**Curriculum**

**8th Grade English**

**Course Overview**

The eighth grade English course is designed to further students’ appreciation of different genres of literature (novels, plays, poetry) and a variety of writing domains, in addition to mastery of, and practice in the basic skills of grammar, spelling, and acquiring vocabulary. Particular time and attention is paid to the craft of writing and composition (essay, analytical, creative, research, oratory), preparing students for upper school and formal writing requirements. The students create a diverse writing portfolio and assess their writing based on a 6-Trait analytical rubric. Course content, activities, and literature are chosen as engaging, challenging, age-appropriate connections between the reader and the text. Emphasis is placed on the drafting of writing, spelling, grammar, research, critical thinking, effective oral interaction, and general study habits. Vocabulary words are taught on a weekly basis through literature, etymological background, word relationships, and practical application in the context of students’ own writing.

**Department Standards**

Students will:  
1. develop critical thinking skills that will encourage them to make connections between literature and both their own lives and other academic disciplines;  
2. develop an appreciation for literature through the comprehension and analysis of various genres;  
3. communicate their understanding and ideas effectively in a variety of written forms;  
4. articulate organized ideas through a variety of oral activities;  
5. expand and strengthen their vocabularies to enhance their ability to understand and communicate;  
6. and learn and apply the standard conventions of the English language in both speaking and writing.

**Benchmarks**:

**Course Benchmarks**

Eighth grade students will:

1. read with critical understanding. (1)

2. use technology to research, to enhance learning, and present learning to others. (1)

3. develop creativity, humanity, values and integrity through exposure to literature. (2)

4. continue to apply literary terms to their critical reading and writing. (2)

5. write in many styles and forms with voice, organization, fluency, strong ideas, appropriate word choices, and correct conventions. (3)

6. speak more confidently and learn to present and share their ideas orally in many different forums. (4)

7. expand their vocabulary. (5)

8. become more aware of their own spelling problems, mechanical errors, and punctuation shortcomings and improve their editing skills. (6)

**Performance Indicators**

**First Quarter:**

1. LITERATURE

In class discussions students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of the literary elements (plot, character, theme etc) of To Kill a Mockingbird.

Students will be able to describe cultural and historical aspects of the text including background and setting.

2. READING FLUENCY

Student will work towards reading from a variety of genres with accuracy, immediate recognition and expression.

3. COMPREHENSION

Students will predict text content using prior knowledge and text features, confirm predictions for accuracy, generate clarifying questions while reading, connect information and events in text in order to relate to related texts and sources, and use reading strategies to interpret text.

Students will analyze plot development to determine how plots are resolved, identify and compare themes across works, describe a character based on actions, thoughts, and deeds, contrast points of view, analyze the elements of setting to the mood and tone of text, and draw conclusions about the style, mood and meaning of text based on author’s word choice.

4. WRITING/ ORAL EXPRESSION

Students will be able to use effective content (use clear focused ideas and details to support the topic), organization (a clear introduction, body, and end which is appropriate to the style of writing), voice ( a strong sense of audience and identity), word choice (accurate, specific and powerful words), sentence fluency (varied sentences that flow and sound natural/appropriate), and convention (correct mechanics including capitals, commas, spelling grammar, usage and paragraph breaks) in all form of writing (Six Writing Traits).

Students will use a writing process, which includes prewriting, drafting, revising, editing and publishing.

Students will write a paragraph with a clear topic sentence, relevant supporting details and a strong conclusion.

Students will write learn to write an eleven sentence paragraph and practise the form several times. (Updated November 2015)

Students will write a minimum of six poems of different types and styles demonstrating and understanding of poetic devices (image, metaphor, simile, alliteration, assonance, onomatopoeia, oxymoron). At least one will address the theme of prejudice.

Students will write a book report on a book that explores some form of prejudice as a theme and demonstrate an understanding of protagonist, antagonist, setting genre, conflicts, theme and basic analysis/critique.

Students will share reponses based on the summer reading (Goodnight Mr. Tom and The Princess Bride) and have an opportunity to revise with attention to the details that illustrate a clear understanding of the text. (Updated November 2015)

5. LANGUAGE

Students will work independently on Membean, an online vocabulary program. They will also be able to determine the meaning of vocabulary using linguistic roots and affixes, use context to identify the intended meaning of unfamiliar words, use context to identify the meaning of words with multiple meanings. (Updated: September, 2015)

Students will be able to determine the meaning of figurative language including simile, metaphor, alliteration, assonance, onomatopoeia, personification, image, oxymoron, plot, setting, theme, conflicts, genre, allusion, characterization.

Students will learn to recognize and correct grammatical and mechanical errors in regular sentence practice through The Writer's Notebook (Mechanically Inclined). Students copy sentence patterns from mentor texts and imitate them, and collect vivid verbs, nouns and phrases to use in their writing. Students learn how to use commas, the semi-colon, colon, dash through mentor sentences. This straddles first and second quarter

**Second Quarter:**

1. LITERATURE

In class discussions students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of the literary elements (dramatic plot, character, theme etc) in Of Mice and Men.

Students will be able to describe cultural and historical aspects of the text including background and setting. (ex. 'To a Mousie' by Robert Burns)

2. READING FLUENCY

Student will work towards reading from a variety of genres with accuracy, immediate recognition and expression.

3. COMPREHENSION

Students will predict text content using prior knowledge and text features, confirm predictions for accuracy, generate clarifying questions while reading, connect information and events in text in order to relate to related texts and sources, and use reading strategies to interpret text.

Students will analyze plot development to determine how plots are resolved, identify and compare themes across works, describe a character based on actions, thoughts, and deeds, contrast points of view, analyze the elements of setting to the mood and tone of text, and draw conclusions about the style, mood and meaning of text based on author’s word choice. Foreshadowing will be stressed as a tool Steinbeck uses particularly effectively.

4. WRITING/ ORAL EXPRESSION

Students will be able to use effective content (use clear focused ideas and details to support the topic), organization (a clear introduction, body, and end which is appropriate to the style of writing), voice ( a strong sense of audience and identity), word choice (accurate, specific and powerful words), sentence fluency (varied sentences that flow and sound natural/appropriate), and convention (correct mechanics including capitals, commas, spelling grammar, usage and paragraph breaks) in all form of writing (Six Writing Traits).

Students will use a writing process, which includes prewriting, drafting, revising, editing and publishing.

Students will write an essay with a clear topic thesis, a general introduction, relevant supporting details, three supporting quotes cited correctly, and a strong conclusion.

Students will write a memoir (My \_\_\_\_\_ History) with attention to the six writing traits and edit and revise for those traits (Updated November 2015)

Students will present an oral book report on a book of their choice and demonstrate an understanding of protagonist, antagonist, setting genre, conflicts, theme and basic analysis/critique. They will also present it in costume showing an understanding of a specific characters point of view.

5. LANGUAGE

Students will work independently on Membean, an online vocabulary program. They will also be able to determine the meaning of vocabulary using linguistic roots and affixes, use context to identify the intended meaning of unfamiliar words, use context to identify the meaning of words with multiple meanings.

(Updated November 2015)

Students will be able to define an use figurative language including simile, metaphor, alliteration, assonance, onomatopoeia, personification, image, oxymoron, plot, setting, theme, conflicts, genre, allusion, characterization.

Students will learn to recognize and correct grammatical and mechanical errors in regular sentence practice through The Writer's Notebook (Mechanically Inclined). Students copy sentence patterns from mentor texts and imitate them, and collect vivid verbs, nouns and phrases to use in their writing. Students learn how to use commas, the semi-colon, colon, dash through mentor sentences. This straddles first and second quarter. (Updated November 2015)

**Third Quarter:**

1. LITERATURE

Students will demonstrate an enjoyment of the literature of Shakespeare throughout the unit.

Students will be able to relate the plot of the play, understand the crucial speeches and identify the names of the characters in a test format on Act 1 and II.

Students will be able to describe cultural and historical aspects of the text including background and setting.

2. READING FLUENCY

Through reciting the prologue from memory, students will be able to demonstrate an articulation of the text, will have a physical experience of the language, will demonstrate the ability to memorize difficult text, and will be encourage to use the language expressively.

3. COMPREHENSION

Through reading and listening together in class students will practice translating the language into modern day English and will begin to understand the layers of complexity.

Through the scene rehearsals and presentations students will practice the language and be better able to understand (both literally and figuratively), express and appreciate the complexity of the poetic language.

4. WRITING/ ORAL

Students will describe an antagonist as part of their short story using descriptive language sensory detail and figurative language.

Students will research the setting of their story and write a description of place with attention to sensory details.

Students will prepare a lesson on one of the following conventions and explain the rule clearly, give thorough examples, provide practice handouts and create a colorful poster to help us remember and refer to the rule: the sentences fragment, the run-on sentence, the comma splice, the numbers rule, Indicating titles, comma rules (review).

5. LANGUAGE

Students will work independently on Membean, an online vocabulary program. They will also be able to determine the meaning of vocabulary using linguistic roots and affixes, use context to identify the intended meaning of unfamiliar words, use context to identify the meaning of words with multiple meanings.

(Updated November 2015)

Students will be able to define an use figurative language including simile, metaphor, alliteration, assonance, onomatopoeia, personification, image, oxymoron, plot, setting, theme, conflicts, genre, allusion, characterization.

Students will learn to recognize and correct grammatical and mechanical errors in regular sentence practice through The Writer's Notebook (Mechanically Inclined). Students copy sentence patterns from mentor texts and imitate them, and collect vivid verbs, nouns and phrases to use in their writing. Students learn how to use commas, the semi-colon, colon, dash through mentor sentences. This straddles first and second quarter. (Updated November 2015)

**Fourth Quarter:**

1. LITERATURE

In small group discussions students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of their chosen contemporary book in a literature circle.

Students will be able to describe cultural and historical aspects of the text including background and setting, character, and theme.

2. READING FLUENCY

Student will work towards reading from a variety of genres with accuracy, immediate recognition and expression.

3. COMPREHENSION

Students will predict text content using prior knowledge and text features, confirm predictions for accuracy, generate clarifying questions while reading, connect information and events in text in order to relate to related texts and sources, and use reading strategies to interpret text.

Students will take the roles of researcher, summarizer, travel tracer, illustrator, connector, and discussion director in order to analyse novels. (Technology Standards 3.1, 3.2)

3. WRITING/ ORAL EXPRESSION

Students will be able to use effective content (use clear focused ideas and details to support the topic), organization ( a clear introduction, body, and end which is appropriate to the style of writing), voice ( a strong sense of audience and identity), word choice (accurate, specific and powerful words), sentence fluency (varied sentences that flow and sound natural/appropriate), and convention (correct mechanics including capitals, commas, spelling grammar, usage and paragraph breaks) in all form of writing (Six Writing Traits).

Students will use a writing process, which includes prewriting, drafting, revising, editing and publishing.

Students will write two essays on the final exam with a clear topic thesis, a general introduction, relevant supporting details, three supporting quotes cited correctly, and a strong conclusion.

Students will write a persuasive speech with a clear topic thesis, a general introduction, relevant supporting details, three supporting quotes cited correctly, and a strong conclusion. (Technology Standards 3.1, 3.2, 3.3)

Students will complete a short story with attention to the six writing traits and edit and re-write until it reaches assessment standards.

Students will present a persuasive speech with attention to audience, eye contact, body language and voice. The strongest will take part in a school wide speech contest.

4. LANGUAGE

Students will be able to determine the meaning of vocabulary using linguistic roots and affixes, use context to identify the intended meaning of unfamiliar words, use context to identify the meaning of words with multiple meanings.

Students will be able to define an use figurative language including simile, metaphor, alliteration, assonance, onomatopoeia, personification, image, oxymoron, plot, setting, theme, conflicts, genre, allusion, characterization, parallel structure.

Students will learn to recognize and correct grammatical and mechanical errors in their writing.

**Assessments**

**First Quarter:**

Poetry Writing Rubric

Summer Reading Answers

Test on To Kill a Mockingbird Part One

Reading Discussion Checks

Writing Rubric- My History

Book Report

Vocabulary quizzes

Grammar/Comma quiz(Updated: September, 2015)

**Second Quarter:**

Poetry Writing Rubric

Keynote Rubric

Essay on To Kill a Mockingbird

In class essay writing test on Of Mice and Men

Memoir: Six Traits Rubric

Spelling, vocabulary and grammar quizzes

Oral Book Report

**Third Quarter:**

Prologue Delivery Assessment

Shakespearian Scene Rubric

Test on Act One and Two, ‘Romeo and Juliet’

Descriptive Writing Assessments (2)

Vocabulary quizzes

Grammar/Comma quiz

**Fourth Quarter:**

Short Story Rubric

Final Exam

Speech Rubric

Spelling quizzes

Vocabulary quizzes

Grammar/Comma quiz

**Core Topics**

**First Quarter:**

Getting Acquainted and Class Rules

Summer Reading: Goodnight Mr. Tom, The Princess Bride

To Kill a Mockingbird

Paragraph Writing

11 Sentence Paragraph

Poetic Terms

Poetry Writing

Editing Marks

Comma Rules

Using Membean Vocabulary Online

Writing a Book Report

Literary terms

**Second Quarter:**

Using Keynote/Powerpoint

To Kill a Mockingbird- Film

‘To a Mousie’ by Robert Burns

Of Mice and Men

Itinerant workers and the great depression

Loneliness and dreams

John Steinbeck

Memoir

Six Writing Traits

Figurative Language

Essay Writing

Editing and re-writing

Persuasive Writing

Using quotes/text to persuade

Giving credit to a source and citing quotes

**Third Quarter:**

‘Romeo and Juliet’ synopsis skits

‘Romeo and Juliet’ in the prologue

‘Romeo and Juliet’ the language

‘Romeo and Juliet’ the themes

Acts I&II

Dramatizing the scene

Sword Play- the death of Mercutio

The films: Zeffirelli and Luhrmann.

Shakespearian Vocabulary

Vocabulary

Book Report

Writing the Short Story

Student teaching grammar topics: comma rules, semi-colons, colons, dash and

hyphen.

**Fourth Quarter:**

Literature Circles based on the books: Peak, Flowers for Algernon, Divergent, Unwind, The Book Thief, The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night Time, Tuesdays with Morrie, Of Beetles and Angels, The Wave . . . .

Speech Writing

Journal Writing

Six Writing Traits

Editing and re-writing

Persuasive Writing

Research

Using quotes/text to persuade

Giving credit to a source and citing quotes in a speech

Vocabulary

Spelling

Grammar:

Exam essay writing

**Specific Content**

**First Quarter:**

Getting Acquainted and Class Rules-

organization and procedure as well as kindness and consideration.

Summer Reading: Goodnight Mr. Tom or The Princess Bride.

To Kill a Mockingbird-

Prejudice and Discrimination (different types as well as individual experiences of).

Tolerance.

The Civil Rights Movement- Rosa Parks, Ruby Bridges.

Langston Hughes and Gwendolyn Brooks selected poetry (‘Dreams’, ‘Mother to Son’, ‘Question 1’, ‘I, Too’, ‘Poet to Bigot’, ‘Park Bench’, ‘Harlem 2’, ‘We Real Cool’).

Song- ‘Strange Fruit’ by Billie Holiday (Youtube).

Harper Lee biography as generated by student research.

Paragraph Writing- Topic Sentence, details and conclusions.

Poetic Terms (image, metaphor, simile, alliteration, assonance, onomatopoeia, oxymoron ).

Poetry Writing- a list poem, two name poems, a metaphor poem, an image poem and a free poem.

Editing Marks from Write Source.

Comma Rules- Use commas to correctly puntuate items in a series, introductory words and clauses, direct addresses, interruptors, compound sentences, appostives, dates and addresses.

Using Membean Vocabulary Program.

Vocabulary Building through Vocabulary baseball games.

Writing a Book Report and using literary terms ( protagonist, antagonist, setting genre, conflicts, theme and basic analysis/critique.).

**Second Quarter:**

Using Keynote/Powerpoint- using font, sound, images, transitions, color, tone and emotional content to create visual poetry art. (Technology Standards 1.1)

To Kill a Mockingbird- Film- enjoy and explore some differences between the film and the book establishing the superiority of the book.

‘To a Mousie’ by Robert Burns- read and understand the Scottish dialect and look at the possible implications for the novel’s themes and the title’s significance.

Of Mice and Men- read with dramatic expression and comprehension and an understanding of plot, characterization, themes, conflicts, symbols and setting

Itinerant workers and the Great Depression.

Loneliness and dreams- discuss and write an essay on the themes in the novel with reference to and a sensitivity of the lives of the main characters.

John Steinbeck-understand his purpose, form and style.

Memoir- write a moving and narrow account of an event which is of some importance for the purpose of a large audience in the literary magazine.

Six Writing Traits- write and edit based on the five elements of good writing: content, organization, sentence fluency, word choice, voice, mechanics.

Figurative Language- see how writers use poetic devices in writing prose to make it more vivid.

Essay Writing- break down the essay into parts and practise each part before an in class essay test.

Editing and re-writing- practise editing marks and looking for common mechanical errors, punctuation mistakes and other errors based on the six writing traits.

Persuasive Writing- learn to write a persuasive argument by proving a thesis in a systematic way.

Using quotes/text to persuade.

Giving credit to a source and citing quotes.

**Third Quarter:**

Students present a very brief and slapstick version of the basic plot.

Students memorize and perform the prologue. We go over the meaning and form of a Sonnet, talk about language, puns and how to speak the speech.

Students learn forty basic Shakespearian vocabulary words.

Students play with Shakespearian insults (language).

I give another, more detailed synopsis on the board, stressing characters and events and have them copy it down.

We go through the first two acts using different media- BBC cassette, reading and analysis, Zeffirelli's film- looking at language and expression in order to prepare for our scenes.

Students are put into groups to act out one scene from Act II, IV, V. I work with the groups as director and help them block somewhat.

We costume and film the scenes.

We watch the Luhrmann film.

Membean Vocabulary Program

Students present one oral book report after going over the elements of good speaking.

Students begin a short story project by looking at genre, the antagonist, the protagonist, the setting and the problem. Week by week they put together a 10-14 page story, double spaced.

Students continue to teach assigned grammar topics including using the colon, semi-colon, dash, hyphen and the basic parts of speech. These will carry over into the next quarter.

**Fourth Quarter:**

Literature Circles: Current texts – students choose a contemporary novel and work independently in groups discussing and analysing the text.

Speech writing- persuasive.

Giving a speech.

Visit to the Globe Theatre for Romeo and Juliet workshop and tour.

Roles in Literature Circles include:

Discussion Director

Travel Tracer

Connector

Illustrator

Researcher

Throughout the course, “Quickwrites,” (short free writing prompts) and “Bloopers,” (student errors) are used to begin class.

**Resources**

**Course Resources:**

*Romeo and Juliet* (play and film versions)

*To Kill and Mockingbird*

*Of Mice and Men*

*Romeo and Juliet*

*The Hunger Games Trilogy*

Selected poetry

*Write Source 2000*

*Wordly Wise* (Course 8)