that fit in with each other. |
| * Introduction lacks a clear topic and main idea. | * Has a minimally developed topic. Lead sentence or thesis paragraph lacks clarity. | * Has a fairly developed topic stated in lead sentence or thesis statement. | * Has a fully developed topic and a clear main idea expressed in a lead sentence or thesis statement. |
| * Has few, if any details to guide thesis statement. | * Some details are present but writer's position may be unclear. | * Has some details that support some, but not all, of the main ideas. | * Has carefully selected, interesting details that support all key points. |
| * Does not answer question asked. | * Focus strays from topic. | * Generally maintains focus, but has some unrelated details. | * Answers the prompt and maintains focus. |
| **Organization** | * There is no clear overall structure or organization; lacks coherence. | * Some organization is present, may not be appropriate to assignment. | * Organization is appropriate for style of writing, and shows attempts to apply concepts introduced in class | * Organization clearly supports assignment consistently, provides for all key writing assignment requirements. |
| * Lacks an introduction, body, or conclusion. | * Has introduction, body, and conclusion, but some are not well developed. | * Has an introduction, body, and conclusion, but balance could be improved. | * Introduction, body and conclusion are well balanced and connected. |
| * Contains little division into paragraphs. | * Some divisions into paragraphs, but paragraphs are not well developed. | * Contains well-developed paragraphs with sound supporting detail. | * Paragraphs all have lead sentences, only rich supporting detail and conclusions that lead to the next idea. |
| * Is difficult to follow. | * Parts are difficult to follow. | * Is fairly easy to follow. | * Is very easy to follow. |
| * Has no organizational words or phrases. | * Organizational or transitions words are limited or used incorrectly | * Organization words and phrases are used at most important parts. | * Use of organization words and phrases guides the reader throughout. |
| **Word Choice** | * Contains limited vocabulary, generally below grade level. | * Contains some grade level vocabulary, lacks modifiers and relies on passive verbs. | * Vocabulary generally at grade level, making good use of visual verbs and modifiers. | * Vocabulary is powerful and engaging, includes strong verbs and many strong modifiers, creating imagery and emotion. |
| * Words are not appropriate for purpose or audience. | * Some words may not be appropriate for purpose or audience. | * Vocabulary mostly appropriate for audience and purpose. | * Vocabulary consistently appropriate for audience and purpose. |
| * Words are used incorrectly, affecting understanding and readability. | * Some words used incorrectly but do not affect comprehension | * Words are used correctly, but don't enhance the writing. | * Words are used correctly and enhance the tone of the writing. |
| * Words are not precise in meaning. | * Word choice includes clichés, slang and overused words. | * Clichés slang and overused words are seldom used. | * Word choices are precise and engaging. Clichés/slang not used to support message. |

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|  | **Emerging** | **Developing** | **Accomplished** | **Exemplary** |
| **Sentence Fluency** | * Generally does not write using complete sentences. | * Has several incomplete sentences. | * One or two incomplete sentences, likely due to attempts at more complex structures. | * There are no incomplete sentences. |
| * Many sentences are run-on or rambling. | * Has some run-on or rambling sentences. | * Few run-on or rambling sentences. | * There are no rambling or run-on sentences. |
| * Sentences that are complete are short and choppy, with basic subject verb structure. | * Has some variation in sentence structure and length, but relies on simple sentence structure. | * Variation in both sentence structure and length. | * Varied sentence structures and lengths contribute to the rhythm of the writing. |
| * No variation in sentence beginnings. | * Has little variation in sentence beginnings. | * Some variation in sentence beginnings. | * Varied sentence beginnings contribute to the flow of the writing. |
| * There is no cadence or flow in sentences | * Sentences flow somewhat. | * Sentences flow fairly naturally. | * Sentences flow with a natural cadence and rhythm that make expressive reading easy. |
| **Voice** | * Writing is neither expressive nor engaging. | * Writing has some expression. | * Writing is expressive and somewhat engaging. | * Writing is very expressive and engaging. |
| * Voice seems indifferent and uninvolved with lack of concern for the audience. | * Personal insights not shared. Ideas expressed in generalities. | * Paper is beginning share personal insight and show awareness of audience. | * Writing presents a clear sense of relationship to the audience. |
| * Voice is not appropriate for purpose, audience, topic, and/or genre. | * Voice is, at some points, appropriate for audience, purpose, topic, and/or genre. | * Voice is generally appropriate for the purpose, audience, topic, and/or genre. | * Voice is consistently appropriate for the purpose, audience, topic, and/or genre. |
| * Little evidence of individual voice. | * Voice comes and goes. | * Voice is unique and consistent. | * Voices is unique, honest, and passionate. |
| **Conventions** | * Has multiple errors in grammar, punctuation, and mechanics. | * Has some errors in grammar, punctuation, and mechanics. | * Has few errors in grammar, punctuation, and mechanics. | * The writer demonstrates a good grasp of standard writing conventions and uses the conventions effectively to enhance readability. |
| * Poor handwriting, font selection, or spacing make the paper difficult to read. | * Handwriting, font selection, or spacing is fairly clear. | * Handwriting, font selection, or spacing is clear .but may be inappropriate for academic writing. | * Handwriting, font selection, or spacing is simple and clear, making the paper easy to read. |
| * Illustrations, clip art or tables, if present, are not related to the content or are not placed logically. | * Illustrations, clip art or tables, if present, portray the main idea but do not enhance the presentation. | * Illustrations, clip art or tables, if present, enhance the presentation somewhat. | * Illustrations, clip art or tables, if present, enhance the main idea and guide the reader through the presentation. |
| * No evidence of MLA style and formatting. | * Minimal evidence of MLA style and formatting. | * Generally adheres to MLA style and formatting. | * Exceptional evidence of MLA style and formatting. |