

Course Scope: This one-year course emphasizes the development of critical reading and writing skills. A variety of literature and informational text of steadily increasing sophistication is used. Through close reading, careful writing, class discussions, and presentations, students deepen their ability to independently write, analyze, evaluate, and critique text. Students demonstrate increasing sophistication in all aspects of language use. Students actively seek to understand other perspectives and cultures through reading and listening. Technology is used thoughtfully to enhance reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language use. This course fulfills the eighth-grade English requirement.

CCSD implements the National Common Core State Standards which can be found at www.corestandards.org.

I. **Course goals**

- a. To determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas. [CCSS: RL.8.2, RI.8.2]
- b. To analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text. [CCSS: RL.8.3, RI.8.3]
- c. To interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone. [CCSS: RL.8.4, RI.8.4]
- d. To analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole. [CCSS: RL.8.5, RI.8.5]
- e. To assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text. [CCSS: RL.8.6, RI.8.6]
- f. To integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse formats and media, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words. [CCSS: RL.8.7, RI.8.7]
- g. To delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence. [CCSS: RI.8.8]
- h. To analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take. [CCSS: RL.8.9, RI.8.9]
- i. To write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence. [CCSS: W.8.1]
- j. To write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content. [CCSS: W.8.2]
- k. To write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences. [CCSS: W.8.3]
- l. To develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach. [CCSS: W.8.5]
- m. To conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation. [CCSS: W.8.7]
- n. To gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism. [CCSS: W.8.8]
- o. To draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research. [CCSS: W.8.9]
- p. To write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences. [CCSS: W.8.10]
- q. To collaborate, express and listen carefully to ideas, evaluate and integrate information from oral, visual, quantitative, and media sources, use media and visual displays strategically to achieve

- communicative purposes, and adapt speech to context and task. [CCSS: SL.8.1, SL.8.2, SL.8.3, SL.8.4, SL.8.5, SL.8.6]
- r. To demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking. [CCSS: L.8.1]
 - s. To demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing. [CCSS: L.8.2]
 - t. To 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. [CCSS: L.8.3]
 - u. To determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases by using context clues, analyzing meaningful word parts, and consulting general and specialized reference materials, as appropriate. [CCSS: L.8.4]
 - v. To demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings. [CCSS: L.8.5]
 - w. To acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression. [CCSS: L.8.6]

Each anchor standard has been correlated to the grade-specific standard.

II. **Course content and time schedule**

Quarter 1: This unit introduces the Challenge theme by examining **heroes**: in our personal lives, in literary work, and in the world at large. You will be introduced to the archetype of the hero's journey and will view various examples of heroes through that archetypal lens. After exploring heroism, you will then examine the challenges of society as you encounter texts in which individuals take great risks as they struggle to do what they think is right.

Quarter 2: As life continues to grow more complex and challenging, you will need to continue to develop your critical thinking skills. By focusing on nonfiction texts, this unit will teach you to ask insightful questions, to develop clear and logical arguments, and to express those arguments in both written and oral texts. This quarter continues with acts of heroism and examining the archetypal hero's journey in literature as well as the concepts of **utopia and dystopia**.

Quarter 3: Every year brings challenges. In the first two units, you encountered individuals, both real and fictional, who have faced obstacles and challenges, and have found ways of mastering or triumphing over their limitations. You and your classmates, too, have faced challenges: personal, social, and academic. Midway through the year is a good time to pause and reflect on the work you have done during the past months. This quarter focuses on real world challenges both in fiction and nonfiction by using texts related to the **Holocaust and other significant historical events** and how those events have shaped our society.

Quarter 4: The end of the year will be spent reviewing elements of literature and poetry in preparation for high school. A variety of texts, both written and visual, may be used to cement these concepts to ready our students for their next stage in their academic life.

*Order of units is flexible. .

III. Course activities

- a. Journal writing on a regular basis
- b. Using the writing process to complete final drafts
- c. Participation in class discussions, debates, and presentations
- d. In-class assignments
- e. Special projects/homework
- f. Silent/oral reading
- g. Conducting and presenting research
- h. Using technology to prepare for college and work

IV. Evaluation

Criteria for arriving at students grades

- a. 40% Formative Assessments (classwork, practice, review)
60% Summative Assessments (essays, projects, tests, quizzes)
I do provide opportunities for extra credit.
- b. Semester exams will be worth 20% of the SEMESTER grade
 - i. Semester exams will not be administered early. Students who are absent may make-up their exams on the district approved make-up day.
- c. Explanation of student grades
 - i. A 100 – 90%
 - ii. B 89 – 80%
 - iii. C 79 – 70%
 - iv. D 69 – 60%
 - v. F 59 and below
- d. How and when students will be advised of their grades
 - i. Parents and students are urged to check the **Infinite Campus** Portal for grades regularly.
- e. Citizenship/behavior expectations- Citizenship is taken very seriously at Leavitt Middle School. Teachers expect the best of their students at all times. Students are to bring supplies to class and pay attention. It is important to stay on task and to be respectful of others. Nuisance items, gum, and food should not be brought to class. Students who cannot work within these expectations will have points deducted from their citizenship grades. Other actions, which disrupt the environment of the classroom and other students, will also be documented and points will be lost.
 - i. Below is a scale for citizenship. All reports of misconduct will be documented by the teacher.
0-1 - Outstanding
2-4 - Satisfactory
5-6 - Needs Improvement
7 or more - Unsatisfactory
- f. Late Work policy – Optimal student learning happens only if work is done in a timely fashion. If it is not turned in on time, some or all credit will be lost. **No late work will be accepted the last week of each quarter.**

V. Supplies needed for this course-

- a. One 3 ring binder with lined notebook paper
- b. Writing utensil
- c. Composition (comp) book
- d. Ipad or other device with charger and earbuds

- VI. Utilizing technology to learn - This year, at Leavitt, we want to encourage the daily use of technology in and out of the classroom to further enhance the educational experience. As such, Leavitt will be providing students with individual devices in grades 7 and 8 to utilize in class and at home. Students will also be provided with a Google email address to correspond with their teacher and classmates on projects, as well as to turn in assignments. Students may choose to utilize their own electronic tablets (iPads, Kindle Fire, Samsung, etc.) cell phones, laptops, and reading devices for educational purposes. Please be reminded that your student is responsible for the safety of their personal device and must utilize the district's Wifi to ensure their internet safety. All use of these devices will be for educational purposes and **classroom use must be approved by the individual teacher.**
- VII. Teacher's hours of availability- generally before and after school. Please confirm with teacher.
- VIII. Please sign up for Remind101 for text alerts and reminders. Check your child's Google classroom as well. Thank you for your support.

I look forward to a positive and productive school year!