

8th Grade Magnet English: Power & Voice

Welcome to Kealing Magnet Eighth Grade English! We are looking forward to an exciting and innovative year. Students will be participating in a reading-writing workshop as part of their class experience. Our emphasis will be on improving communication skills as well as developing a portfolio with examples of each student's best writing. We will create an atmosphere in the classroom where natural, purposeful writing, reading, and speaking take place.

Reading and Texts

This year we will be studying a variety of styles and genres of writing with an emphasis on points of view. Students may also select from chosen novels for literature circles. As a class, we will also read several whole group novels. Students will be given time periodically to participate in a reading/writing workshop. We will also have a drama unit with plays to be selected by students.

Writing

Much of our writing will be done in class. Students will be expected to maintain a working file consisting of writing in various stages. During Sacred Silent Writing, students should produce approximately a page of writing. Sacred Silent Writing will be graded periodically. During reading/writing workshop, students will assist one another in the revision process. Polished pieces will be due each six weeks. Students will have a great deal of choice in selecting topics and genres.

Agendas

Each student will be given and expected to maintain an agenda book/planner. It is important that students use this tool to make note of homework assignments, project deadlines, and other information that teachers ask students to enter in their agendas. Students are responsible for bringing their agenda books to class every day. Parents may wish to glance over the agendas to monitor their child's assignments. This system only works if the students update their agendas daily. Consequently, grades may be taken for the appropriate use of the agenda book.

Homework

Homework assignments should be entered into a student's agenda on a daily basis. Students must be prepared to hand in homework assignments at the beginning of class on the due date to receive full credit. Students will always have English homework, whether short or long term. Students who do not have their completed homework at the beginning of class fill out a No Assignment Sheet.

Supplies needed

An agenda book or planner

Binder

Spiral or composition book for Writing Journal

Kealing Writing Manual

Grading/Late Work

Each six weeks' grade will be determined by the content and quality of the work produced and by the fulfillment of the reading and writing assignments. The polished pieces will be graded on content, process, and mechanics and will be weighted. Students will also receive grades based on participation in class discussions, group assignments, projects, and presentations. Each six weeks students may turn in one assignment one class day late without penalty. The eighth grade magnet program late work policy states that work turned in late will receive a 50% deduction. Late work will not be accepted after three school days.

Extra Credit

To receive extra credit, students may:

- Visit a museum or attend a cultural activity and write an analytical response (minimum of 1 page).
- Submit a piece of polished writing for publication to a magazine.
- Memorize and perform a piece of literature.

NOTE: Students with any zeros will be required to make-up missed assignments to be eligible for extra credit.

Absences

Naturally, students who are absent will miss information, discussions, and assignments. It is the *student's responsibility* to request any work they missed. Students should consult the website and other students or their teacher. Except under extreme circumstances, makeup work is due within two class meetings from the date of the student's return. However, student absences will *not* delay the deadlines of major assignments and projects.

Parental Involvement

We welcome and encourage parental involvement. There will be several opportunities throughout the year where student work will be showcased and we hope that you will come and participate in that learning experience. We encourage you to be involved in all aspects of your child's learning and hope that you will discuss their reading, writing, and learning with them on a regular basis.

Contact

Feel free to contact us with any questions, concerns or comments. Our contact information is as follows:

Mr. Webster: j.frank.webster@austinisd.org (Wednesday office hours)

Ms. Carolan: julie.carolan@austinisd.org

Ms. Sarah Waggoner: sarah.waggoner@austinisd.org (B-Day Tuesdays or by appointment)

We are looking forward to getting to know you throughout the year. Your involvement in your child's education is encouraged and appreciated!

Sincerely,

Mr. J. Frank Webster

Ms. Julie Carolan

Ms. Sarah Waggoner