

Eighth Grade Grammar and Composition

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Course Overview

Grammar

As there exists a definite relationship between grammar and rhetoric, this year the eighth grade grammar and composition class will be involved in an in-depth study of the English language. We use *Warriner's English Composition and Grammar, Third Course* as our primary grammar text. We will classify and diagram sentences, work towards improving sentence structure using compound and complex sentences, practice editing skills, review dictionary skills, master verbals and subordinate clauses, and thoroughly analyze and apply knowledge of the function and relationships between the major parts of speech.

Writing

Our writing focuses on the four primary genres of prose: narrative, descriptive, expository, and persuasive writing. Through intensive modeling workshops, students will receive formal instruction in writing well-developed paragraphs and essays. We will emphasize the writing process, including pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. Modeling sessions are teacher-student collaborations that encourage and necessitate student contributions, and students will be guided and challenged to accurately use an expanding vocabulary that grows out of modeling sessions, class discussions, and our *Classical Roots Vocabulary* work. Students will complete a minimum of two formal writing assignments each quarter. There will also be informal writing assignments (typically journaling) primarily completed within one class period. Additionally, our spring term includes a cursory tour of poetry, particularly lyric, narrative, free verse, and imagist forms. The primary aim of this class is the development of the students' writing skills. In order to accomplish this, we will engage in an in-depth study of the writing process through writing in the four major genres of prose.

*A note on **plagiarism**: misrepresenting another's work as your own will not be tolerated. Such actions by a student may result in a zero on the assignment, a detention, and possibly other consequences as deemed necessary by the teacher and school.

Vocabulary

Vocabulary from Classical Roots is the text for our vocabulary work. The text presents challenging and relevant English words and connects the students to the words' Latin or Greek origin. It is a curriculum emphasizing the definitions, spelling, and root origins of English words. Each lesson culminates with an objective format quiz.

Expectations and Policies

Attendance & Punctuality

Be prompt to class. You must be in your seat and prepared for class at the designated time for the class period. Tardiness to class will be given a disciplinary referral unless you have a pass.

You will receive 2 days to make up your work for every excused absent day. After this time the work will be late. Please write on your paper "LATE" and the date you turned it in. We will follow the handbook policies on deductions for unexcused absences.

If you are absent, I expect you to get the homework that you missed by emailing me and/or collecting the materials from my classroom worktable. If there are any questions after having gathered the materials, I will be happy to answer them.

If you are absent the day before there is a previously announced test or project (with longer than 2 days notice), you are expected to take the test or turn in the project unless other arrangements have been made.

Homework and Assignments

Students should expect daily homework (except for Fridays). It is imperative that students follow directions and complete work on time. Late writing assignments and tests will be penalized 11% per day for every day that they are late. Students should plan on two grammar tests and a variety of quizzes each quarter. Formal revised papers will count as a test grade; shorter writing assignments and some homework assignments may count as a quiz or homework/classwork grade.

All homework assignments **must be completed** and brought to class. You will receive a zero for incomplete or poorly done homework and classwork.

Please know that I am here for you. As we are called to witness the Holy Spirit's power in our lives, I care greatly about your faithfulness and hard work. If you struggle on assignments, always do your best. Bring your questions to class, and we will work through them together. Not understanding something is an opportunity to learn, grow, and improve. Ignoring or neglecting our work is never the way. **Always do your best**. When you need help beyond our class time, see me I will be more than happy to give extra instructional time for those students who need it. **I am here to serve you and blessed to be so!**

Daily Preparation and Participation

Your faithfulness to our class is a powerful witness to your classmates and me. I expect you to come to class prepared and organized every day. This means you have all of your class materials necessary for our work (**binder, paper, pens, pencils, highlighters, red editing pens, textbooks, and any other supplies or materials that you have been instructed to have for our class**).

Your Preparation and Participation "Bank Account":

You will receive 100 points at the beginning of each quarter. The points are yours to keep or lose. Should you come to class unprepared or poorly organized, you will lose 5 points from your quarterly "bank account." You will also lose 5 points should you decide to neglect your call to contribute positively and constructively to our class (participation). The points are not given back to you once you have lost them. The amount of points that you finish with will be a reflection of your faithfulness and diligence as a steward of the time and opportunities that God has given you; respecting the time and opportunities that He has given you, your classmates, and me is critical. It all connects to putting others before ourselves and maximizing our opportunities to steward our lives as a reflection of our love for Jesus.

Organization

As stated above, I expect you to establish and maintain systems of organization that enable you to be prepared for class every day. Bring your binder, loose-leaf paper, pens, pencils, erasers, and necessary textbooks to class **EVERY DAY**. In some instances, you will not be permitted to go back to your locker once the period start time has occurred, and you will lose your daily points for that day. If you develop a pattern of being unprepared and/or disorganized, you will receive a referral for your lack of stewardship.

Your Grammar and Composition binder will have 4 sections in it. These sections will be: Vocabulary, Grammar & Parts of Speech, Writing & Mechanics, and Notes. You will also need a journal and an assignment notebook (or other effective means of documenting your assignments).

*I will spot-check your notebook at unannounced times. All notes, homework, and quizzes will be kept in these appropriate sections of your binder. **Do Not discard any classwork or related materials without my permission.**

Your textbook will be covered at all times. After covering the book, use clear contact paper to cover the book's cover. This will allow your cover to last longer. Periodic book checks may occur at any time.

Grading

There will be approximately two tests per quarter in grammar. Each test is comprehensive. Vocabulary quizzes will be every Friday. There will also be a number of papers assigned each quarter of varying lengths and topics.

Quarter grades will be determined as follows:

Tests and Papers	55%
Quizzes	30%
Homework and Classwork	10%
Daily Preparation and Participation	5%

Classroom Decorum/Behavior

For behavior expectations, see and read the student handbook. Beyond that, I expect you to conduct yourself in a manner worthy of the gospel of Jesus Christ. I place a high premium on manners, respect for others, respect for our material blessings (classroom, desks, books etc.), and respect for the authorities God has given us.

Please diligently follow the expectations set forth in class. While asking questions of peers and teachers can be helpful and is encouraged, **all work** is expected to be done individually unless specifically stated by the teacher. Participation in class is strongly encouraged and should be respectful. In fact, respect should guide all of your decisions and actions in my class. Rude or disrespectful comments or class disruptions will result in immediate action by the teacher. A daily review of your notes from this class is a preferred method of test preparation rather than trying to cram the night before. Stay organized and ask questions when they arise. Remember, *you* help determine what kind of year you will have . . . Make it a great one!

My commitment to you is to provide an atmosphere of acceptance, accountability, encouragement, and love that I pray will foster growth in the Lord and excellence in English.

Therefore, I expect you to be loyal to our school and be obedient to our school rules and my stated policies. I will require and encourage your best effort in everything you undertake. I expect you to exhibit obedience to all of the authorities that God has placed over you, and I expect you to model kindness and respect to everyone in our school.

Please pray for your classmates, teachers, and everyone in our Westminster community as we journey through this year together.

I have read and understood the guidelines and expectations/policies stated above, and I agree to adhere to them.

Signature

Date

Please print your name: _____