

**KELLY MIDDLE SCHOOL
COURSE SYLLABUS
2015-2016**

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Hours: 8-4:30pm M-F • Room 29

Course: 7th Grade Language Arts/ Social Studies Block

Duration: 2015 – 2016

Class Description:

The Language Arts/ Social Studies Core is a comprehensive and integrated course designed to give you a solid foundation in the skills necessary to be successful in middle school and prepare you for the future. To accomplish the goals and objectives for this course, students will:

1. **read** the local newspaper, multicultural short stories and essays, historical fiction novels, folktales, poetry, and geography texts including maps and atlases;
2. **write** in a variety of modes, including imaginative, narrative, persuasive and expository;
3. **discuss** current events, global issues, and key concepts from readings and instruction;
4. **speak** in front of the class and give brief oral presentations;
5. **build** vocabulary and practice proper writing mechanics and grammar;
6. conduct primary, library, and Internet **research**;
7. develop critical literacy skills through **questioning/inquiry**; and
8. **explore** driving questions throughout the year including:
 - “What is culture?”
 - “How does geography shape cultures?”
 - “What are the influences that impact and effect the development and sustainability of cultures?”

The content of the combined Language Arts and Social Studies core class will include integrated student-produced projects, which will further develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills and put into practice the sixteen Habits of Mind (please see attached document).

Grades:

Grades are individual assessment tools that predominantly measure effort and organization. Grades will be posted every 2-3 weeks on Synergy. Students should not wait to make up assignments until after I've posted grades. Being responsible does not hinge on Synergy communication. I am available every day after school! Please understand that the focus in class will not be on grades but on learning, making meaning and learning how to learn.

Late work will be accepted up to one week after the original due date for half credit. In addition, I expect students to honor deadlines established well in advance of an unexpected or expected absence and work delivered late due to an absence may be counted late unless I receive parent notification or prior arrangements are made with me.

The opportunity to earn extra credit points will be available each term and the guidelines for each assignment will be further explained in class. Keep in mind EC assignments will never replace class assignments and cannot be used to “save” your grade. Instead EC assignments should be considered opportunities to **extend** learning and go beyond the required class assignments.

Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated and consequences will include a grade of 0 for the assignment and a possible office referral.

Grades Continued:

Grades are calculated using a total points system. All student work is designated into three different categories: formative assessment, summative assessment and participation. All categories of assessment are unweighted. Proficiency in standards will also be assessed but those scores will not contribute to the overall grade.

A= 90% - 100%

B= 80% - 89%

C= 70% - 79%

D= 60% - 69%

F= 59% and below

Materials Provided for this Class:

1. All textbooks and class novels
2. Newspapers
3. Class binder with pencil pouch
4. Learning Log and **all** art materials necessary for a creative response to learning (scissors, colored pencils, glue)

You will be responsible for the replacement cost of a text if it is lost or damaged.

Materials Necessary for this Class:

1. pencils and pens (dark blue or black ink only) – all year!
2. 1 folder to keep papers that are not 3-hole punched
3. index cards
4. flash drive/memory stick (optional)

Vocabulary Workshop:

Each student will receive his/her own vocabulary workbook. This is not a textbook, rather students will be writing in and studying from the workbook and will not be sharing it with other students. Typically the class will study a vocabulary unit every other week. Vocabulary work is an integral part of the Language Arts grade. Due to budget cuts, **it is necessary for students to purchase the vocabulary book at the discounted cost of \$10.** Keep in mind the book will belong to the student once purchased. 😊 Please send in the \$10 payment by Friday, September 25th. You can also break down the payment into smaller amounts and pay over an extended amount of time. Please consider this an investment in your learning.

Homework:

Homework is designed to prepare students for class assignments and/or extend learning beyond the classroom. Weekly homework will be assigned in the beginning of the week and be due at the end of the week. The work will vary from specific worksheets to general studying and researching. When beginning a vocabulary unit, flashcards will be assigned as homework. It is also expected that students will study those vocabulary words as homework throughout the week. When we focus on a project, homework could involve research, drafting, planning, editing, reading, drawing, coloring, interviewing or just plain thinking about the key concepts of what we're studying. If students need clarification, or help in completing homework, I am available via e-mail before 9pm every evening at mora@4j.lane.edu. I will respond as quickly as possible. In addition, students and parents can refer to my blog on the Class Focus Page for assignment information and a general plan for activities in the class. No password is needed to access this information. I typically post the week's agenda at the end of the day on Monday.

Assignments and Attendance:

Homework assignments are due at the beginning of class. If you have an excused absence, you, the student, are responsible for setting up a time **other than class time** for receiving assignments and instruction and then making up the work. Good attendance is essential to the learning process and being successful in class. Often the instruction will involve group and partner work, hands-on activities, and presentations. When you miss such activities your comprehension of the content is jeopardized. You cannot make up participation points or classwork.

As your teacher I am fully invested in making your 7th grade year successful and rewarding. I will do everything I can to help you progress academically and these guidelines and expectations will help ensure a positive experience for all of us. I look forward to learning with you.

Dear students,

It may sound funny, but I believe the more you read, the more you'll read. In other words, the best way to gain and improve one's literacy skills is by exercising one's literacy skills. The act of reading builds background knowledge, contributes to being a more well-rounded person, leads to strong and critical thinking, bolsters empathy skills and....improves one's ability to read.

So, as your language arts teacher, I'm charged with improving your reading skills (and maybe even your interest in reading which often evolves from an increase in reading skills). Therefore I've carved out class time devoted to your reading enjoyment. Yes, I want you to read what you're interested in and just keep reading. Perhaps, you'll even develop an appreciation for what reading can do for you and how it can literally change your life! This daily personal reading where the purpose for reading is primarily enjoyment will not take the place of other readings and literacy activities. It will be in addition to our coursework and language arts studies.

Now, keep in mind literacy doesn't only mean having the ability to read. Writing is the other half of literacy and if the goal is for you to be fully literate you must also practice writing/communication. Thus there is a writing component connected to your choice reading. After you have finished reading your novel of choice (at your own pace) I expect you to choose and complete one of the options listed on the other side of this paper. This will not disrupt your choice reading in class. A new novel should be chosen within two days of finishing the previous book. Please don't feel pressured to hurry your reading. I am most concerned with measuring progress and I will intervene and problem-solve with you if you are not getting through a significant number of pages each day over a period of time. Many times it's just a matter of finding the "right" book.

Lastly, please keep these reading choice guidelines in mind:

- Avoid books that are "too easy". Often times the content of these simple texts can't keep your interest nor hold your attention. You now have more sophisticated tastes than when you were in elementary school. Trust me.
- Avoid books that are "too difficult". If you find yourself questioning the meaning of every other word, and you're rereading each sentence 3 - 4 times in an effort to understand what's happening, the story will be lost and well... what then would be the point of reading?
- You can absolutely read a book you've already read. Just ask yourself if you're reading it again because you LOVE the story or if you're trying to get out of work and "pull one over on the teacher". If your answer is related to avoiding work my reminder to you is, "Being able to read what **you** want shouldn't be work, it should be fun!"
- Be open to trying different authors and different kinds of stories (genres)
 - add some variety.

ENJOY!!

TIMELINE FOR READING CHOICE PRODUCTS

*I expect all of my students, at the BARE MINIMUM, to independently read **3** choice novels by the end of the school year by using the class time provided. I hope you will read more (many more) than 3 books and that you will read outside of class, but I will only require **3** reading choice products (RCPs). I suspect that ALL of you will end up reading more than 3 books this year but I don't want the reading to be turned into "work". ☺*

Here is a general timeline, keeping in mind the different reading paces, the different lengths of stories being read and the different reading times being put into the novels (some of you also read at home while others only use the 10 - 12 minutes provided in class).

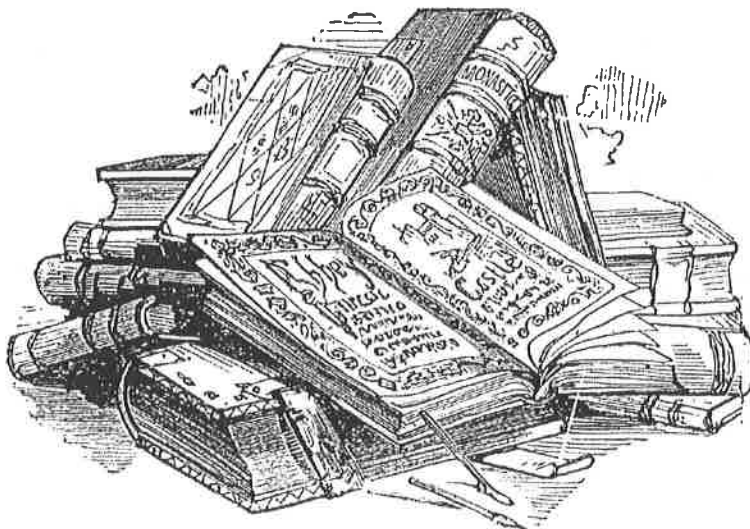
RCP #1: DUE BY MONDAY, NOVEMBER 23rd

RCP #2: DUE BY MONDAY, MARCH 14th

RCP #3: DUE BY MONDAY, JUNE 6th

☆ *For every book you complete reading you will need to fill out an information sheet. I will be keeping track of your progress and reward your efforts in various ways (I'm going to surprise you).*

☆ *At the end of the First and Second Trimesters there will be a time set aside in class to discuss the novel(s) you have read and to give your personal commentary (Book Talk).*



Reading Choice Project Options - 25 points

*All RCPs must also include your name, the title of the book and the author
If there is a * next to the RCP option, an outline of the novel is required.*

** 1. Write a **letter** to:*

- the author, (evaluate, discuss story and ask questions)*
- a friend, (give a review and summary, recommend or discourage reading the book)*
- a teacher, (give a review and summary, include info. a teacher would appreciate) or*
- a character from the book (discuss elements of the story with the character as if he/she were real)*

*2. **Compare/Contrast:** Read a book that has been made into a movie. (Caution: it must have been a book **FIRST**. Books written from screenplays are not acceptable.) Write an essay comparing the movie version with the book.*

** 3. Draw a **portrait** of one of the characters and fill in a personal survey as if it is about that character. Provide at least two excerpts from the novel that support your interpretation of the character traits. (survey and paper provided)*

*4. Create a **timeline** of the events in the story. Provide details and specifics. A minimum of ten events is required on the timeline.*

** 5. Create a **book jacket**. Must be in color. Include the author's name. On the back write a one paragraph teaser about the book and include quotes that promote the book. (paper provided)*

*6. Provide a **summary of the story in the form of a comic book**. You may use ComicLife but may also freehand your drawings. In keeping with the style of comic books, color and ink is required.*

*7. **Write a critique of the novel**. A critique partly analyzes the author's techniques and comments on whether or not the author was successful. A critique also reviews and evaluates the story.*

*8. **Record an oral telling** of the story. Using Garage Band or a personal recording device, prove to me that you've read the book. 2 – 5 minutes in length.*

** 9. Create a **collage** of the themes, setting, and action of the story. On the back of the collage write an explanation of how the images and words represent the story.(base paper provided)*

















*10. Create a **Keynote** Presentation or **iPhoto** slideshow summarizing the plot of the story and your review/commentary.*

** 11. Construct a **diorama** (three-dimensional scene which includes models of people, buildings, plants, and animals) of one of the main events of the book. Include a written description of the scene.*

*12. **Write a feature article (with a headline)**. Tell the story of the book as it might be found on the front page of a newspaper in the town where the story takes place.*

** 13. Design a **movie poster**. Considering the mood and themes of the novel design a movie poster that includes the title, cast, rating and a quote from the book. Must use color. (paper provided)*

Habits of Mind

 <p>1. Persisting Stick to it! Persevering in task through to completion; remaining focused. Looking for ways to reach your goal when stuck. Not giving up.</p>	 <p>2. Managing impulsivity Take your Time! Thinking before acting; remaining calm, thoughtful and deliberative.</p>
 <p>3. Listening with understanding and empathy Understand Others! Devoting mental energy to another person's thoughts and ideas. Make an effort to perceive another's point of view and emotions.</p>	 <p>4. Thinking flexibly Look at it Another Way! Being able to change perspectives, generate alternatives, consider options.</p>
 <p>5. Thinking about your thinking (Metacognition) Know your knowing! Being aware of your own thoughts, strategies, feelings and actions and their effects on others.</p>	 <p>6. Striving for accuracy Check it again! Always doing your best. Setting high standards. Checking and finding ways to improve constantly.</p>
 <p>7. Questioning and problem posing How do you know? Having a questioning attitude; knowing what data are needed and developing questioning strategies to produce those data. Finding problems to solve.</p>	 <p>8. Applying past knowledge to new situations Use what you Learn! Accessing prior knowledge; transferring knowledge beyond the situation in which it was learned.</p>
 <p>9. Thinking and communicating with clarity and precision Be clear! Striving for accurate communication in both written and oral form; avoiding over generalizations, distortions, deletions and exaggerations.</p>	 <p>10. Gather data through all senses: Use your natural pathways! Pay attention to the world around you Gather data through all the senses; taste, touch, smell, hearing and sight.</p>
 <p>11. Creating, imagining, and innovating Try a different way! Generating new and novel ideas, fluency, originality</p>	 <p>12. Responding with wonderment and awe Have fun figuring it out! Finding the world awesome, mysterious and being intrigued with phenomena and beauty.</p>
 <p>13. Taking responsible risks Venture out! Being adventuresome; living on the edge of one's competence. Try new things constantly.</p>	 <p>14. Finding humor Laugh a little! Finding the whimsical, incongruous and unexpected. Being able to laugh at oneself.</p>
 <p>15. Thinking interdependently Work together! Being able to work in and learn from others in reciprocal situations. Team work.</p>	 <p>16. Remaining open to continuous learning I have so much more to learn! Having humility and pride when admitting we don't know; resisting complacency.</p>

Introduction to a Growth Mindset

What is Mindset?

Carol Dweck, world-renowned Stanford University psychologist, conducted decades of research on student motivation and achievement and discovered there are two mindsets, or beliefs, that greatly impact motivation, learning, and success: fixed and growth.



Why is it important?

Research shows that people with a growth mindset reach higher levels of success than people with a fixed mindset. Teaching a growth mindset creates motivation and productivity in the worlds of business, education, and sports. It also enhances relationships and increases overall achievement and success.

Individuals holding a fixed mindset...

- Avoid challenges
- Focus on performance goals (proving ability)
- Become easily frustrated
- Seek praise rather than advice
- Employ minimal learning strategies
- Attribute mistakes and failure to their level of intelligence
- Give up easily in the face of setbacks and obstacles
- See effort and hard work as a waste of time
- Are threatened by others' success
- Identify as "I'm a failure." (identity)

Individuals holding a growth mindset...

- Embrace challenges
- Focus on learning goals (improving ability)
- View struggle as an opportunity to learn
- Seek advice and view criticism as a vehicle for improvement
- Employ a variety of learning strategies
- View mistakes and failures as opportunities to learn and grow
- Persevere in the face of setbacks and obstacles
- See effort and hard work as the path to learning
- Are inspired by the success of others
- Identify as "I failed." (action)

Middle School Language Arts Power Standards 2015 for 4j School District

READING

1. Identify main ideas. (RL1-2/RIT 1-2)
2. Make an interpretation and cite text-based evidence. (RL1-3)
3. Identify and explain how literary devices, word choice, and structure convey meaning. (RL 4-6/RIT 3-6)
4. Evaluate an author's claims and evidence. (RIT 8)
5. Make comparisons between information delivered in different media. (RL7,9/RIT7,9)

WRITING

1. Write detailed and organized argumentative texts, supporting claims with evidence. (W1,4,6,9,10)
2. Write detailed and organized informative/explanatory texts that explain a subject in a meaningful way. (W2,4,6,9,10)
3. Write detailed and organized narratives that tell a story in a clear way. (W 3,4,6,9,10)
4. Research topics and report findings in an organized way. (W 7-10,4)
5. Develop and strengthen skills by planning, revising, and editing as needed. (W5)

SPEAKING/LISTENING

1. Collaborate with others respectfully, prepare for discussion, and listen/respond critically. (SL 1,3)
2. Present information in a manner that enhances understanding of content. (SL 2,4-6)

LANGUAGE

1. Use correct spelling, punctuation, and grammar. (L 1-2)
2. Learn, use and spell challenging words correctly. (L 3-6)

7th grade Oregon State Standards - Social Sciences covered in class

HISTORICAL KNOWLEDGE

- 7.1. Describe and compare the beliefs, the spread, and the influence of religions throughout Europe, Asia, and Africa, Islam, Crusades, Holy Roman Empire.
- 7.2. Examine the importance of trade routes and trace the rise of cultural centers and trade cities in Europe, Asia, and Africa.
- 7.3. Analyze the interconnections of people, places and events in the economic, scientific and cultural exchanges of the European Renaissance that led to the Scientific Revolution, voyages of discovery and imperial conquest.
- 7.6. Form historical questions and use a variety of information resources to find, summarize and evaluate historical data on the people places, events and developments that have played a part in the history of Africa, Asia and the Southwest Pacific.
- 7.7. Interpret documents and data from multiple primary and secondary sources (e.g., art, artifacts, eyewitness accounts, letters and diaries, real or simulated historical sites, charts, graphs, diagrams, written texts) while forming historical questions.

GEOGRAPHY

- 7.8. Use and evaluate maps, graphs, charts, models, and databases to analyze geographic distributions in the Eastern Hemisphere.
- 7.9. Collect and analyze data to make geographic inferences and predictions regarding the Eastern Hemisphere.
- 7.10. Interpret maps and other geographic tools to find patterns in human and physical systems in the Eastern Hemisphere.
- 7.12. Compare and analyze human characteristics (e.g., population, land use, language, and religion) of places and regions in the Eastern Hemisphere.
- 7.15. Determine and explain the interdependence of people around the world during significant eras or events.

CIVICS AND GOVERNMENT

- 7.18. Investigate current issues in the Eastern Hemisphere and how they relate to other countries, including the United States.

SOCIAL SCIENCE ANALYSIS

- 7.24. Analyze current and historical sources (e.g., artifacts, eyewitness accounts, letters and diaries, real or simulated historical sites, charts, graphs, diagrams, and written texts) for accuracy and point of view while forming questions.

STUDENT LAST NAME: _____

STUDENT FIRST NAME: _____

Dear Student and Parent/Guardian:

After you have read the materials listed below please sign your names in the space provided and return this page to me **with the \$10 payment for the vocabulary book.**

Please then file those documents in the student's three ring binder for future reference.

- Course syllabus - LA/SS 7th grade Block: Mrs. Mora
- RCP Assignment/Letter to students
- Habits of Mind reference sheet

Student Signature _____

Adult Signature _____

Comments/ Questions:

