

**English Language Arts Reading Course Syllabus
Keefer Crossing Middle School 2009-2010**

Dear Parent/ Guardian:

PLEASE READ THIS HANDOUT CAREFULLY. The information presented is based upon several years of experience and is designed for preventative maintenance in the learning environment. With your help we will improve student success and decrease parent frustration concerning assignments, grades, absences, etc. Please feel free to call or email any time. Your student will be successful if we all work together as a team to offer unfailing, consistent support.

Thank You.

I am looking forward to a successful school year together!

Sincerely,

Karen Gassen
English Language Arts Reading Instructor
Grade 7

**Course Syllabus – English Language Arts Reading - Grade 7
Keefe Crossing Middle School – 2009-2010**

Karen Gassen 7th grade English Language Arts (ELAR) and ELAR Pre-AP/GT
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To be successful in life, students must be adequately prepared and able to communicate effectively with others in the English language. The curriculum for English Language Arts is designed to continue students' exposure to a variety of literary texts with adequate understanding and to refine grammar skills and improve writing through the writing process. We also prepare the students to pass the state-mandated TAKS Writing Test which is given in March and the Reading TAKS given in April. This course is a combination of the Reading and English classes in an effort to increase students' understanding of the reading/writing processes. This year-long course will be one hour and thirty minutes per day.

Textbooks:

Because classroom sets of textbooks will be provided, students will not be required to bring their books to class on a daily basis; however, students can check out a copy of the text from the teacher to use at home if needed. Workbooks will be given to the students, but kept in the classroom.

Grammar:* Holt, Rinehart, Winston *Elements of Language First Course (Green in color)

Literature:* Prentice Hall *Literature Bronze Level (Purple in color)

Elements of Language Workbook

TAKS Skills Practice Workbook

If a student loses his/her textbook or workbooks throughout the year, he/she will have to pay the current replacement cost for the lost item before being assigned a new one

Course Outline

Reading Strategies	Expository/informative writing
Reading Process	Descriptive writing
Spelling	Narrative writing
Short Stories & Literary Terms	Persuasive writing
Writing Process	Non-fiction literature
Vocabulary development	Poetry and Elements of Poetry
Effective sentence development	Various Novels
Journal writing	Mythology
Research Skills	Mechanics
Parts of Speech	Effective Communication Skills (i.e. Listening, Speaking, Viewing)
6 Writing Traits	
Effective usage development	

***Due to block scheduling, we may be able to cover additional material that is not listed here. This is tentative and subject to change as needed. If you have any questions, please call or email any time.

Projects and Required or Recommended Readings

There will be a least one major project/ reading each semester which may require some work outside of class and may include a need to go to the public library, use magazines, newspapers, craft supplies, etc. If a project is late, or not turned in, parents will be contacted.

Agendas:

Each student will be given an agenda. They will write down assignments, homework, due dates, or other information given by the teacher. Each student will be required to bring the agenda to class, and will be held accountable for keeping it up to date and filling out the necessary information each day in class.

Grading Procedure:

NCISD has implemented a new grading policy that must be adhered to by all faculty. This portion is copied directly from the 2009-2010 Student Handbook and NCISD website:

Middle School Grading Guidelines 2009/10 Grade Reporting Guidelines and Procedures

Grades should represent the level of mastery of an instructional objective. The instructional objectives for grade level subjects in grades 7-8 are aligned with the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). The objectives address the skills required for successful performance in the next grade or in a sequence of courses.

Assignments, tests, projects, classroom activities, homework, and other activities are designed to allow a student's performance to indicate the level of mastery of the designated objective.

Reporting Grades

Grading Scale -- Letter Grade Numerical Grade

A 90 –100 Excellent progress

B 80 –89 Good progress

C 75 –79 Satisfactory/average progress

D 70 –74 Minimal progress

F Below 69 Unsatisfactory progress

I Incomplete

For Pre-AP/GT level, students are chosen based on teacher recommendation, classroom performance, TAKS scores or GT identification. **Students who fail to maintain an 80 average for two six weeks will be returned to the regular classroom.**

Progress Reports

Grades will be communicated to parents at progress report time (half way through each six week grading period). Documentation of parent notification will be maintained when a student's average falls below 70. If a student receives a grade of less than 70 in any class or subject on a progress report, parents are encouraged to contact the appropriate teacher.

Report Cards

Report cards are sent home at the end of each grading period. If a parent or guardian has a question about the student's grade, please contact the student's teacher by telephone or e-mail. A parent conference may be arranged, if necessary.

The weight of the semester exam is 1/7. Semester grades are determined by taking the average of the three grading periods multiplied by two (2), adding the final exam grade and dividing by seven (7).

Computation of Grades

Daily Grades

Daily grades will make up 40% of the overall grade. A minimum of ten (10) daily grades will be taken each grading period. Daily work is any assignment other than major grades and homework –e.g., class work, notebooks, quizzes

Homework

Homework is an effective tool in developing responsibility, study habits, and skills. It is an extension of the learning process and involves the home in the student's curriculum. It should be purposeful, related to classroom experiences, and be age and grade appropriate. The purpose and directions for the assignment need to be clearly communicated and should be preceded by instruction that adequately prepares the student to do the task independently and successfully. **Homework** will make up 10% of the overall grade. There must be a minimum of one (1) assignment weekly for each core subject and a maximum of one (1) assignment nightly for Monday – Thursday. Long term or special assignments may be made for weekends as needed.

Late Daily Work and Homework:

Category 1 –if a student is absent he/she has one (1) day for each day absent to turn in the work for full credit.

Category 2 – 7th grade –*during first semester*, students may turn in late daily work or homework (ONE DAY LATE) for a maximum of a 50. *During second semester*, NO late daily work or homework will be accepted.

Major Grades

A minimum of two (2) major tests, projects, presentations will make up 50% of the overall grade.

Special Programs

Students with individual education plans, enrolled in English as a Second Language, or participating in a gifted or pre-advanced program, will have grades that are reflected in those programs. Students for whom an ARD requires a standard state assessment (TAKS), the only modifications allowed when benchmarking for that assessment will be those allowed by their individual Modification Sheets and also allowed by the state. e.g., – extended time

Assessments for State Assessments

For assessments that are designed for diagnostic purposes only and used to determine student progress and needs, no grades should be recorded in the grade book. Check Point /Benchmark Assessments are used to determine student mastery of targeted objectives taught during a specific instructional period. Departments will determine how a grade for these benchmarks will be recorded. Although it is the individual department's discretion as to the weight of the grade, no grade should be taken on material not previously taught.

Cheating/Plagiarism

Cheating shall be defined as giving or receiving information on a test or submitting duplicate work for outside assignments. Using technology (e.g., computer, Internet, cell phone, PDA, or calculator) to cheat or copy the work of another is prohibited. The penalty for a student found guilty of cheating is a grade of zero for the test or assignment. Plagiarism consists of using another person's ideas or writing as one's own. Plagiarism is a form of cheating and the penalty shall be a ZERO on the assignment. Students caught cheating will be referred to their respective assistant principal for disciplinary action.

Student Expectations:

In addition to all rules and regulations outlined in the student handbook and student code of conduct, I wish to add the following:

- ◆ Display common courtesy and decency toward your classmates, yourself, and me.
- ◆ Do not sleep or put your head down on your desk.
- ◆ Do not get up to turn in assignments, sharpen pencils, discard refuse, etc. if any other presenter or I am in front of the class speaking or presenting.
- ◆ Food and drink will not be allowed in the classroom.
- ◆ Students are not to make derogatory or negative comments about any other teacher or student.
- ◆ Students are expected to work cooperatively in groups.
- ◆ Stay in your desk at the end of class UNTIL I DISMISS YOU, regardless of the bell.
- ◆ Clean up around your desk and return things to their correct place in the room before we dismiss.
- ◆ Do not primp, check makeup, hair, etc. in my room.

Students will attempt to be in class every day. Students will come to my class on time. Students will learn. Students will understand that learning is an ACTIVE process. Students will participate in class discussions. Students will attempt not to simply memorize but to learn and to understand material presented to them; they will understand that education is vital to the rest of their lives. ASK QUESTIONS! That is the only way you will learn.

If a student fails to comply with the above expectations, or breaks any school rule as outlined in the student handbook, they will be subject to disciplinary action.

Tardy Policy:

Teachers and students will adhere to the tardy policy found in the student handbook

Tutorial Schedule:

Tutorials are available for any students needing assistance in ELA. Tutorials will be held weekly each Wednesday. The times are: Wednesday morning from 6:45 – 7:15, and Wednesday afternoon from 2:30 - 3:00.