

## Syllabus and Materials

### Grade 6 Language Arts

Mr. Hays

Sixth grade Language Arts is one of the most important classes you will have in middle school. In this class, we will be preparing for the Florida Standards Assessment, learning about literature, and developing a love for reading. Students will use reading, writing, listening, speaking, and viewing to explore different aspects of Language Arts, the Florida Standards, and the International Baccalaureate Programme standards and practices. Students will create a digital portfolio in the form of a blog on Wordpress. This will be explained further in class and in a parent letter. The blog is only to be used to showcase your school work and to publish your writing. Developing a lifelong love of reading is a goal in my Language Arts class, and each student is encouraged to read independently for 30 minutes each day. Students are able to use a website called MyOn through their portal to earn points and compete with one another, and they will be able to write book reviews, create book trailers, or record podcasts to post on their blogs. Each student is required to read at least one novel independently on their level per nine weeks. Testing and blogging is done through the computers in our classroom or school library if not available at home, and the assignments will count as 20 percent of a student's final grade (along with class quizzes).

In addition to independent reading, we will be reading two novels as part of the curriculum this year. You are required to have a copy of the novel each day in class unless otherwise stated (if it is a digital copy, it must be on a tablet or e-reader, not a phone). These can be checked out from the library for free or purchased through Amazon or another book seller. If you would like to use Scholastic, our class code is MZ832 – books ordered this way are sent directly to the school and distributed in class. We are reading *Racing in the Rain* by Garth Stein, and *Amina's Voice* by Hena Khan.

Students are required to bring a way to take down homework assignments (a planner will be provided for all students through the Language Arts classes). Homework counts as 20 percent of your final grade (along with classwork). Homework always includes iReady practice and independent novel reading of 30 minutes per day. Students will have a duotang notebook (must have clips and pockets) for their writing portfolio in a specific color that will be explained in class. A composition notebook is also required every day for notes and "Do Now" assignments. Students must be prepared for class and should have paper and pens/pencils every day. Through an effort to become "Paper-Free", I created a website for the class – <http://www.PaperFreeClass.net> – You can check the site regularly for updates to the class and to see some of the assignments my students have done in the past. We use various paper-free options in our class, including Edmodo.com for projects and essays, OneNote or Google Keep for notes, and Socrative for quizzes. Most Paper-Free assignments count as 30% of the final grade (along with writing assignments), but some may count less as quizzes and notes or as independent reading assignments.

Miami-Dade County Public Schools has a “Bring Your Own Device” policy, and students are encouraged to participate in this to utilize technology on a daily basis. Students will be allowed to use laptops, e-readers, smartphones, tablets, iPods, etc., but these are not required. Students are responsible for their devices, and if there is a worry about the security or their devices or if they are found to be using them inappropriately, it is advised that they be left home. Here are the percentages for various grade categories in our class – All assignments are weighted evenly, though some projects/tests may count for more than one grade: Projects & Tests – 30% Paperfree & Writing – 30% Independent Reading & Quizzes – 20% Homework & Classwork – 20% This year, we will be studying the themes of Animal Intelligence, Making Your Voice Heard, Fairness, and Cultural Perspective. We will focus on life outside the classroom and using technology in the classroom. Our goal is to bring the world outside into our class, and take our class outside into the world.

#### Classroom Rules

1. Enter quietly, orderly, and on time.
2. Take assigned seat immediately.
3. Open notebook to begin assignment.
4. Remain seated and silent to await directions.
5. Food, drinks, and gum are prohibited.

A couple of reminders:

When I enter a place, I will not do anything to disturb the purpose of that place.

Silence when someone is speaking, loudspeaker is on, or a visitor enters.