



8th Grade English Language Arts
Syllabus 2020-2021
Mr. Ball

Contact Information

The best way to contact Mr. Ball, and all of the teachers at HHA this year, will be with the Bloomz app. See more information on Bloomz below.

Welcome to 8th Grade!

Get ready for a challenging but awesome school year! I am so excited to work with you again this year and to help you grow as a reader, writer, editor, and speaker, as well as to prepare you for high school and your life beyond education. Students will build on and continue to develop their appreciation for literature. They will do this through the study of literary elements in both contemporary and classic selections. An emphasis will be placed on having students move from the literal meaning to the abstract in the students' critical thinking skills.

All students are expected to develop and utilize the following mindsets inside and outside of the classroom to help develop community:

Community: knowing a feeling of fellowship and understanding of others while respectfully communicating common attitudes, interests, and goals.

- **Love:** A great interest in something
- **Solidarity:** Mutual support within a group
- **Resilience:** Using your strengths to recover quickly from difficulties and setbacks
- **Joy:** A feeling of happiness
- **Well-Being:** A state of being comfortable, healthy, and happy

Middle School Schedule

Homeroom: 9 am - 9:30 am

Core 1: 9:30 am -10:15 am

Core 2: 10:30-11:15 am

Lunch: 11:30 am -12:15 pm

Core 3: 12:15 pm - 1:00 pm

Resource: 1:15 pm - 2:00 pm

Office Hours / Independent Work Time: 2:00 pm - 2:50 pm

English: Springboard Curriculum

For English this year, students will be using The College Board's Springboard curriculum. Most work will be completed on Google Classroom.

Methods of Instruction

- Individual research through technology
- Group lectures and discussions
- Small group activities
- Hands-on activities such as projects and portfolio work
- Oral presentations
- Written compositions/essays

Writing

Students will write daily in class in both informal and formal styles throughout the year. The writing process will be used (prewriting, drafting, editing, revising, publishing) as students explore different types of writing and different purposes for writing. Writing skills are extremely important to succeed at the best Baltimore City high schools, the most prestigious colleges and universities, trade school, business, as well as being responsible citizens in a democracy. Specific types of writing in 8th grade include:

- Journal Writing
- Expository Writing
- Argumentative Writing
- Creative Writing
- Writing Poetry

Speaking and Listening

Academic talk plays a very large and very important role in our class. Students will be expected to speak to each other in an academically appropriate way as well as actively listen to what others have to say. Many assignments will involve speaking and listening, including:

- Oral presentations (individual and group)
- Literature Circles

- Group work
- Whole class debates
- Socratic Seminars

Grading Policy

Due to the unusual circumstances of our virtual learning environment, the grading policy will be slightly different than in years past and it will be different in each subject. In ELA this year the grading breakdown will be as follows:

60% Classwork / Exit Tickets

30% Assessments

10% Participation

Classwork / Exit Tickets

Every day in our live sessions we will be working on assignments together as a class, in pairs, and/or individually. The work students' do in class will count as the majority of their grades while we are in the virtual classroom. It is incredibly important that students show up every day ready to work, learn, and grow. Any assignments that are not completed in class will need to be completed independently.

Assessments

In the virtual classroom, our assessments will count as slightly less than in the physical classroom. Assessments in the virtual setting will include chapter quizzes, Socratic Seminars, and a final essay. It is imperative that students are present in class so they receive the instruction necessary to be successful in the assessments.

Participation

Participation in the virtual classroom looks like students coming to class on time, keeping their camera on (unless the teacher has spoken with them about an exception), answering questions using their mic, the chatbox, or non-verbal gestures, and working productively to complete classwork in a group, in pairs, or independently.

Virtual Learning Norms

1. Login daily! Please remember to check your email and Google Classroom at the beginning of each morning.
2. Read all instructions on Google Classroom and each assignment.
3. Plagiarism is unacceptable. Any work submitted that is not your own will result in a zero.
4. Always use appropriate and academic language when communicating with staff and students.
5. Complete work on time and to the best of your ability. Feel free to ask questions via Bloomz.

Zoom

1. During our class time, please sign in with your real full name and turn your video on! It's important to see your face so we can create a connection between you and your name. We want to make sure that we can continue to build our relationships throughout a year. If there is a specific concern or you do not have a device with video access, please contact your homeroom teacher for support.
2. During our class time, we want to make sure that we can hear from you! If you have an answer to a question or want to speak, please use the "raise your hand" feature through Zoom. For more information on how to do that, check out this [helpful video](#).
3. We want to make sure that we're keeping our Zoom classes as professional as possible! Please make sure you're wearing appropriate attire during our class time. Some simple rules are:
 - a. No pajama-type attire, undershirts or other bedtime attire is allowed during the school day or during school-sponsored activities.
 - b. Apparel with vulgar statements or statements promoting illegal drugs, alcohol, sex, violence, or gangs is not allowed.
 - c. No undergarments worn as outerwear are allowed. Clothing should be worn so that undergarments, including boxer shorts, thongs, or bras, are not exposed.
4. Just a reminder that all Zoom classes will be recorded. This will allow missing students to be able to gain access to instruction as well as support students who might need it. Please contact your homeroom teacher with any additional questions. We will be posting a link to the Zoom Cloud with recordings at the end of each day.
5. All zoom links and schedules will be posted on your Google classroom. Please allow a five-minute window for tech issues and software updates to make sure you're on time for class!

Independent Work Policy

All assignments that are not completed during our live sessions must be completed before **7:45 am** the day after it was assigned. Please talk to the teacher personally if there is any reason why you will need an exception to this rule.

Additional Support

Every day from 2:00 pm to 2:50 pm there will be an opportunity for additional support. Mr. Ball will be in a Zoom session and any students who need additional support will be able to come to the sessions to receive support.

Makeup Work Policy

It is expected that all assignments are turned in on time. All assignments are due at 7:45M, the morning after they are assigned. If there are extenuating circumstances, the student must reach out to their teacher before the activity deadline.

Absences

Students are expected to be in class EVERY DAY ON TIME. Students are responsible for making up work after being absent from class.

Need to leave class briefly?

Students are expected to be in class for the entire class period (so please use the bathroom before class). If there is an emergency, a student really needs to use the bathroom, or support a sibling, please be sure to chat Mr. Ball before you go and make it as quick as possible.

Google Classroom

The majority of our assignments will be posted and completed on Google Classroom. The Google Classroom is the same one you used last year for ELA with Ms. Lojo. Please reach out to me as soon as possible if you have any issues locating or logging into Google Classroom.

Bloomz

Mr. Ball will use Bloomz to track student behavior and to communicate with students and parents about positive and negative behaviors. **All families will be given a code to connect their students and guardians.** It is incredibly important that guardians connect to Bloomz to track student progress