

# **BNS Middle School Language Arts Curriculum 2017-2018**

## **Instructor: Jared Bond The Role of the Outsider**

### **Introduction**

The middle school language arts curriculum allows students to explore multiple genres and authors through the integrated study of literature, critical writing, creative writing, and grammar. Students will read selections from and write responses to a variety of authors, works, and genres. This curriculum correlates with the current World Studies curriculum, which surveys mid-19<sup>th</sup> century and 20<sup>th</sup> century American history. Thus, many of the books and themes discussed in language arts will be loosely tied to the American experience. The contemporary literature selections will help students better appreciate these same topics in their World Studies curriculum. All instruction, materials, and assignments will be based on the strengths and needs of the class and individual students. The curriculum will incorporate student interests while meeting Virginia SOL's and BNS objectives. Grammar and vocabulary lessons will be derived from Sadlier-Oxford *Vocabulary Workshop* and a grammar program loosely based on the *Easy Grammar: Plus* model of instruction. Spelling lessons will be derived individually from student mistakes.

### **Reading**

A variety of literary genres will be covered this year, including short stories, historical poetry, drama, modern fiction, science fiction, and nonfiction. While topics correlate with themes explored in social studies, works have been chosen based on depth of themes, perceived student interest, language complexity, and purposeful exposure to a variety of writing styles, both classical and modern. Aside from reading assigned for class, students will be further expected to select books for independent reading. Time will also be set aside for sustained silent reading. Students will be asked to respond to literature in various ways, in particular through questioning, connecting literature to previous experiences, creating images, making predictions, and exploring themes, literary devices, and word choice. Student comprehension and use of inference will be encouraged through active discussion, questioning, reflection, and critical thinking.

### **Writing**

Students will likewise be asked to respond to literature by writing in a variety of ways, both creatively and technically. Each unit allows students to produce creative and technical products, and a variety of formal and informal response forms will be studied. Through response journals students will informally respond to reading throughout the curriculum. Writing will be further enhanced with regular assignments requiring students to master a variety of styles, to write for a variety of audiences, and to explore their own experiences through writing. Emphasis will be placed on form in writing, including proper sentence formation, paragraph formation, and composition organization. Students will experience the full complexities of the writing process by regularly engaging in

brainstorming, composing, revising, proofreading, and publishing. Content, organization, voice, fluency, grammar, and word choice will be emphasized throughout the writing process. Each year, students will be given the option of publishing work through a variety of venues, including submission to the annual middle school literary magazine and to various writing competitions. All students will participate in the school-wide celebration of writing at the end of the year by producing, revising, proofreading, and presenting a short story for Authors' Tea.

### **Grammar and Vocabulary**

Grammatical conventions will be studied regularly in the form of regular lessons as part of a 3-year program. Grammar will also be emphasized throughout the course of student writing. Writers' workshops will enhance exploration of the conventions of writing styles and purposes. Students will be expected to use studied grammar and spelling rules in all formal writing assignments and to revise assignments so that they contain no grammatical mistakes. In addition, there will be a focus on vocabulary enhancement, especially words they encounter frequently in high school reading.

### **Speaking and Listening**

Speaking and listening will be integrated throughout the curriculum through regular oral presentation, small group discussions, literature circles, interviews, sharing of writing, debate, and drama. All students are expected to contribute to group discussions and to listen attentively to others in the classroom. Students will work to develop confidence in their own speaking abilities as well as to show respect toward the work and opinions of others.

### **Assessment**

Students will be assessed both formally and informally throughout the year. Ideally, each student will be able to use his or her own strengths and interests to display knowledge. A variety of assessment opportunities will be given, including quizzes, informal response journals, short-term assignments, long-term assignments, essays, homework completion, portfolios, creative pieces, and participation in a variety of in-class assignments, including whole-class, group, and individual.

The grading policy will include the following:

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| Quizzes and short-term assignments:  | 15% |
| Long-term assignments, including major creative assignments and essays         | 40% |
| Class preparation and homework completion, including response journals         | 25% |
| Class work, notebook organization, and appropriate participation in discussion | 20% |

## Curriculum Overview:

| Dates                    | Unit of Study  | Literary Works  | Writing Projects  |
|--------------------------|--|---|---|
| <b>September/October</b> | <b>Poetry</b><br>- 19 <sup>th</sup> Century<br>American Poetry | Sidney Lanier<br>Henry Wadsworth<br>Longfellow<br>William Cullen Bryant<br>John Greenleaf Whittier<br>James Russell Lowell<br>Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr.<br>Ralph Waldo Emerson<br>Henry David Thoreau<br>Edgar Allan Poe<br>Walt Whitman<br>Emily Dickinson  | - Book Review<br><br>- Style Imitation<br>- Poetry Set<br><br>- Presentation of a<br>Poetry style |
| <b>October</b>           | <b>Introduction to Literature</b><br>- Short Stories           | <b>6<sup>th</sup></b> - “The Three Questions,”<br>“Chivalry,” “Charles,” “A<br>Sound of Thunder”<br><br><b>7<sup>th</sup></b> - “Secret Life of Walter<br>Mitty,” “Gator,” “We Can Get<br>Them For You Wholesale,”<br>“There Will Come Soft<br>Rains”<br><br><b>8<sup>th</sup></b> – “Celebrated Jumping<br>Frog,” “Cop and the<br>Anthem,” “The Lottery,”<br>“Owl Creek” | - Thesis Statement<br>Workshop<br><br>- Compare/<br>Contrast Essay                                |
| <b>November</b>          | <b>NaNoWriMo</b>   |   | Creative Short Story  |
| <b>December</b>          | - <b>Novels</b>  | <b>6<sup>th</sup></b> – <u>No Promises in the<br/>Wind</u><br><br><b>7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup></b> – <u>The Truth About<br/>Sparrows</u>  | - Vignettes<br><br>- Character Essay  |
| <b>January/February</b>  | - <b>Novels</b>  | <b>6<sup>th</sup>/7<sup>th</sup></b> – <u>Kira-Kira</u><br><br><b>8<sup>th</sup></b> - <u>The Education of Little<br/>Tree</u>  | - Persuasive Essay<br><br>8 <sup>th</sup> – Author Essay  |
| <b>February/March</b>    | - <b>Novels</b>  | <b>6<sup>th</sup>/7<sup>th</sup></b> – <u>Witness</u><br><br><b>8<sup>th</sup></b> - <u>To Kill a Mockingbird</u>   | - Authors’ Tea<br>(Dialogue, Vignettes,<br>Inner Monologue)<br>- Response Essay                   |
| <b>April/May</b>         | <b>Shakespeare</b><br>- Drama                                  | “Hamlet”  |   |

