

Middle School English Syllabus

2026-2027

Mrs. Muniz

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Course Description-This course is dedicated to enhancing students' skills in English Language Arts through a personalized and supportive approach. Tailored specifically to meet individual needs, the curriculum is designed around each student's unique Individualized Education Program (IEP) goals. By focusing on personalized learning objectives, students will engage in targeted activities and strategies that support their growth in reading, writing, and critical thinking. Our goal is to foster a deep understanding of English Language Arts while building confidence and academic success.

Class Materials-

- 2 packs of # 2 pencils
- 1 Clorox wipes
- 1 Package of Crayola colored pencils

Grading Scale-

Projects- 20%
Classwork- 40%
Bell Ringers- 15%
Participation- 15%
Assessments- 10%

Classroom Expectations-

1. **Respect Yourself:** You respect yourself by being prepared, doing your best, having a positive attitude, and participating.
2. **Respect Others:** You respect others by waiting for your turn to speak, by being understanding, staying on task, and by working together.
3. **Respect Our School:** You respect our school by following directions, picking up after yourself, and by following school rules.

Participation: Participation is a significant component of your final grade, accounting for 15%. Active participation includes contributing to discussions, engaging in class activities, and completing assignments while in class. Points will be deducted if you disrupt the learning environment, fail to complete in-class work, or arrive late. Maintaining consistent attendance and timely arrival, along with respectful and engaged

behavior, is crucial for both your academic success and a positive classroom atmosphere.

Plagiarism-In our English class, it is crucial to produce original work and give proper credit to others. Plagiarism, which is using someone else's work, ideas, or words without proper acknowledgment, is a serious offense. This includes copying from books, websites, or other sources, and presenting it as your own. If a student plagiarizes any assignment, they will receive a zero. If they do it again, they will be referred to the office for further disciplinary action.

AI-This policy is designed to ensure that all work in English class reflects students' own thinking, creativity, and writing skills. While AI tools (such as ChatGPT, Grammarly, or similar) can be helpful in certain areas, they cannot replace the learning process or the development of each student's individual voice. The first time AI is used, the student can redo the assignment with a loss of 10% of their grade. For each subsequent time the student will be given an automatic 0%. If AI is continued, the student will be sent to the office.

Device Policy

- In accordance with Senate Bill 11 (2025) and guidance from the New Mexico Public Education Department (PED), PAPA requires wireless communication devices to be silenced and kept out of sight from the time students arrive on campus until the dismissal bell. Wireless communication devices include cell phones, smartphones, smartwatches, tablets, laptops, gaming devices, wireless headphones, and other portable devices capable of transmitting voice, text, or data. Students may not use, display, or access these devices during the school day unless explicitly authorized by a teacher or administrator for an educational purpose. Exceptions may be made for documented medical needs or when authorized by school personnel during an emergency.
- Students who use a wireless communication device without permission may be required to surrender the device to the front office for parent/guardian pickup and/or secure the device in a locked cell phone pouch for the remainder of the school day. The pouch may only be unlocked in the front office after dismissal. Refusal to follow staff directions regarding device use will be addressed according to the school's Behavior Matrix, including consequences for defiance or disruption of the educational environment. Tampering with or damaging a cell phone pouch may result in financial responsibility for replacement costs and additional disciplinary consequences.
- Parents and guardians who need to contact their student during the school day should contact the school front office. Students who need to contact a parent or

guardian during school hours must do so through the front office with permission from school staff. These procedures are intended to support student safety, minimize disruptions, and maintain a focused, respectful learning environment.

Common Core Standards- All assignments and classroom activities will be based on the Common Core Standards . To see the English Language Arts standards, please visit the website below. They start on 34 and end on 54.

http://www.corestandards.org/wp-content/uploads/ELA_Standards1.pdf

Late Work Policy-Work is expected to be submitted on the due date. For any assignment that is handed in late, there will be a penalty of 10% deducted from the final grade. Any class work, quizzes, or assigned homework that was due on a day when a student was absent, must be made up and turned in within the number of days of the student's absences.

Novel Studies- This year we will be reading two novels as a class. In quarter two, we will be reading *Fish in a Tree* by Lynda Mullaly Hunt. In quarter three, we will be reading *Bud Not Buddy* by Christopher Paul Curtis. The students will also be responsible for an individual novel study. Instructions will be sent home for that assignment.

IXL-

Overview: IXL is an integral part of our classroom learning experience. This adaptive learning platform will be used multiple times a week to help measure and enhance your child's progress in key skills related to our curriculum and their Individualized Education Program (IEP) goals.

Purpose: The IXL program will be employed to:

- Track and measure progress in class-specific skills.
- Address and bridge any skill gaps.
- Support the achievement of IEP goals.

Implementation:

- **Daily Routine:** At the start of each class, students are required to spend the first ten minutes working on their recommended IXL skills. This consistent practice is designed to reinforce learning and ensure steady progress.

- **Bell Ringer Grade:** This daily ten-minute activity will be assessed and will constitute the bell ringer grade. Regular participation and effort during this time are essential for your students' growth.

Benefits:

- **Personalized Learning:** IXL adapts to each student's level, providing a personalized learning experience that targets their specific needs.
- **Continuous Feedback:** The program offers immediate feedback, helping students understand and learn from their mistakes in real-time.
- **Goal Alignment:** By focusing on skills that align with IEP goals, IXL ensures that students are making progress in the areas most critical to their success.

Expectations:

- **Consistency:** Students are expected to engage with IXL regularly as part of their daily classroom routine.
- **Effort:** Active participation and genuine effort during the IXL sessions are crucial. Students should aim to challenge themselves and make the most of this time.
- **Progress Monitoring:** I will closely monitor each student's progress on IXL to provide additional support where needed and to celebrate their achievements.

By integrating IXL into our daily schedule, we aim to create a structured, supportive environment that fosters continuous learning and growth.

Class Year Plan- This schedule is subject to change based on class needs, student progress, and instructional priorities, but represents the general plan for the year. In addition to the quarterly focuses and novel studies, students will engage with a variety of additional texts, writing activities, and assignments designed to reinforce key skills and enhance their understanding of each unit. Instruction will also target individual skill gaps and provide ongoing support to help students make progress toward their IEP goals.

1st Quarter: Writing and Literary Elements

- **Focus:** Developing foundational writing skills and exploring key literary elements.
- **Activities:**
 - Writing workshops on narrative, expository, and descriptive writing.
 - Analysis of literary elements such as plot, character, setting, and theme.

2nd Quarter: Novel Study: *Fish in a Tree* by Lynda Mullaly Hunt

In this unit, students will read and analyze *Fish in a Tree*, exploring themes of friendship, perseverance, self-confidence, and recognizing individual strengths. Students will examine Ally's experience with dyslexia and how her learning disability affects her experiences in school, while learning that having a learning difference does not define a person's abilities or potential for success. Through discussion, comprehension activities, and written responses, students will explore literary elements such as character development, conflict, point of view, and theme while making connections between the novel and their own experiences.

3rd Quarter: Novel Study: *Bud, Not Buddy* by Christopher Paul Curtis

In this unit, students will read and analyze *Bud, Not Buddy*, exploring themes of family, perseverance, identity, hope, and belonging. Set during the Great Depression, the novel provides opportunities for students to learn about the historical challenges faced by children and families during this time. Through discussion, comprehension activities, and written responses, students will examine literary elements such as character development, setting, conflict, point of view, and theme while making connections between Bud's experiences and their own lives.

4th Quarter: Grammar, Writing Skills, and Individual Summative Project

- **Focus:** Reinforcing grammar fundamentals, refining writing skills, and completing a comprehensive summative project.
- **Activities:**
 - Grammar review sessions covering syntax, punctuation, and usage.
 - Writing workshops to polish personal writing style and techniques.
 - Development and presentation of an individual summative project that integrates learning from the year.

Syllabus Signature Page

To ensure that parents/guardians and students are aware of the guidelines and expectations of this class, please sign, date, and return this page only with your student. Your student will receive credit for returning this sheet. I appreciate your time and cooperation.

Student Name

Print: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature

Print: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Please complete the following information:

Best number to reach you: _____

Best email: _____

Is there anything you feel I should know about your child to help them be more successful in my class?