

Ms. Maes

English Language Arts - 10th Grade



WELCOME



»»» ABOUT MS. MAES

My name is Aspyr Maes, and I will be your teacher!

A little about myself: I have a deep passion for reading and literature, so much so that I got a degree in English and Medieval Literature. I taught for three years at UNM at various levels, and now a couple of years here at PAPA! I have always valued the beauty found in written language, and I hope to share even a fraction of my love of reading and writing with my students. Aside from teaching language arts, my goal is to foster a safe and respectful classroom where everyone, including family members, can feel seen and heard. I am looking forward to a wonderful year!

Contact Information:

amaes@paparts.org

RM 17

»»» ABOUT OUR CLASS

Building upon the skills developed in ninth grade, this course emphasizes deeper literary analysis, rhetorical thinking, and purposeful communication. Throughout the year, we will examine how authors use language, structure, and artistic choices to explore themes of identity, responsibility, belonging, and self-discovery. Students will analyze how literature reflects historical and cultural contexts while considering how stories continue to shape our understanding of ourselves and the world around us.

You will continue to develop your writing through analytical, argumentative, research-based, and creative assignments. You will strengthen your ability to support ideas with relevant textual evidence, evaluate the credibility of sources, and communicate effectively through written, spoken, visual, and performance-based presentations. By the end of the course, you will be a more confident reader, writer, researcher, and critical thinker who understands how literature, rhetoric, and the arts can challenge perspectives, inspire empathy, and deepen your understanding of diverse cultures and human experiences.

Online Platforms

Access to Google Classroom. This class is supplemented by the Google Classroom. You will use Google Classroom to access all course materials: the required readings, assignments, syllabus, calendar, and additional readings. You will also use Google Classroom to submit your work, and all of the grading will be done via Google Classroom.

RESPECT AND RESPONSIBILITY

The Motto of our classroom is "Move forward with Patience, Kindness, and Respect."

I expect you to enter class ready to learn and participate and with a positive and respectful attitude. If you disagree with someone or something, I expect you to handle the disagreement in a mature manner. And, of course, do not text/listen to your phone when class is in session. If you need to take a break or deal with an important issue, please excuse yourself from the classroom. Our classroom is a safe space for everyone. See Student Handbook for more in-depth explanation of PAPA's policies, (pages 35-36).

Consequences (if you choose to break a rule):

- First time: Verbal warning
- Second time: Verbal & written warning to parents/guardians
- Third time: Student calls parent/guardian & may have to be removed from class if causing disruption to others
- Fourth time: Parent/Student/Teacher conference
- Severe infractions: Meeting with student, parents/guardians, teacher(s), and the administration

Student and Parent Initials Here: _____

CURRICULUM

UNITS:

UNIT 1	GRAPHIC NOVEL
UNIT 2	INDIGENOUS STORIES
UNIT 3	SHAKESPEARE
UNIT 4	RESEARCH WRITING
UNIT 5	POETRY

GRADING POLICY

Units	35%
Final Exams	40%
Participation	15%
Bellringers	10%

UNIT DESCRIPTIONS

We will progress through the semester in projects. Below are brief descriptions of your assignments this semester:

Unit One: Students begin sophomore English by revisiting graphic literature through a more sophisticated analytical lens. Rather than focusing primarily on visual storytelling, students investigate how Marjane Satrapi intentionally combines images, symbolism, structure, and language to construct political arguments and personal narratives. Students examine the Iranian Revolution, censorship, propaganda, cultural identity, and coming-of-age experiences while analyzing how historical context shapes both authors and readers. Throughout the unit, students practice rhetorical analysis, evaluate authorial choices, and consider how visual composition functions as persuasive communication. By studying both the artistic and historical dimensions of *Persepolis*, students learn how literature can challenge assumptions, preserve cultural memory, and inspire civic reflection.

Unit Two: Through *Firekeeper's Daughter*, students explore identity, justice, family, and cultural responsibility while examining the intersections of Indigenous knowledge, systemic inequality, and personal integrity. Students investigate how Angeline Boulley blends mystery, social commentary, and coming-of-age storytelling to highlight contemporary Indigenous experiences. The novel encourages students to consider how loyalty, courage, and ethical decision-making shape both individuals and communities. Throughout the unit, students analyze characterization, multiple perspectives, symbolism, and social issues while strengthening argumentative writing and research skills. Students also investigate the role storytelling plays in preserving culture and amplifying voices that have historically been marginalized.

Unit Three: In this unit, students will study William Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* to explore how identity, love, and social expectations are shaped through performance and perception. Students will build confidence reading Shakespeare by analyzing language, dramatic structure, characterization, and irony while experiencing the play through performance. As a performing arts school, students will bring the text to life through scene work, directing, movement, costume and set design, and modern adaptations. Throughout the unit, students will consider how artistic choices influence meaning and audience interpretation. The unit concludes with a Modern Adaptation Festival, where students creatively reinterpret scenes from the play for contemporary audiences.

Unit Four: In this unit, students develop the research and media literacy skills needed to navigate today's digital world. They learn how to evaluate sources for credibility, identify bias, distinguish fact from opinion, and recognize persuasive techniques across print, digital, and visual media. Students explore how news, social media, advertising, film, and music influence public opinion while practicing ethical research and MLA citation. Through an inquiry-based project, students investigate a contemporary issue of their choice and present their findings in a format that reflects their strengths, such as a documentary, podcast, debate, TED Talk, or traditional research paper. This unit prepares students to become thoughtful researchers and informed consumers of information.

Unit Five: In this culminating unit, students explore poetry as both a literary and performing art. Through the study of classic, contemporary, and spoken word poetry, students examine how writers use imagery, figurative language, sound, and structure to communicate powerful ideas and emotions. Students also analyze song lyrics and other artistic forms to discover the connections between poetry, music, theatre, dance, and visual art. Throughout the unit, students write original poems, participate in writing workshops, and develop confidence in sharing their voices through performance. The unit concludes with a Poetry Slam and Gallery Showcase, celebrating students' creativity, self-expression, and growth as readers, writers, and artists.

Bell Ringers: We will complete bell ringers at the beginning of each class. Some of these will be written down and others may be a class discussion. These build upon prior knowledge, discussions, or lectures in previous classes.

Participation: These points are jointly related to your attendance and participation in class. While you are expected to show up to class you must also be prepared for the day's instruction, i.e., you have done the readings and are ready to participate in class activities.

LATE WORK POLICY

Late assignments must be submitted through our late basket turn in or through Google Classroom, and will not be accepted after 10 days after the due date, including weekends. Each day it's late will be 5% off.

Student and Parent Initials

Here: 

SUPPLIES

- ☐ Pencils
- ☐ Pens (Black or Blue)
- ☐ Notebook
- ☐ Folder
- ☐ Chromebook/Personal Laptop
- ☐ Planner/Agenda

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Class attendance is mandatory for all students. Each class session in the course is designed to progress toward the next. If you do not come to class or if you come to class unprepared, you will miss not only that day's instruction, but the background and preparation for the next class. Please see the Student Handbook for school policies on absences (pages 14-15).

Please let me know as soon as possible about any school related absences or absences that you have prior knowledge about. I am happy to give you the work early

so that you may complete it ahead of time. You and I can discuss a personalized timeline to turn in your work.

PHONE POLICY

Phones are not permitted in class unless there is an emergency. Students will be asked to drop phones off in their designated cubbies before the start of class. If you need to take a break or deal with an important issue, please excuse yourself from the classroom. If a student chooses to break this rule they will have the following consequences:

- First time: Verbal warning and student must put phone in class phone "prison."
- Second time: Verbal & written warning to parents/guardians, phone will be confiscated until the end of the day.
- Third time: Student calls parent/guardian & may have to be removed from class if causing disruption to others
- Fourth time: Parent/Student/Teacher conference



AI POLICIES

AI is not permitted in my course without prior authorization, specifically AI such as Chat GPT, OpenAI, etc. Students at this grade level need to further build their literacy and analytical skills before using such devices that can curb critical thought. If a student is caught using AI to supplement or complete their work *without prior authorization*, they will receive the following consequences:

- The first time a student is caught using AI they may be allowed to resubmit their work for partial credit. Students must acknowledge their mistakes and complete additional reflection assignments.
- If the Student is caught again using AI, they will receive a zero on the assignment with no opportunity to resubmit.

Student and Parent Initials Here: _____

UNIT	NEW MEXICO ELA STANDARDS
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UNIT 1: PERSEPOLIS – VISUAL RHETORIC, REVOLUTION, AND IDENTITY	RL.9–10.2: Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text. RL.9–10.7: Analyze the representation of a subject or a key scene in two different artistic mediums, including what is emphasized or absent in each treatment (e.g., <i>Persepolis</i> graphic memoir and historical photographs or documentary film).New Mexico Reading Literature Standard: Analyze and evaluate significant works of literature from a variety of cultures, including Hispanic and Native American oral and written traditions, using textual evidence to support analysis and interpretation.
UNIT 2: FIREKEEPER'S DAUGHTER – COMMUNITY, JUSTICE, AND RESPONSIBILITY	RL.9–10.3: Analyze how complex characters develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme. RI.9–10.6: Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how an author uses rhetoric to advance that point of view or purpose.New Mexico Reading Literature Standard: Analyze and evaluate significant works of literature from a variety of cultures, including Hispanic and Native American oral and written traditions, using textual evidence to support analysis and interpretation.
UNIT 3: JULIUS CAESAR – LEADERSHIP, PERSUASION, AND POLITICAL POWER	RI.9–10.6: Analyze a particular point of view or cultural experience reflected in a work of literature from outside the United States, drawing on a wide reading of world literature. SL.9–10.4: Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically so that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and task. L.9–10.3: Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.
UNIT 4: RESEARCH AND MEDIA LITERACY – INVESTIGATING TRUTH	W.9–10.1: Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence. W.9–10.7: Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question or solve a problem, synthesizing multiple sources and demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation. RI.9–10.8: Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is valid and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; identify false statements and fallacious reasoning.
UNIT 5: POETRY – VOICE, PERFORMANCE, AND HUMAN EXPERIENCE	RL.9–10.4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone. W.9–10.3: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences. SL.9–10.5: Make strategic use of digital media and visual displays of data to express information and enhance understanding of presentations.

Student Name:_____

____ I have read and understood Ms. Maes' 25-26 English 9/10 course syllabus.

Parent/Guardian signature: _____Date:_____

Student signature: _____Date:_____