

Ms. Maes

English Language Arts - 9th 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, but I am excited to teach at the high school level. I hope to foster a deep relationship with my students and their families.

Contact Information:

amaes@paparts.org

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»»» ABOUT OUR CLASS

We will focus on analyzing genre, literary devices, and comparing literature from different cultures and regions. You will also develop your writing style both creatively and academically. We will focus on citing evidence to support and justify claims within your writing.

In this class, you will develop skills to analyze situations, read critically, apply multiple modes in your writing, and learn from the writing that you have done in the past. You will gain an understanding of why writing and critical reading are useful, important, and worth learning.

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: Throughout the unit, students will examine how Satrapi combines visual and written storytelling to explore themes of identity, revolution, family, oppression, resilience, and coming of age. Students will learn that every artistic decision contributes to meaning and that graphic novels deserve the same level of close reading and analysis as traditional literature. Students will regularly practice these analytical skills through

chapter discussions, written responses, close readings of individual panels, and a Socratic Seminar centered on the relationship between visual storytelling and rhetoric. As they progress through the novel, students will begin applying these same techniques to their own creative work. The unit culminates in the Final Project: My Story Through Visual Rhetoric, in which students will create a short graphic memoir inspired by *Persepolis*.

Unit Two: In this unit, students will read *The Marrow Thieves* by Cherie Dimaline to explore how stories, language, and culture shape identity and help communities endure hardship. Through the lens of dystopian fiction, students will examine themes of colonialism, survival, memory, and resilience while making connections to the history and experiences of Indigenous peoples. Students will analyze symbolism, characterization, and social commentary while engaging in discussions, creative performances, and artistic projects inspired by the novel. The unit culminates in the Dreams Worth Saving Community Archive Project, where students preserve and celebrate traditions, stories, or artifacts they believe should be passed on to future generations.

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 confere

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: _____

NEW MEXICO COMMON CORE STANDARDS

Unit	New Mexico ELA Standards
Unit 1: Persepolis – Graphic Memoir & Visual Rhetoric	RL.9-10.7 – Analyze the representation of a subject or scene in two different artistic mediums (text, graphic novel, film, visual art). RL.9-10.2 – Determine a theme or central idea and analyze its development throughout a text.NM Reading Literature Standard – Analyze and evaluate significant works of literature from various genres, including diverse cultural perspectives. (State Records Center & Archives)
Unit 2: The Marrow Thieves / Firekeeper's Daughter	RL.9-10.3 – Analyze how complex characters develop and interact over the course of a text. RL.9-10.6 – Analyze how an author's point of view or cultural perspective shapes a text.NM Reading Literature Standard – Analyze literature that includes Hispanic and Native American oral and written texts and perspectives. (State Records Center & Archives)
Unit 3: Twelfth Night	RL.9-10.3 – Analyze how characters develop and advance the plot and themes. RL.9-10.5 – Analyze how an author's structural choices contribute to meaning and dramatic effect.

	SL.9-10.1 – Initiate and participate effectively in collaborative discussions, performances, and seminars. (NMPED)
Unit 4: Research and Media Literacy	RI.9-10.8 – Delineate and evaluate an argument and specific claims, assessing reasoning and evidence. W.9-10.7 – Conduct short and sustained research projects to answer a question or solve a problem. W.9-10.8 – Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative sources, evaluate credibility, integrate information, and cite sources appropriately. (NMPED)
Unit 5: Poetry	RL.9-10.4 – Determine the meaning of words and phrases, including figurative and connotative meanings, and analyze the cumulative impact of language. RL.9-10.5 – Analyze how an author's structural choices contribute to meaning and aesthetic impact. W.9-10.3 – Write narratives using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured sequences (applied through original poetry and creative writing). (NMPED)

Student Name: _____

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

Parent/Guardian signature: _____ Date: _____

Student signature: _____ Date: _____