

**6th Grade Magnet English Language Arts (ELA) 2022-23**  
**Sky Ranch Middle School- Mr. Sorensen**  
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**Course Overview:**

In ELA, you will have an advanced and accelerated experience with reading, writing, in the magnet program. This class will develop critical reading skills by giving students the opportunity to engage with, discuss, and write about compelling literature. It will also give students choice in their writing topics in order to hone skills such as purposeful thesis statements, strong organizational structure, thorough and convincing evidence for the writer's claim, precise language, and correct conventions.

**Essential ELA Question for this Year:**

*Why is it human to search for understanding?*

<p><i>1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Focus</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Class fiction novel- <u>A Face Like Glass</u> by Francis Hardinge             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Socratic discussions with higher level student-created questions</li> <li>Class activities – individual and group</li> <li>Literary analysis essay</li> </ol> </li> <li>Grammar &amp; vocabulary             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mini class activities</li> <li>No Red Ink</li> </ol> </li> <li>Exemplification Essays</li> </ul>	<p><b>Unit Guiding Essential Question:</b>  <i>Why is understanding our origins so important to humans?</i></p>
<p><i>2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter Focus</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Class fiction novel- <u>Watership Down</u> by Richard Adams             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Literature circles with depth &amp; complexity icons</li> <li>Class activities – individual and group</li> <li>Literary analysis essay</li> </ol> </li> <li>Grammar &amp; vocabulary             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mini class activities</li> <li>No Red Ink</li> </ol> </li> <li>Poetry book project &amp; presentation</li> </ul>	<p><i>How do systems shape human understanding?</i></p>
<p><i>3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter Focus</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Class Novels- <u>Sophie's World</u> by Jostein Gaarder</li> <li><u>The Giver</u> by Lois Lowry             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Socratic discussions &amp; literature circles with depth complexity icons &amp; higher-quality student-created questions</li> <li>Class activities – individual and group</li> <li>Literary analysis essay</li> </ol> </li> <li>Independent book project</li> <li>Grammar &amp; vocabulary             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mini class activities</li> <li>No Red Ink</li> </ol> </li> <li>Argumentative essay</li> <li>Descriptive essay</li> </ul>	<p><i>How are humans impacted by conflict? How do humans seek resolutions?</i></p>

**Class Reading:**

The novels have been selected by Washoe County School District GT magnet English teachers to challenge strong readers through advanced text requiring greater complexity, depth of thinking and creativity. The assigned books *are* the books we will read together. Parents are encouraged to read the books along with (or ahead of) their children to share in what they are learning, discussing and writing about at school. Please let me know if you'd like to check out a copy of any of our class novels.

**Individual Reading:**

It is important for scholars to enjoy and practice reading for information and pleasure. To foster this ideal, each student will be responsible for independent reading while experiencing different genres and responding to books in different ways. Beginning in the second quarter, students will typically be responsible for one independent book per quarter. Students are encouraged to read at or above their current reading levels and to choose books of great interest to them, whether they are non-fiction or fiction. We will have a class visit to the library each quarter to help students find books to try.

**Writer's Notebooks (tentative):**

Students will be writing in their class notebooks on a daily basis. This will be a place to generate new ideas, share experiences, and note insights and observations. From these new ideas will come topics students can develop into essays. Class notes on academic vocabulary as well as exercises on conventions and word roots will be stored inside. Students will also be using their writer's notebooks to explore various writing skills and taking notes on class novels.

**Writer's Workshop/Essays:**

Students will be writing consistently in writer's workshop, practicing the various purposes of real-world writing, analyzing exemplars, and pre-writing, drafting, revising, and editing. Students will have opportunities for peer response, meeting in writing groups and/or pairs. Self-evaluations will also be used for published pieces to help students acknowledge their hard work and growth and to set goals for future writing pieces.

**Socratic Seminar/Literature Circles:**

As part of our reading focus, students will compare ideas and observations based on the week's reading from the class novel. This will require sharing these essentials verbally in structured group and class discussions. Tangential to this, students will occasionally have assignments requiring class presentations and/or speeches.

**Practice:**

To give students time to work on basic conventions and grammar, there will be several resources used sporadically throughout the year. The Magnet program uses the website No Red Ink, which involves a preassessment determining the areas where they individually need the most practice and tailoring lessons to the specific student. Additionally, to lend depth and context to students' reading, we will also work on examples and understanding of various Greek and Latin roots. Finally, we will occasionally use MindWare's tools to work on vocabulary and develop an understanding of analogies.

**Required Materials (from the Griswold Base supply list):**

- Writing utensil
- Class composition notebook
- Post-It notes

**Grading Policy:**

Assessments/Projects	85% of total grade
Classwork/Homework	15% of total grade

To be successful in this class, you must not only complete all your work, but you must also *engage* in the process. Those who do their work and engage in the content will have earned a grade reflecting mastery of the material and a job well done. This includes telling me when you're having difficulty or stress as a result of any assignments or deadlines. My job is to help you be successful. I will be happy to help any student who needs extra help and/or time to finish all his or her work so long as the student has communicated with me about any issues ahead of time.

**Homework:**

Students will be expected to read independently at home for their class novel and independent book. A reading section for each of our class novels will be assigned once each week. When students do a bit of reading each night, approximately 20-30 minutes of reading will be required. Students are expected to come to class with reading assignments read thoroughly to fully participate in class discussions and activities.