

## 8TH GRADE ENGLISH

Kinard Middle School

Instructor: Ms. Kelly Peterson  
Classroom: A100  
Office hours: Lunch Tuesdays and Thursdays; After school Mondays and Wednesdays; And by appointment  
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### COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to prepare eighth-grade students to read, write, think, speak, and listen. It will focus on critical thinking, creativity, and student interest. Upon completion of this course, you will be more able to ground your learning in meaningful and engaging goals while being an active participant in the world around you. The course is designed in an experiential way for you to take agency in the class structure, expectations, and topics.

### INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES

This class is designed to prepare you to meet/to exceed the Colorado Standards while being integrated in students' own goals. Specifically, by the end of this class, you will be able to show your proficiency with regard to the following standards:

1. Oral Expression and Listening
  - a. Communication skills and interviewing techniques are required to gather information and to develop and deliver oral presentations
  - b. A variety of response strategies clarifies meaning or messages
2. Reading for All Purposes
  - a. Quality comprehension and interpretation of literary texts demand self-monitoring and self-assessment
  - b. Quality comprehension and interpretation of informational and persuasive texts demand monitoring and self-assessment
  - c. Context, grammar, and word choice influence the understanding of literary, persuasive, and informational texts
3. Writing and Composition
  - a. Stylistic devices and descriptive details in literary and narrative texts are organized for a variety of audiences and purposes and evaluated for quality
  - b. Ideas and supporting details in informational and persuasive texts are organized for a variety of audiences and purposes and evaluated for quality
  - c. Editing writing for grammar, usage, mechanics, and clarity is an essential trait of a well-written document
4. Research and Reasoning
  - a. Individual research projects begin with information obtained from a variety of sources, and is organized, documented, and presented using logical procedures
  - b. Common fallacies and errors occur in reasoning
  - c. Quality reasoning relies on supporting evidence in media

### COURSE ROUTINES

1. **Check Ins:** Since I rely on this class being a community, I provide five minutes of time to check in on one another since life comes first when we walk through the door each day. From fun icebreaker questions to asking each other about the weekend to doing a mindfulness activity and so on, we will pause to register our humanness before moving into our class goals for the day.
2. **Independent Reading:** You need to bring a book of choice to class every day, but especially on Mondays and Wednesdays because we will read for the first 10 minutes of class. Studies show that students who read more, succeed more on testing. It's not just about testing to me, but it helps you succeed more in life and academia moving forward. And you will be held accountable for reading during this time.
3. **Journaling:** You will be doing Quick Writes for 10 minutes twice a week in order to practice writing as much as they can. Your writings can often spark ideation for the topics and assessments going on at the time. Other prompts will simply ask for creativity and writing strategies. We will discuss as a class how to hold this piece accountable to you.
4. **Grammar Practice:** You will practice Standard English grammar rules twice a week for the first ten minutes of class because of the importance conventions have on everything we do in class. I believe in its credibility and opportunity it gives writers. You will sometimes turn it in, and other times keep it for your own reference.
5. **Vocabulary Practice:** You will practice different sets of vocabulary lists in various ways throughout the year twice a week for the first ten minutes of class. I also believe in the importance of vocabulary when it comes to reading and writing. Without consistent exposure to difficult words, students will not be able to access their potentials.
6. **Writing Partners:** You will work together in a pair each unit to enhance learning through ongoing inquiry and collaboration about the summative assessment, often being a paper. You will meet with your writing partner consistently throughout the unit to talk through the writing process—including goals and glows.

<https://kellypete4.wixsite.com/education>

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**ASSESSMENT**

My job is to give you the tools and opportunities for you to succeed in this class. If you ever feel like you are not being supported enough, whatever that looks like to you, please come talk to me. We will work together to make sure that your potential is being stretched and reached. I do have high expectations for each one of my students, but we all learn differently so even though I try to cater to many different needs, I will most likely not be successful for everyone. Help me change that.

1. **Rubrics and Portfolio:** Instead of using points, we will be jointly assessing your work using student-build rubrics, conferencing, self-reflection, and feedback. You can access these rubrics on Canvas. You should always bring a copy of these rubrics with you to class. We will be engaging in ongoing, consistent assessment during each unit to make sure our learning is rooted in expectations. Holistic grades can make some students nervous. As such, we will do an evaluation of your progress in the middle of the semester using a learning portfolio that we are adding to throughout each unit. The rubrics and portfolio will help us come to a consensus about a cumulative grade. Also, you are welcome to come to my office hours at any point in the semester, and we can evaluate your progress in the course together using the rubrics.
2. **Class Participation:** We will discuss as a class what productive participation looks like, but I cannot emphasize enough the importance of your participation in class. You are expected to do the readings in entirety *before* you come to class. I am not a fan of reading quizzes, but I need to know that you are doing your homework. As such, you will complete reading quizzes at the beginning of several classes. You will also be asked to reflect and engage with the reading in class.
3. **Conferencing:** You will meet one on one with me at least once per unit to individually talk about your progress and goals for three minutes. We will often focus on summative assessments, but if there are concerns about the formative assessments, then that can be included as well. Other students will be independently working at that time.
4. **Homework:** You will be expected to work on projects, papers, reading, and other assignments outside of class and complete them by a deadline. It will be difficult for you to be an active participant during class if you do not do your work/learning outside of class. Late work will always be accepted but will be noted on your portfolio that I refer to in conferences and final assessments. We will have conversations if late work becomes a habit and it will reflect your cumulative grade at the end of each semester. If you foresee a need for an extension, then I am open to talking about accommodations with you.

**COMMUNITY NORMS**

1. **Attendance:** Please attend class. I will notice if you are gone and we will miss you 😞. Our class runs smoothly when we're there to learn together. Communicate with me prior to vacations, sports, and other planned absences so that we can make sure you stay on top of it. If you are sick, check Canvas, absent folder, or with me for what needs to be done to hop back in. You have one day per absent day to make up work.
2. **Tardiness:** You will be expected to get to class on time. You are sending a message to me and your classmates when coming in late. Communicate with me when there is a reason why you were late and I'm happily hear to listen. Things happen. If it becomes a habit, it will be noted in your portfolio and we will have a conversation about it.
3. **Breaks:** When you gotta go, you gotta go. Use a hallway pass to use the restroom or fill up your water bottle during appropriate times during class. You will be expected to be back within 10 minutes. Please do not do this every day or I will inquire why.
4. **Cell Phones and Computers:** I want you present. Cellphones do not allow us to be present in our learning. A quick text message at the beginning and end of class is understandable but coming in and sitting on it will not be welcomed in our class. And using it during class will result in a tap on the desk from me, unless otherwise noted for the activities for the day. If I see it out for a third time, I'm putting it in phone jail.
5. **Classroom Courtesy/Decorum:** We will respect one another, ourselves, property, and the Earth at all times in this class. This is not up for negotiation and is the highest priority. In regard to other courtesy expectations, we will have regular discussions about what these mean to us.
6. **Expectations:** This is a rigorous course that expects you to give the best you can. I believe that you will benefit from the hard work that you will invest in this class. We're going to talk about some important stuff! And your passions will hopefully be at the forefront. Come talk to me at any time if you feel unsupported.
7. **Academic Integrity and Student Conduct:** The course will adhere to the Academic Integrity Policy of Poudre School District and the Student Conduct Code. Do not plagiarize. Any student who plagiarizes or cheats on any assignment in this course faces penalties that may include an F on the assignment.

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### **SAFETY**

#### **Drills:**

We will talk about and practice each type of drill. Don't hesitate to talk to me about your concerns. Your safety is my number one concern and I will make decisions I know best to reflect this. Just know that I take every situation seriously and I expect my students to not make jokes that entail harm.

#### **Reporting:**

I have an open door to all my students, past and present, who need a vulnerable space to be in. I am here to listen, offer advice, and give tissues to. However, I like to be up front about telling you that I am required to tell authority about any harm that has been done that draws the line in legalities.

#### **Resources:**

- Poudre School District and Kinard health and counseling staff
- School Security and Resource Officer
- Get Immediate Help: [Mentalhealth.gov](https://www.mentalhealth.gov) 1.877.726.4727

#### **Accommodations:**

If you are a student who will need accommodations in this class, please do not hesitate to make an appointment to see me to discuss your individual needs.

*Lastly, let's enjoy the year! I'm excited to get to know each of you and for the class to transform into a community of learners.*