



Journey Middle School

217 Celtic Drive, Madison, Alabama 35758

English Language Arts, 8th Grade

Ms. Takivia Rhodes

Teacher Contact Information	Email: tjrhodes@madisoncity.k12.al.us Classroom Phone: 256-774-4695 ext.84212
Classroom Digital Platforms	Webpage Link Schoolology is our digital learning platform. If you need your access code, please email me, and I will provide it. Distribution List Link:
Textbook Information	Textbook: StudySync Grade 8, McGraw-Hill This is an online and print text. The online platform is available to students via the “McGraw Hill” link in Schoolology. Students will have their own consumable copy of the textbook as well. These will remain in the classroom until the end of the school year.
Required Novels	<i>Drums, Girls, and Dangerous Pie</i> by Jordan Sonnenblick (Summer Reading) <i>The Outsiders</i> by S.E. Hinton <i>The Diary of Anne Frank: Play Edition</i> by Albert Hackett and Frances Goodrich <i>The Alchemist</i> by Paulo Coelho (25th Anniversary Edition)
Writing Projects	Any writing assignment will be created in the student’s Madison City Schools Google Drive using the Google Platform, which includes Google Docs, Google Slides, and Google Sheets.
Course Description	8th Grade Language Arts focuses student learning to help students prepare for college and future careers based on the standards outlined in the Alabama Course of Study. The course focuses on analyzing different types of texts, making connections through reading different types of literature and informational texts, experiencing the writing process with modes of writing, participating in thoughtful discussions with peers, and practicing digital citizenship.
Course Objectives	Students will develop and strengthen critical thinking skills by reading, comprehending, and engaging with both literary and informational texts. Students will make text-to-text, text-to-world, and text-to-self connections. Students will be able to identify, define, and duplicate examples of figurative language found in texts. They will demonstrate their understanding of the text through various formative and summative assessments. Students will display the convergence of their independent thoughts and textual examples in the writing of paragraphs and essays, as well as develop clear and concise writing skills through the execution of writing assignments and the application of proofreading and editing skills. Students will also improve their writing through the increased understanding and application of grammar, mechanics, and vocabulary skills. Students will be able to respectfully engage critically and constructively in a dialogue of ideas through class discussion, small group assignments, and project-based learning. Students will develop and display clear written and verbal communication skills.
Course Outline	Unit 1: Summer Reading Skills: <i>Drums, Girls, and Dangerous Pie</i> Unit 2: Realistic Fiction: <i>The Outsiders</i> by S.E. Hinton Unit 3: Narrative Writing Unit 4: Strange and Mysterious Stories (Short Story Unit) <i>Argumentative and persuasive elements embedded</i> Unit 5: Dystopian Elements & Short Story Applications Unit 6: Research Skills: Holocaust Era Research Unit 7: Nonfiction Drama: <i>The Diary of Anne Frank: Play Edition</i> by Albert Hackett and Frances

	Goodrich Unit 8: ACAP Prep Unit 9: Allegory: <i>The Alchemist</i> by Paulo Coelho (25th Anniversary Edition) Grammar Skills: • Parts of Speech Review • Subject/Predicate • Subject Verb Agreement Review • Clauses & Sentence Structure • Active & Passive Voice • Verbals, Gerunds, & Infinitives • Verb Moods • Verb Shifts Vocabulary is embedded throughout the school year with a blend of standard vocabulary units and academic vocabulary. Nonfiction excerpts, articles, and other sources are used in each unit to make real world connections, enhance critical thinking skills, and deepen understanding of fictional texts. <u><i>*This is subject to change at teacher discretion.*</i></u>
Classroom Expectations	• Be respectful and be responsible. • <u>Cell phones and any other personal digital devices must be turned off and stored in a backpack from 8:15-3:20 as per the FOCUS Act.</u> • Bring your school-issued chromebook and charger to school. • Charge your chromebook at home.
Progressive Discipline Procedures	All progressive discipline will correspond with the Madison City Schools Code of Conduct regarding Class I and II offenses. Some Class II and all Class III offenses are a direct office referral. • Warning • Conference with student with parent notification • Parent Contact • Detention • Referral to administration for repeat Class I violations and initial Class II and III offenses---Consequences determined to be reasonable and appropriate by the school administration.
Electronic Communication Device Policy	Wireless Communication Devices A. Definitions 1. Instructional Day – • When school is open and in session: • During class time, lunch, transitions between classes, and any non-instructional periods; • Any time that students are required to store their Wireless Communication Devices under the Student Code of Conduct, or other school rules; or • Any other time, students are instructed to store their devices by school staff. 2. Wireless Communication Devices – Any portable electronic device that has the capability of exchanging voice, messaging, or other data communication with another electronic device, including, without limitation: • cellular telephones • tablet computers • laptop computers • pagers • gaming devices • smart watches

	• earphones or headphones (Air Pods, ear buds, over the ear headphones, etc., whether wireless or not) B. Possession of Wireless Communication Devices – Students are prohibited from bringing Wireless Communication Devices into school buildings and onto school grounds, except in compliance with this policy. The Board is not responsible for the theft, loss, or damage to any Wireless Communication Device brought onto campus by a student. C. Storage of Devices– At all times during the Instructional Day, students who possess a Wireless Communication Device on any campus or in any school must turn the device off and store the Wireless Communication Device off their person in a locker, car, backpack, purse, gym bag, or other storage location approved by school administrators. This storage requirement is subject to the exceptions set out in subsection D below. D. Prohibition on Use; Exceptions – Students are prohibited from using, operating, or possessing a Wireless Communication Device during the Instructional Day, except under the following limited circumstances: • The use, operation, and/or possession of the device is specifically included in the student’s Individualized Education Plan (IEP), 504 Plan, or an Individualized Health Plan; • The use, operation, and/or possession of the device is for educational or learning purposes under the supervision of school personnel; and • The use, operation, and/or possession occur during an emergency threatening the life or safety of the student or another person. The Superintendent or designee is authorized to develop additional guidelines for implementation of these exceptions. E. Searches – School officials may read, examine, or inspect the contents of any wireless communication device upon reasonable suspicion that the device contains evidence of a violation of Board policy, the Code of Conduct, or other school rules, provided that the nature and extent of such reading, examination, and inspection shall be reasonably related and limited to the suspected violation. F. Disciplinary Action – Any violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action under the Student Code of Conduct. G. Additional Procedures Authorized – The Superintendent or designee is authorized to develop any additional rules necessary to carry out this policy.												
Grading Policy <i>(MCS Policy)</i>	Middle School 60% = Assessments (Tests, Essays, Projects) 40% = Daily Grades (Quizzes, Homework, Classwork, and Participation) <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2">Assessment Point Ranges (New for 2025-2026)</th></tr> <tr> <th>Assessment Type</th><th>Point Range (60%/70% of Grade)</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Semester Exams</td><td>100-120 Points</td></tr> <tr> <td>Unit Tests and Exams</td><td>65-100 Points</td></tr> <tr> <td>Quizzes</td><td>10-65 Points</td></tr> <tr> <td>Projects/Essays</td><td>50-100 Points</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Assessment Point Ranges (New for 2025-2026)		Assessment Type	Point Range (60%/70% of Grade)	Semester Exams	100-120 Points	Unit Tests and Exams	65-100 Points	Quizzes	10-65 Points	Projects/Essays	50-100 Points
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Late Work Procedures	Students present in class on the day of instruction are expected to turn in all in-class and out-of-class assignments on time. Late work will be accepted up to 3 days after the initial due date, with a deduction of 10% each day it’s late. Late work will not be accepted after 3 days. Students must email the teacher upon submitting late work in order to receive credit.												
Make-up Work/Test Policy <i>(MCS Policy)</i>	Students are permitted to make up work, tests, and other assignments, activities, etc., when absences are excused. Under normal circumstances, it is expected that students will submit previously assigned work upon return to school after an excused absence. All work missed on the day(s) of excused absence(s)												

	must be made up within three school days after returning to school. However, for extended excused absences when homebound services are not necessary, the teacher may grant additional time, but not to extend beyond two weeks past the return to school. It is the joint responsibility of student and parent to ensure a student makes up work following excused absences. Teachers may alter assignments, tests, work, activities, etc., as necessary to ensure an accurate evaluation of the student's performance after an excused absence. <u>Students will not receive credit for and will not be allowed to make up any assignments, tests, work, activities, etc., missed during unexcused absences.</u>
Technology	Student laptops should not be hard-wired to the network or have print capabilities. Discs, flash drives, jump drives, or other USB devices are not allowed on Madison City computers. Neither the teacher nor the school is responsible for broken, stolen, or lost laptops. Laptops and other electronic devices will be used at the teacher's individual discretion.
Cheating/Plagiarism	A student who cheats will not receive credit for the work in question. If any other student has cooperated in cheating, that student is also considered to have cheated and will not receive credit. Cheating students will also be subject to disciplinary consequences in Section XXII of this CSC. Cheating is defined to include, but is not limited to: (a) copying someone else's work in or out of class and identifying and submitting it as your own (b) failing to quote and/or list appropriate citations for material derived from published sources (including the Internet) and identifying and submitting it as your own (c) the use of unauthorized notes, other materials, or assistance during the accomplishment of graded work in or out of class (d) any other situation in which the student attempts to or accepts credit for work not his or her own.
Artificial Intelligence Acceptable Use Policy <i>(MCS Policy)</i>	Madison City Schools acknowledges that technology is ever-changing and has a tremendous impact on our global society, local community, and classrooms. Artificial intelligence (AI), including generative forms of AI, is becoming more a part of our everyday lives. It is our responsibility to educate and train students to utilize AI in an ethical and educational way. Therefore, Madison City Schools is not banning the student or teacher use of AI, but each student will need to be aware of the limitations and guidelines of its usage: a. Madison City Schools student email accounts and Chromebook access to specific open AI software, such as ChatGPT, are blocked due to data and security concerns. b. Any misuse of AI tools and applications, such as hacking or altering data, is strictly prohibited. c. Teachers may allow the use of AI for curriculum purposes. Access to specific websites will be granted on an as-needed basis, adhering to specific data and privacy guidelines regarding age restrictions and usage. d. College Board and Dual Enrollment college and university classes may have additional restrictions and limitations regarding the use of Artificial Intelligence. e. Students who use AI software with a personal device and/or personal credentials should do so at their own risk, acknowledging that each platform is collecting various forms of data. f. Students must acknowledge the use of AI in any capacity related to their schoolwork, including text, images, multimedia, etc. The use of AI could be subject to the Academic Dishonesty Policy. h. Students should acknowledge that AI is not always factually accurate, nor seen as a credible source, and should be able to provide evidence to support its claims.
Materials & Supplies	Only include supplies listed on the JMS school supply lists. You can use this space to ask for donations of other classroom supplies not included on the school supply list.
Homework	Homework is rarely assigned. It is typically an extension of the day's lesson and/or work not completed in class. This is typically common during writing and research projects.
Parent & Student	Complete this Acknowledgement Form after you and your child/children have read the syllabus. If you

Acknowledgment Form

have more than one child in any of my ELA classes, please add their name in the space provided on this form.

[Acknowledgement Form Link](#)