

Dear Students and Parents,

Welcome to 8<sup>th</sup> grade **language arts!** You have many goals to achieve this year as you prepare for high school. You will fine-tune your reading and writing skills. You will constantly be engaged in reading, either a book of your own choosing, or one we are reading together as a class. You will also experiment with several modes of writing including research papers, poetry, fiction, and persuasive essays. Here is a rough outline of topics and standards that we will be covering this year:

**Writing**

The writing process (planning, drafting, revising, etc.)

Narratives

Informative/explanatory

Research

Argumentative/persuasive

**Reading**

Citing Evidence from the text

Theme and central idea

Dialogue

Context clues

Analysis and reflection

Independent reading (free choice)

In order to have a successful school year, please bring your binder to class **EVERY DAY** containing:

- Writer's Notebook (spiral or otherwise bound notebook, at least 70 pages)
- A Book! Whatever you are currently reading
- 2 pencils and black or blue pen
- Notebook paper

Other school supplies such as scissors, glue, markers, etc. are not necessary to bring to class and can be left at home. I will provide them in the classroom if needed.

**Free Choice Reading**

Much of the school year you will be able to read any book of your choosing, and complete several class assignments from your current reading material. It is the expectation that you always have something that you are currently reading, and that you finish several books this year. I would LOVE to help you select books that you will actually enjoy if this is a challenge for you. The books in the classroom library are categorized as "Middle Grades" and "Young Adult." I will not restrict or censor your free choice book, as long as you are actually reading it, loving it, and completing assignments with it. Instead, it is up to parents to help their students to determine if the content of a book is appropriate or not. Parents: I am happy to help you make that decision, if you are unfamiliar with the titles your child is interested in. However, if a book (or cover) is not appropriate for an 8<sup>th</sup> grade classroom, I might kindly ask you to save it for home, and choose a different in-school book ☺

**Grades:**

**Standards-Based** grades measure actual student progress on the skills we are practicing in class. Each assignment in class, whether a graded assignment or a non-graded in-class activity, is intended to provide an opportunity for the student to demonstrate their level of understanding for the skill/standard we are working on. Students are given multiple opportunities to demonstrate understanding, and

improve their scores if needed. The scores are based on the district's 1-4 scale as follows:

- 4 - Excellent, advanced application of skill
- 3 - Demonstrates competency and understanding**
- 2 - Does not quite meet the standard (but close!)
- 1 - Shows little understanding

**Assignment Completion** grades measure the overall quality and timeliness of an assignment. Effort and timely completion can help balance, boost, or bring down an overall grade when averaging with the standards-based grades.

**Late work**

You will be penalized 10% for each day an assignment is late and unexcused. For example, if an assignment with “B” quality work is one day late, it becomes a “C.” If it is two days late, it becomes a “D.” You will always receive SOME credit no matter how late an assignment is. Remember, SOME credit is better than NO credit, and even if an assignment is late, you can still receive FULL standards based grades!!!

If you are absent, it is YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO CHECK WITH ME to see what you have to make up.

I'm looking forward to a great year with great students! Please feel free to come to me with any questions or concerns. See you in class!

Sincerely,  
Kevin Hall  
[hall\\_kevin@salkeiz.k12.or.us](mailto:hall_kevin@salkeiz.k12.or.us)

*Please return this page to class*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student's Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian's name (please print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Email Address

\_\_\_\_\_ [ ]home [ ]work [ ]cell  
Best phone number to reach you

I have read this letter, and my child and I both understand the classroom policies and procedures explained within.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date