Course Description
The eighth grade English Language Arts program will develop students’ critical thinking skills, strategic approach to reading a wide variety of texts, and clear articulation of views and ideas within the frame of a sustained argument.

The literature program is designed to enlighten students to the concept of *empathy* and *change* through character analysis, inferential and interpretive reading, and literary discussion. The ultimate aim of the program is to create a love of reading through independent reading choices, book projects, and scholarly discussions about their texts.

Specific Course Goals
1. Students will increase their academic vocabularies through word analysis, discovering meaning through context, and integrating new words into their writing.

2. Students will write argumentative essays with a definitive claim and the best evidence to support and develop their arguments. Students will write with the mastery of grammar and mechanics required in the 8th grade CA State Standards and ICEF’s Writing Goals.

3. Students will increase their reading levels by learning reading strategies and acknowledging when to apply them to understand a variety of texts.

Standard Curriculum Literature:
Selected short stories
Warriors Don’t Cry, Melba Patillo Beals
The Pearl, John Steinbeck

To Kill a Mockingbird, Harper Lee
Othello, William Shakespeare
Selected Poetry

CLASS PROCEDURES

Agenda: Agendas keep you organized. When the bell rings, you should be sitting in your seat copying the agenda and homework assignment for the day in your planner. If you have lost your school agenda, you must set up an agenda /homework sheet at the front of your binder.

Attendance: All students are expected to be in class each day. Your grade is determined by class work, homework, participation, as well as individual and group assignments. If you are sick, it is your responsibility to find out what you missed.

ABSENT STUDENT PROCEDURE
1. Go to the student folder section of the room to find any notes, handouts, or assignments from the day(s) you missed in your student folder.
2. If you have any questions, see Mrs. Geter before you leave school that day.
3. **ALL** missed assignments should be completed and turned in for full credit no later than one week from the day you return to school. Any assignment that is not turned in by the deadline will be considered a late assignment.

BATHROOM PASSES
**There are no bathroom passes in my classroom. You need to take care of that before school, during passing time, nutrition, lunch, or after school.**
**If it is an emergency (i.e. personal reasons with a doctor’s excuse, called from the office), notify me discreetly, and you will receive a bathroom or hall pass.**

**FOOD/DRINK POLICY**

**NO** food is allowed in class unless you are rewarded a special privilege. You may bring water to drink, but no other beverage is allowed.

**LATE WORK POLICY**

Late work is unacceptable. This is how it works:

- Homework is due at the beginning of class.
- If a student has not completed the work, s/he will be required to complete the missing work outside of regular class hours for partial credit (30% will be deducted from final score).
- Parent/Guardian will be notified.
- Any late assignments must be turned in by Friday of the same week no later than 3:20 p.m. for partial credit (30% will be deducted from final score).

**ABSENT FOR A MAJOR PROJECT/PRESENTATION**

Students have ample time and knowledge for major assignments. So, if a student is absent on the due date of a major project, the student must make arrangements to have the assignments turned in, otherwise it is considered late and will not receive full credit.

**EXTENSIONS**

If a student has a valid reason for an extension for an assignment, the student must request an extension in writing at least two days before the due date. This request must be approved by the teacher and signed by a parent.

**EXTRA CREDIT**

Extra credit assignments may be challenging in nature and require extra effort. Always remember that extra credit=extra effort! Students must demonstrate that they are eligible for all extra credit assignments. Students missing any major essays or projects will not be eligible for extra-credit. I will notify all students when they are eligible for extra credit. Extra-credit work is offered periodically, but never at the end of a semester. This is to prevent students from trying to make up for irresponsible work habits at the last minute. Special extra-credit work is never given to individual students.

**ACADEMIC DISHONESTY AND PLAGIARISM**

The definition of Academic Dishonesty is clearly explained in the VPPACMS Student Handbook. Please read this section. This policy includes copying of another student’s work, and plagiarizing work from the Internet or other printed source (Note regarding copying: if a student allows another to copy his/her work, that student is also guilty of academic dishonesty and subject to disciplinary action). Students will not receive credit for assignments completed with academic dishonesty.

Test taking is a very serious matter. During tests or quizzes, there is NO COMMUNICATION. NO EXCUSES. You can raise your hand if you have a question regarding the test. If you communicate, in any way, without permission, I will take away your test and you will receive a “F”. Remember, you may look down for meditation, you may look up for inspiration; but you may not look to your neighbor for information!

**Class Time:** During class you should only be focused on what I am teaching. I do not want to see/hear toys, grooming tools such as brushes or make-up, games, IPods, or any other electronic equipment. You should not be working on any other homework unless I have given you permission to do so. You should not be writing notes to friends. I WILL TAKE AWAY ANYTHING THAT YOU BRING INTO THE CLASSROOM THAT YOU ARE NOT SUPPOSED TO HAVE. CONFISCATED ITEMS WILL ONLY BE RETURNED TO A PARENT OR GUARDIAN.

**Keep this paper in the front of your binder at all times.**
BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS
1. Be Prompt – Be seated and silent at the bell. When you enter the classroom, you should begin working immediately.
2. Be Prepared – Bring any text(s) and necessary materials to class every day and have them ready on your desk.
3. Be Productive – Follow instructions the first time they are given.
4. Be Polite – Allow one person to speak at a time. Raise your hand and wait for permission to speak or leave your seat.
5. Be Patient – with each other and with the teacher.

Entering and Exiting the classroom: No student may enter the classroom without permission. Once permission is granted to enter the classroom, you may walk to your seat silently and begin working in your journal. Do not start packing your bag when I am talking. I will dismiss you, not the bell. You will not be dismissed until both you are sitting silently. Please push your chair in before exiting the classroom.

Tardies: You must be in your seat when the bell rings or you are tardy. If you come into the room after the bell has rung, you must have a pass or I will enforce a consequence. Consistent tardies will result in a “U” on your report card.

Substitute Teachers: If I am absent, I expect that you will treat the substitute teacher, each other, our classroom, and our materials in the classroom with respect. Any negative student behavior that is reported to me will result in a parent conference and a “U” for that grading period.

REWARDS
❖ Good Call/Letter Home
❖ Raffle Tickets
❖ Student of the Month
❖ Miscellaneous “surprise” privileges

CONSEQUENCES
1. Verbal Warning
2. Isolation
3. Parent contact
4. Referral to the Principal

**Teacher reserves the right to call home at any time.
**Teacher reserves the right to write an office referral at any time.

MATERIALS (You MUST bring these everyday!)
* Literary Text (novel, poem, short story, or article)
* English Notebook (3 ring binder with dividers)
* composition notebook
* 2 – 2 pocket folders with prongs

* index cards (standard size)
* 2 pencils, sharpened
* 2 pens, blue/black,
* 1 red pen
* 2 highlighters, multicolored
* agenda/student planner

**ALL students must have materials by Tuesday, September 6, 2011

GRADING:
30% Essays
15% Socratic Seminar (Portfolio)
10% Benchmark Assessments

20% Class work
10% Homework
15% Tests and Quizzes

Statements Mrs. Geter never wants to hear:

**Keep this paper in the front of your binder at all times. **
1. “I don’t have a pen/pencil/piece of paper.” It is your responsibility to come to class prepared, not mine or your neighbor’s.

2. “What are we supposed to be doing?” It is your responsibility to pay attention in class. Directions will always be stated, repeated once, and written on the board. You are intelligent middle school students; you must be attentive as well.

3. “I don’t want to work with him/her.” Has anyone ever said that about you? How did that feel? Remember that you don’t have to be friends with your group mates or partners, but you do have to treat them with respect.

4. “S/he hit me.”
“We were just playing” is not an acceptable response for hitting and/or name-calling. WE are in school and we are here to learn; I expect you to act like scholars. If you have a conflict with someone, settle it outside of class time in a mature manner.

5. “I’m not doing that.” Your education and your success in this world depend on YOUR cooperation and willingness to learn. If you are not here to learn, you are hurting yourself as well as those around you.

6. “This is easy.” Nothing we do in class is “easy”. Some assignments are easier for certain students. What is easy for you may be hard for someone else. Respect the fact that not everyone learns at the same pace.

7. “You’re stupid”, “Shut up”, etc. This kind of language not only breaks our behavior expectations, it also breaks down our class environment and culture. These and any other insulting or obscene phrases (i.e. profanity) are completely unacceptable at school and especially in this class.

8. “I left my backpack/jacket/other possessions in ______________________.” Be responsible and keep your things with you. I won’t allow you to go and get them; it is distracting to the learning process. I won’t allow you to keep your things in my classroom either.

**SCHOOL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**
ALL school policies and procedures will be enforced by the teacher and upheld in this classroom.
NO EXCEPTIONS!

Parent/Guardian Acknowledgement
This document should be kept in your child’s binder, for reference, at all times. Please return only the signed portion of this syllabus by Friday, September 2, 2011. If you have any questions or concerns about the syllabus before you sign, please feel free to contact me at: jgetter@viewparkprep.org

Thank you,
Mrs. Geter
8th Grade English Teacher

I have thoroughly read and reviewed this syllabus and the parent letter with my child. I understand my child’s expectations and agree to support the expectations described in this syllabus.

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<th>Parent Signature</th>
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I have thoroughly read and reviewed this syllabus with my parent/guardian. I understand and agree to my expectations in Mrs. Geter’s English class.

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