

# Mrs. Rewers' Literacy Class Syllabus

James Ward School

2017-2018

8<sup>th</sup> Grade

## Overview:

8<sup>th</sup> graders will engage in four major units of study this year, utilizing a variety of literature – novels, short stories, current event articles, poetry, or drama. Each unit will include a larger piece of work that the entire class or literature circles will read. These anchor texts will be demanding and require focus from all students. We will modify work for students with special needs, but all students will be expected to put forth their best effort. We will also include shorter text (short stories, articles, poems) to enhance our studies. We will also continue to write argumentative essays using the CERCA format. Each unit will also include additional writing studies (informative or narrative). On a daily or weekly basis, students will also engage in grammar and Words Their Way instruction. Students will be responsible for independent reading on a consistent basis, using Accelerated Reader to check for comprehension.

The themes and anchor text for each unit are:

Quarter	Theme	Anchor Text
Q1	Society and Power	Classic Short Stories
Q2	Identity and Power	Holocaust Literature Circles
Q3	Identity and Society	Melba Patillo Beals' <i>Warriors Don't Cry</i>
Q3	Identity and the Arts	Shakespeare's <i>Romeo &amp; Juliet</i>

All of our efforts in the classroom, many of which will extend to the home, are in preparation for NWEA and PARCC testing. We will administer the NWEA test twice this year (a full test in the winter and in the spring), and the PARCC test will be administered in just one part in the spring. These tests are quite rigorous and require each student to do their best effort on all tasks to ensure academic growth throughout the year. High schools will be using NWEA grades from this year to determine admission, so students should take all opportunities to find success in class.

**Word Study:** Students will study vocabulary through the *Words Their Way* program OR *The 100 Words All Middle Schoolers Should Know*, as assigned by their ability assessment. This program is ideal for our student population, as it meets individual students at their individual ability levels. This design allows all students to feel adequately challenged in an effort to grow as readers and learners. While our daily bell ringers will focus on some piece of word study, a majority of the work for word study will take place independently, requiring support at home to ensure that all work is completed by due dates.

**Independent Reading:** Students will engage in independent reading through the Accelerated Reader program. In using this online comprehension testing program, students will be required to read a book of their choosing and take a quiz **EVERY TWO WEEKS**. We will work together to ensure students are choosing books that are at their lexiles and manageable in a two-week period. I will review the book choice and testing process with students in the first week of school. These tests will count toward students' formative assessments. In addition to AR comprehension checks, students will be required to write about or present about one of their books each quarter. This presentation/project will count as a summative assessment each quarter.

## **Classroom Expectations:**

Classroom norms outline the expected behavior of all students (and the teacher) in our classroom. We will also use the SLANT strategy to focus attention on learning in the classroom. If you are having trouble following either the norms or the SLANT strategy, we will determine a plan on a student-by-student basis through a student-teacher meeting.

Classroom Norms	SLANT Strategy
1. If anyone talks, everyone listens	S – Sit Up
2. Be prepared for class	L – Lean Forward
3. Use class time wisely	A – Ask & Answer
4. Try your best	N – Note Taking
	T – Track the Talker

### **Student Homework:**

A majority of **independent reading** will take place at home, with some opportunity in class. This will allow us to focus on skill development in class with only small homework assignments. Students will be given weekly assignments as part of **word study**. As stated earlier, much of word study vocabulary work will need to be done at home. Additional projects across reading and writing may be assigned during the year. Project assignments will be provided with approximately 2 weeks advance notice of due dates.

### **Class Materials:**

You will be expected to bring with you to literature class the following items every day:

- planner
- binder
- independent reading book

It is important for you to have these materials in class with you each day. By having them, you will be able to participate fully in class work and class discussions (#2 – be prepared for class).

### **Grade Breakdown:**

Each component of your literacy grade is important and should be completed to the best of your ability (#4 – try your best). This is the breakdown of your grade:

#### **Summative Assessments 35%**

- These are writing pieces, projects or tests that measure understanding at the end of a unit of study

#### **Formative Assessments 55%**

- There will be many formative assessment during the year, on an almost daily basis – including checks for understanding the day's topic, quizzes, in class work and more.

#### **Homework 10%**

- This will primarily be independent reading logs and word study assignments.

### **Assessments:**

There will be consistent assessments throughout the year to keep in mind:

- **Accelerated Reader:** Every other Monday, starting 9/25 (10/10 & 10/22 are the additional dates in Q1) until the end of the end of the school year (when there is a Monday off, the test will be on Tuesday)
- **Word Study:** Every other Monday, starting 10/2 (10/16 & 10/23 are the additional dates in Q1) until the end of the school year (when there is a Monday off, the test will be on Tuesday)
- **Independent Reading Projects:** Quarterly IR Projects will be due in the first half of each quarter and the Summative Grade will appear on your progress report. The due dates for the year will be 9/29 – 12/15 – 2/23 – 5/4
- **Final Unit Assessments:** Each unit will have a final assessment that will occur approximately 1½ weeks prior to the end of the quarter (to allow for time to grade assessments). Those assessments will be identified no less than 2 weeks prior to their due dates.

### **Literacy Website:**

I am in the process of continuing to improve the literacy website. You will still be able to access information including what is happening in class, assignments, documents for printing (if you lose your originals). Please use this website frequently, both parents and students, to stay up-to-date on our literacy classes. I am working on setting up google classroom sites for literacy. In the interim, the address of my current literacy website is:

**<https://mrsrewers.weebly.com>**

### **Additional Help:**

If you need help outside of class, I am available to meet before or after school. You should schedule a meeting in advance so that I can write you a pass. If I feel that you need additional help outside of class, I will work with you to set up time outside of class. You can reach me via email at **[dlrewers@cps.edu](mailto:dlrewers@cps.edu)**.

I look forward to an exciting new year in literacy class!