

September 6, 2017

Hello Parent(s)/Guardian(s):

I am Mrs. Lisa Dawson your eighth grader's English Language/ Arts teacher. I began my career as a high school teacher in another school district. One of the best decisions I've made in my life was accepting a job offer many years ago here at East Middle School.

Please review the attached English/Language Arts Course Outline, and Supply List. **Parents, complete the student- return form on the last page, due no later than Friday, September 8th.** Should you have any comments, concerns or questions about the outline or about your student's progress at any time during the school year please feel free to leave a message on my voice-mail at (248) 426-1070. For your convenience, if you are running short on time and would like to e-mail concerns/comments/questions regarding your student's progress, my address is [lisa.dawson@farmington.k12.mi.us](mailto:lisa.dawson@farmington.k12.mi.us).

**Open House** is scheduled for Thursday, September 7th from 6:00 p.m.-8:05 p.m. I also look forward to an exciting year with our students and to speaking with you individually at fall conferences, scheduled for October 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>.

Sincerely,

*Lisa Dawson*

Mrs. Lisa Dawson

**Mrs. Dawson's ELA Class**

**COURSE OUTLINE**

**Pre- Advanced Placement  
English/Language Arts  
8th Grade**

**Teacher:** Mrs. Lisa Dawson

**Room:** 119

**Hour:**

**Time(s):**

**Conference/Prep Period:** 6<sup>th</sup> Hour (Best time to call): 1:40-2:32

**Email:** lisa.dawson@farmington.k12.mi.us (Very convenient for quick responses.)

**Voice Mail#:** (248) 426-1070

**Homework Website:** <http://lisadawsonclassroom.weebly.com>

**Overview:**

**8th Grade English/Language Arts Units:**

**Independent Reading  
Literary Essay  
Narrative Reading  
Writing the Argument  
Narrative Poetry  
Informational Reading**

These units provide eighth grade students with a critical foundation of literacy through the use of narrative, informational, and argumentative texts. As students analyze and produce these texts, they become more adept readers, writers, listeners, speakers, and thinkers. They come to distinguish between narrative, informational and argumentative texts by studying fiction and nonfiction in a variety of formats and develop a more thorough understanding of audience and purpose. The use of a reader's/writer's notebook encourages students to become independent, engaged, and empowered

learners who value close reading, idea generation, drafting, and revision within the writing community. The focus on understanding and using the elements of argument is emphasized in both written and spoken form. Units use both narrative and informational reading and writing to support the development of multiple literacies including digital literacy skills for the 21st century learner. The eighth grade curriculum builds upon curricula of prior grades and assists students as they make progress toward high school.

### **8th Grade Pre-AP English:**

The **Pre-AP English** curriculum supports the expectation that all students can perform well at rigorous academic levels. This will be reflected in curriculum and instruction throughout the school such that all 8th grade students are consistently being challenged to expand their knowledge and skills to the next level. Eighth grade students are prepared for higher intellectual engagement by starting the development of skills and acquisition of knowledge as early as possible. The middle school years can provide powerful opportunities to help all students acquire the knowledge, concepts, and skills needed to engage in a higher level of learning. This is compatible with the growth mindset.

### **Repeated Assignments/Assessments:**

- Free-Write weekly journal entries
- Independent Reading Assignments
- Use of reading and writing class time
- Paired, small group and large group discussion and participation
- Impromptu and prepared speeches
- Writing process (research, outlines, drafts, revisions)
- Required readings and analysis of literary and informational texts

### **Essays/Projects:**

- Year-long topical journal using the essay model
- Literary Analytical Essay
- My Michigan Hero
- Argumentative Research Essay
- Narrative writing: The Short Story
- Creating an Original Volume of Poetry

### **Supply List Requests:**

Please bring the following items to class with you daily. **Hall passes will not be given to retrieve supplies.**

- a) 3-ring, 1 or  $1\frac{1}{2}$  -inch binder with inside front and back pocket and outside plastic front and back covers (Please see samples in class. Any color will do.)
- b) 6-subject dividers ( preferably made of **paper or card-stock**) with tabs for the following 8 categories
  - 1) **Classwork**
  - 2) **Notes**
  - 3) **Graded Papers**
  - 4) **Instructional Handouts**
  - 5) **Other**
  - 6) **Loose-leaf**
- c) loose-leaf paper
- d) blue or black ink pens
- e) pen/pencil case with colored pencils, pens, highlighters plus a mini hand-held hole puncher if possible
- f) the assigned paperback/hardcover book of the unit
- g) East Middle School Planner

**Binder Checks:** The entire student's portfolio/binder will be evaluated once per semester. Select sections of the binder may also be evaluated periodically within each quarter. Students will be given a checklist of assignments to arrange in order within a five day period.

### **Classroom Rules:**

- 1) Follow directions the first time they are given.
- 2) Come prepared to class with all necessary materials.
- 3) Be respectful. Avoid teasing, name-calling, or arguing.
- 4) Keep hands, feet and other objects to yourself.
- 5) In order to leave the classroom, you must have your planner.
- 5) Pay attention and stay alert. Keep your head up at all times.
- 6) Use class time wisely. Work when it's time to work.
- 7) Use the proper heading for all assignments.

## **Classroom Policies:**

1. Read the contents of the whiteboards and SMART screen upon entering class daily. Contents include several categories: announcements, lesson objective(s) the day's agenda, homework and reminders.
2. Write all necessary homework/reminders in your planner daily.
3. Upon return from an **absence**:
  - a) Go over to the assignment table in the designated section of the classroom.
  - b) Pick up an agenda checklist from the appropriate folder for the day(s) you missed. Read the list and complete all tasks on it.
  - c) Retrieve all pertinent worksheets/ copies of notes/handouts from the tray that match the day(s) of the week you missed.
  - d) You will have the same amount of nights to complete the assignment than those who were present. If you borrow typed copies of notes from an absent tray, copy them in your own handwriting at home and return the borrowed packet to the appropriate absent tray at the beginning of the next class session.
4. Turn in all current, late or absent work **in the designated labeled** spot(s) at the beginning of your scheduled class period.
5. Some assignments this year must be typed/computer generated. Please print all portions of these assignments at home/in the media center/at a friend's or family member's home, etc. **Please do not email me any portion of any assignment.**
6. East's school-wide **tardy policy** will be enforced:  
**1st incident** Verbal Warning,  
**2<sup>nd</sup> incident**- Tardy Caution Slip sent home to be signed by a parent,  
**3<sup>rd</sup> incident**- After-school Detention assigned,  
**4<sup>th</sup> or more incident**- Office Referral (In-School Suspension).
7. The **same four step procedure** as listed above will be applied to students who **forget supplies**.

**Evaluation of Power Standards Driven Goals:**

The 8th Grade English/ Language Arts teachers will utilize the following scale to evaluate (grade) student progress towards achieving power standard based goals.

**Power Standards Evaluation Scale**

Level	Academic Achievement	Citizenship/Behavior
4	Student has demonstrated complete mastery of learning target beyond expectations.	Student consistently exceeds behavior expectations.
3	Student has demonstrated complete mastery of learning target at expectations.	Student consistently meets behavior expectations.
2	Student has demonstrated some, but not complete mastery of learning target	Student meets behavior expectations most of the time.
1	Student has demonstrated little or no mastery of learning target	Student meets behavior expectations some of the time.
0	Student has made little or no attempt to demonstrate mastery.	Student rarely meets behavior expectations.

## **Grading.**

- Grades are posted on the internet program MI-STAR/Parent Portal **at least** once per week, thus, feel free to check the program as often as necessary.
- **Procedure** for correcting teacher errors on MI-STAR: The student will have the opportunity to submit an **already graded assignment** in class and inform Mrs. Dawson of the error at the beginning of the period during announcement time.
- Halfway through semester, parent(s)/guardian(s) should expect to receive a progress report card grade via the internet program, Mi-Star/Parent Portal.
- At the end of each semester, student achievement will be based upon dividing the total number of points earned by the total maximum number of points possible.

### **The middle-school district-wide grading scale is as follows:**

A= 90%-100% B= 80%-89% C= 70%-79% D= 60%-69% F= 59%-0%

## **MI- Star/Parent Portal Grading Program**

Over the summer, parent(s) received a letter informing them of the district's internet grading program, MI-STAR/Parent Portal. The letter contained parent(s) user name(s) and password(s) to gain access to your grades. If your parent(s) need a copy of the letter, have him/her/them to obtain it from the guidance office at (248) 489-6238.

## **Late Work Policy:**

Late regular assignments and projects will be accepted one school-day late and beyond for a maximum of **80%** credit. If the chapter review assignment is not completed by the day it's checked or reviewed in class, the student will be allowed to complete the assignment as the class reviews the answers and submit it for **minimum credit**. Thus, the student will still have the opportunity to study accurate answers in preparation for tests and quizzes. As per English/Language Arts policy, any assignment that has not been submitted by the completion of a unit will receive a zero, which cannot be made up at a later date.

**Incomplete Assignment(s)** will be returned for completion by the next class session. The above mentioned Late Work Policy will then apply upon submission of the assignment(s).

**Mrs. Dawson's Classroom Website:**

Assignment listings, project due dates along with test dates will be updated on Mondays, usually for the entire week. Feel free to check the following website 2-3 times weekly in case there are any additions, deletions or postponement of due dates:

<http://lisadawsonclassroom.weebly.com>

**The next page must be completed and signed by a parent or legal guardian before or no later than \_\_\_\_\_.**

**Students please do not complete the form yourselves.**

**Keep the rest of this packet in the "Other" section of your binder for the remainder of the school year.**



Dear Mrs. Dawson:

I have read the contents of the Course Packet for **English/Language Arts**  
Thus, with a clear understanding of the aforementioned  
requirements, I will do my best to encourage my son/daughter to  
successfully pass this course.

Print your eighth grader's first and last name:

Print your first and last name:

Work number:

Home phone:

Cell phone:

Parent's Email address:

Parent's signature:

Comments/Concerns (if any):