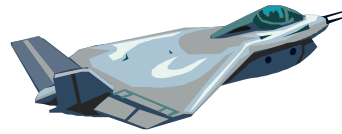


2009–2010

8TH GRADE
LANGUAGE ARTS

POLICY NEWSLETTER

LANGUAGE ARTS



YOUR FLIGHT HAS LANDED – WELCOME TO SERINAVILLE!!!

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And welcome to the exciting world of language! (Although I really need not formally welcome you, since you are all already very proficient sellers and consumers of the English language.) What you may not realize is that there are many interesting avenues of language that you may never have considered. Have you ever wondered who thought up a particularly bizarre word, or how an advertiser is able to convince you of your hunger when you just ate a huge meal?

It is my hope to pique your interest in, as well as expand your grasp of, various language concepts and ideas while helping you acquire important skills to enrich your interactions with the English language and your fellow English-language speakers.

Inside this newsletter you will find all the basic information you will need to know about your Language Arts course. Please read this carefully and keep it as a reference tool.



**“Language exerts hidden power,
like a moon on the tides.”**

-Rita Mae Brown,
Starting From Scratch, 1988

TOPICS OF STUDY

This year we will delve into a variety of topics in our quest to further our language skills. We will explore such concepts in depth: writing, literature, reading strategies, grammar, and vocabulary. Most units of study will revolve around a central theme. In addition to being thematically centered, most units will have interdisciplinary connections to other subject areas such as Civics, Science, and Mathematics.

ITEMS YOU WILL FIND INSIDE:

- GRADING PROCEDURES
- VOCABULARY INFORMATION
- ACCELERATED READING PROGRAM AND D.I.R.T. INFORMATION
- CHEATING POLICY
- CONTACTING AVENUES

CLASSROOM MATERIALS NEEDED

- | | |
|----------------------------|---|
| * 3-ring binder | * box of colored pencils |
| * 5-subject notebook | * highlighters (need blue, red/pink, green, orange) |
| * a folder (for L.A. only) | * pencils |
| * pack of loose-leaf paper | * a red pen |
| * packs of note cards | * sticky tabs |
| * a novel of choice | * a positive attitude!! |



TEXTBOOKS



The Language Arts curriculum is supported by the Prentice Hall “Timeless Voices, Timeless Themes” textbook. There are separate literature and writing/grammar texts.

Text books must be covered at all times. Random checks will be made throughout the year for credit. It is important for the maintenance of the books that you do not write in them, bend pages, or store worksheets inside the books. Mistreatment of books will result in disciplinary action.

The textbooks are available online (should you forget one of them in school). In class, Mrs. Serina will give you information about how to access them online.

Because of the wide variety of choices available, it is possible that each 8th grade team will read different literature, but will no doubt learn the same information.

ASSESSMENT AND GRADING

Your grade will be based on homework, projects, quizzes, tests, and writing assignments. Everything is calculated on the basis of total points; your average is the number of points you have earned out of the total number of points available.

Homework will usually be worth 10-25 points and may be checked for correctness and completeness. You can expect to have homework on a daily basis. *Blanks* or *?????* are unacceptable responses. Be sure to make a valiant attempt on each assignment. If you are stuck on an assignment, re-read your class notes, the corresponding textbook section, and the class samples. Assignments are on an “all-or-nothing” basis. **All assignments must be completed in full to earn credit.**

Quizzes are usually worth 25-50 points and will *usually* be announced. Tests, projects, and writing assignments may be worth 50-100 points. Major assignments will always be assigned adequate time for preparation.

YOUR CURRENT AVERAGE

You may check your grades anytime online via the Home Access Center. Your grades will outline all recent homework assignments, projects, quiz and test scores, as well as your current overall average. If you have any questions regarding your grades, please see me before/after class. Communication is essential to a successful year!



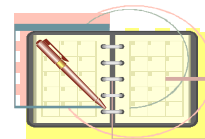
WHEN YOU ARE ABSENT / YOU MISS CLASS

Check the class calendar online (WWW.MRSSERINA.COM) for homework and items covered in class.

Upon your return, the first action you must take is to check the **daily class log** for your class period. Make sure to check your class bin and pick up any handouts listed in the log. Ask Mrs. Serina about assignments that you do not understand.

Remember you have **two days** for each day you are **absent** to make up work that was missed, and it is **your responsibility** to see that missed work is submitted. **If you are absent on the day of a test, you are expected to take the test immediately upon your return.**

If you **miss** Language Arts **class**, but are not absent for the day (band, doctor’s appointment, etc.), all work is still due that day. Drop your assignments off in the morning or stop in to submit them when you arrive to school. It is **your responsibility** to see that assignments are submitted on time for credit. Be responsible, plan accordingly, and communicate!



MISSED ASSIGNMENTS AND EXTRA CREDIT

When a student does not hand in an assignment on the day it is due, **zero credit** will be earned. Because most assignments will be reviewed and checked the day they are due, no work will be accepted late for credit.

(*Major writing assignments and projects are the only exceptions.) A major writing assignment that is submitted late will be docked one letter grade for every day it is late. Please note: the grade will be deducted from the student’s GRADE EARNED.

You will have the opportunity to earn 10 bonus points each marking period. In order to earn this bonus, you must achieve perfect homework during the marking period. **Since completing homework is a fundamental responsibility of being a student (and not an extraordinary task) I expect you to earn extra credit** each marking period. (Please note that this will be your only opportunity for extra credit in Language Arts. One late or incomplete homework assignment disqualifies you from earning extra credit.)

VOCABULARY

Building a strong vocabulary is an essential life-skill necessary for more than just achieving well on standardized tests. A person with a highly developed vocabulary is better able to express his or her thoughts, needs, and desires. Your word choice also reflects upon you as a person and how you are perceived by future employers, work colleagues, and even those people you see socially.

In order to build a stronger vocabulary in its students, Parkland School District uses the Sadlier-Oxford Vocabulary Series. Every unit has a similar format and is designed for primarily independent learning.

Vocabulary will be completed and tested every two weeks, except where holidays or special circumstances dictate a change in schedule. Completion of the unit bookwork includes color-coding the definitions pages according to parts of speech. This will help to emphasize the continued acquisition of grammar skills, as well as the emphasis on the particular usage of each unit's words.

It is extremely important that you treat your vocabulary book with care, as you will need it throughout the school year. Please do not turn down or fold pages of completed units or tear off completed units. I highly recommend covering your vocabulary book. Highly effective covers that I have seen include book socks, stick-on vinyl book covers, and (believe it or not) duct tape! Any type of cover is better than nothing! **Student vocabulary books will be collected at the end of the year for a grade.**

Should you lose your vocabulary book there are several things you need to know. First, **lost books do not earn you an extension on your vocabulary work due dates.** Second, new books can be purchased. Please see me if you run into this situation. The cost of a new book is \$5.00.

"A powerful agent is the right word. Whenever we come upon one of those intensely right words . . . the resulting effect is physical as well as spiritual, and electrically prompt."

-Mark Twain (1835 - 1910)
US novelist, journalist, river pilot



ACCELERATED READING PROGRAM (A.R.P.) & DAILY INDEPENDENT READING TIME (D.I.R.T.)

Reading is an important part of expanding and sharpening language skills. It is by reading that we expand our knowledge of various modes of strong writing, which in turn we can model in our own writing. Research has shown that students who read more are better writers and communicators.

With this idea in mind, Springhouse Middle School is committed to stressing the importance of reading throughout our curriculum. The Accelerated Reading Program (A.R.P.) is just one aspect of this concept. The Accelerated Reading Program, which is familiar to many of you, allows students to earn points for reading. These points can then later be used during an auction at the end of the school year to purchase many great items such as books, gift certificates, DVDs, iPods, and even TVs (and more).

To assure that a student is reading within his or her comfort zone, each student will be assessed for his or her reading level using the S.T.A.R. computer test, and then all book choices for the ARP graded project must be approved.

In addition, as part of our effort to stress the importance of reading to our students, part of class period will be devoted to D.I.R.T., or **D**aily **I**ndependent **R**eading **T**ime on the novel of your choice. (This time will help you to meet your monthly A.R.P. class requirement.

HOMework POLICY

1. ALL HOMEWORK IS EXPECTED TO BE SUBMITTED ON TIME.
2. LATE HOMEWORK WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED. MAJOR ASSIGNMENTS, SUCH AS ESSAYS AND PROJECTS, WILL BE THE ONLY EXCEPTION; HOWEVER, YOUR SCORE WILL DROP ONE FULL LETTER GRADE EVERY DAY IT IS LATE.
3. IF YOU ARE ABSENT, IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO CHECK MRS. SERINA'S WEBSITE (WWW.MRSSERINA.COM) OR CHECK WITH A FRIEND. IN THE EVENT OF AN ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL, PLEASE KNOW IT IS **YOUR** RESPONSIBILITY TO MAKE UP ALL MISSED WORK. ANY HANDOUTS THAT WERE DISTRIBUTED IN YOUR ABSENCE CAN BE FOUND IN THE CORRESPONDING CLASS TRAY ON THE COUNTER. IN ADDITION, PLEASE CHECK THE DAILY CLASS LOG FOR THE ITEMS DISCUSSED AND COVERED IN CLASS.
4. IT IS HELPFUL TO RECORD ALL HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS IN YOUR AGENDA BOOK.
5. IF AN ASSIGNMENT IS TO BE COMPLETED ON A COMPUTER, AND YOU HAVE ANY COMPUTER ISSUES AT HOME (ex: COMPUTER RUNS OUT OF INK / PAPER), SAVE YOUR ASSIGNMENT TO A USB DRIVE AND BRING IT IN TO SCHOOL TO PRINT, OR PLEASE FEEL FREE TO E-MAIL ME YOUR ASSIGNMENT. MY E-MAIL ADDRESS IS SERINAM@PARKLANDSD.ORG.

RESTROOM POLICY

IF YOU MUST USE THE RESTROOM DURING CLASS, PLEASE DO SO AT THE VERY BEGINNING OR VERY END OF CLASS. WHEN LEAVING THE ROOM FOR ANY REASON, YOU **ABSOLUTELY MUST** ASK PERMISSION, SIGN OUT, AND TAKE A PASS. UPON YOUR RETURN, YOU MUST SIGN IN.

PENCIL SHARPENING

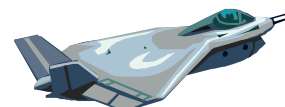
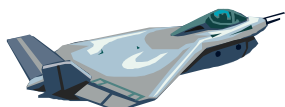
JUST DO IT. THERE IS NO NEED TO ASK ME FOR PERMISSION. PLEASE TRY TO SHARPEN AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS SO YOU DON'T DISRUPT THE LESSON. IF YOU ARE IN NEED OF A WRITING UTENSIL, PLEASE ASK A FRIEND FIRST. IF YOU NEED TO ASK ME, I WILL EXPECT COLLATERAL OF SOME SORT. J

SUBSTITUTE TEACHER POLICY

IF, FOR ANY REASON, YOU GIVE A SUBSTITUTE TEACHER A REASON TO DOCUMENT YOUR MISBEHAVIOR, I WILL SCHEDULE A DISCUSSION WITH YOU. IF I FIND THAT YOU WERE DISRESPECTFUL OR INSUBORDINATE DURING A SUBSTITUTE TEACHER'S VISIT, YOU WILL RECEIVE AN AUTOMATIC DISCIPLINE REFERRAL, AND YOU WILL BE REQUIRED TO WRITE A LETTER OF APOLOGY TO THE SUBSTITUTE TEACHER.

PLEASE REMEMBER THAT THESE POLICIES EXIST TO ENSURE A SAFE AND COMFORTABLE
LEARNING ENVIRONMENT FOR ALL STUDENTS.

**AVIATOR STUDENTS MEET SUCCESS
AND SOAR TO NEW HEIGHTS!**



MRS. SERINA
8TH GRADE LANGUAGE ARTS
AVIATOR TEAM
1200 SPRINGHOUSE ROAD

WEB: WWW.MRSSERINA.COM
EMAIL: SERINAM@PARKLANDSD.ORG
PHONE: 610-351-5900 x 68218

WE'RE ON THE WEB!

WWW.PARKLANDSD.ORG



For my students, my door is always open! Please stop in upon arriving to school, during homeroom, or during activity period. You may also email me. I will try my best to answer you as quickly as possible, but please do not expect immediate answers to nightly homework assignments. If you do e-mail me, follow up with me the next morning when you arrive at school.

For the parents of my students, I can be **most easily reached via email**. If you would like to contact me via phone, I will respond to your contact as quickly as possible.

A final avenue would be to send a note in with your child or to write in their agenda book, with specific instructions to show it to me!
 (This often works well!)

A FINAL WORD...

**IN SERINAVILLE,
 YOU WILL BE A SUCCESSFUL AVIATOR OF
 WRITING, GRAMMAR, LITERATURE, VOCABULARY,
 AND MUCH, MUCH MORE!**

***TO BE SUCCESSFUL IN THIS CLASS
 YOU MUST***

- DO YOUR HOMEWORK (AND DO IT WELL)!
- COMPLETE ASSIGNMENTS ON TIME!
- PAY ATTENTION IN CLASS (AND PARTICIPATE)!
- TAKE NOTES (AND REFER TO THEM OFTEN)!
- PROBLEM SOLVE!
- STUDY YOUR MATERIALS!



INFORMATION REVIEW CONFIRMATION

2009-2010 POLICY NEWSLETTER ***LANGUAGE ARTS – MRS. SERINA***

**** This entire page is to be returned (signed and dated) to Mrs. Serina ****

After you have had time to review the information included in this newsletter,
please sign and date this form and return it to Mrs. Serina in class.

**I have reviewed the information contained in Mrs. Serina's
2009 - 2010 Language Arts policy newsletter and listed any questions below.**

Questions:

Student's Name (print): _____ Period: _____

Student's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Guardian #1:

Name (print): _____ Date: _____

Signature: _____

Guardian #2:

Name (print): _____ Date: _____

Signature: _____

MRS. SERINA'S CHEATING POLICY 2009-2010

** This entire page is to be returned (signed and dated) to Mrs. Serina **

Please review the cheating policy closely.

Once you are finished, please sign and date this form and return it to Mrs. Serina in class.

Definition of Cheating (as taken from the PHS student handbook)

LEVEL ONE:

1. Looking on someone else's test or quiz paper or passing on test info during a test.
2. Reporting on a book that one has not read or on a performance that one has not seen.
3. Submitting reports based on falsified or fictitious data or footnotes.
4. Copying or submitting someone else's work and claiming it as your own; this includes plagiarism.
5. Allowing another student to copy or use one's work, research, or notes for his / her own credit; or doing another student's work for credit.
6. Possessing "crib" notes or other unauthorized materials in class for use during a test or quiz.
7. Being in unauthorized possession of or having made unauthorized use of a test or exam.

Penalty for cheating:

The student will receive an "F" or a zero (0) for the assignment, test, exam, etc. Notification of the offense and the assigned grade will be sent to the home of the student, to the assistant principal, and to the guidance counselor.

I, _____, have read and understand the policy outlined above. I agree to abide by the expectations of this policy and am aware of the penalties if I choose not to abide by the policy.

Student's Name (print): _____ Period: _____

Student's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Guardian #1:

Name (print): _____ Date: _____

Signature: _____

Guardian #2:

Name (print): _____ Date: _____

Signature: _____