**English Language Arts 2016/17**Mary McWay and Tom Simmons

“Education is our passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to the people who prepare for it today.” --Malcolm X

**7th Grade English Description and Philosophy:**

The 7th grade English Language Arts class is a comprehensive one-year course. The curriculum focuses on themes and concepts relevant to historical and current events through literature. We will analyze how literary works reflect the social and political fabric of their times as well as how they relate to our experiences today. We will develop and refine critical thinking skills, particularly with regard to the interpretation of language and reading.

*Students are expected to work collaboratively and independently in and outside of the classroom.* Specifically, this course provides an opportunity to evaluate, qualify, question, and comment critically on different texts and the world around us. Students will work to broaden the range of their writing to refine voice, improve conventions, and expand their sentence fluency. Students will focus on ideas and content to create their own style while learning about and using the writing processes of peer revision, editing, and rewriting.

**Curriculum** Prior to each unit of study, students will receive an outline detailing expectations, assignments, and curriculum focuses.

**Essential Questions**

We will use essential questions and the overall theme of “problem solvers” to guide our class as we navigate a variety of texts, supplemental literature, and assignments.

* How do the challenges we face shape who we are as people?
* Who or what determines if we are problem solvers?
* To what extent are we in charge of our own destiny?
* How are we affected by our culture and upbringing?
* How does our morality guide us through life?
* How do we synthesize what we read and hear into how we understand and solve problems?

**7th Grade Student Expectations**

**Academic**

Students will be evaluated on the following standards throughout the school year:

* Convey and interpret ideas through the use of grade level vocabulary
* Read and comprehend grade level texts independently and proficiently
* Use evidence to support claims, understand multiple perspectives, and inform the audience
* Use reading strategies and annotation to build understanding of text
* Present and exchange ideas using sound reasoning and well-chosen details with appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation
* Evaluates, revises, and edits own writing using correct grammar, syntax, and structure

**Classroom Expectations**

Students are expected to:

* Read independently on a daily basis
* Bring required materials to class on a daily basis
* Participate actively and effectively during class time
* Respect the right of others to learn
* Keep all papers and assignments throughout the year

A failure is not always a mistake. It may simply be the best one can do under the circumstances. The real mistake is to stop trying. –B.F. Skinner. Students are expected to try and give their best at all times, even when the task seems nearly impossible. Effort and perseverance count!

**Assessment of Learning**

There are three basic components of an English grade: product, process, and progress. The first is graded according to objective standards and criteria, the second according to work habits and effort, and the third according to actual learning gain. All students are expected to be involved with their learning on a daily basis; English is a discipline requiring thoughtfulness, attention to detail, self-criticism, and integrity. This course will have multiple formative and summative assessments to bring out the very best of these qualities in you and in your work. Students have the opportunity to receive both full and partial credit (depending on assignments) and are graded using the following scale: Beginning (B), Developing (D), Accomplished (A), and Exemplary (E). Students will also receive marks for Habit of Scholarship.

**General**

**Academic Integrity**We take cheating/sharing/copying extremely seriously. Dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated. We expect you to complete your own work.

**Homework**Classroom time focuses on direct instruction, group discussion, the writing process, peer review/teacher conferences, and student presentations. Time is also allotted for reading and skills assessment. The development of reading and writing skills form the foundation of all academic disciplines. Therefore, it is imperative students spend time outside the classroom honing these skills. English homework will usually include independent reading, written reflection and response, preparing for in-class discussion, working on writing pieces, and independent skills practice.

**Absent and Late Work**
Turn in completed work within the appropriate time frame. If you require additional time, please schedule a time to meet with us and request and extension. Once a unit is finished, no late work will be accepted.

When you are absent, all previously assigned work must be turned in the next class period following the absence. Failure to do so will result in a loss of credit. Additionally, you must make up any missed formal assessment the day you return to school to receive full credit.

**Additional Support**

We want to work with you to make this year successful for you. In order to do that, you must be responsible for completing your work and asking for help when you do not understand a concept. Additional support is available upon request before and after school. Please contact either Mary or Tom via email. Mary: mmcway@exploris.org
Tom: tsimmons@exploris.org

**Materials: please bring all materials to class each day** Folder for class handoutsPen and pencil Marble Composition book
Class novel and/or independent reading book