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Course Expectations/Syllabus (this should be the first thing you put in your 3-ring binder)

Language Arts 1

Ms. Kevinanne Curmano

Room: 2026| Phone: (970) 259-1630 ext. 2081| Email: kcurmano@durango.k12.co.us

Website: kevinanne.weebly.com| REMIND 101: txt: 81010 message: @curmanbro

Welcome to Durango High School! Welcome to Language Arts I! What is Language Arts I? Here’s the official course description: Language Arts 1 combines the reading of short stories, novels, poems, and drama with writing in varied genres and the applied study of grammar and vocabulary to assist students in building essential skills. Through reading, writing, grammar, and vocabulary study, skills in speaking and listening, study and research, and critical reading and thinking are strengthened. My hope is that you will become a lifelong reader, writer, thinker, and learner. Being able to communicate in speaking and writing, reading well, and collaborating may be THE most important skills you need in the 21st century! In this class you will be exposed to a variety of activities, ones that will challenge you to think and to act. I expect you to approach everything that we do with energy and a positive attitude, and you can expect the same from me! Essential Question first semester: Who and what create character? Second semester: How do the choices we make affect the decisions with which we must live?

**9th Grade Learning Targets as put forth by the DHS English Department, School District 9-R, and the State of Colorado:**

* I can read a wide range of literature to understand important universal themes and the human experience
* I can demonstrate comprehension of a variety of informational, literary and persuasive texts
* I can master the techniques of effective informational, literary, and persuasive writing
* I can apply standard English conventions to effectively communicate with written language
* I can gather information from a variety of sources; analyze and evaluate the quality and relevance of the source; and use it to answer complex questions
* I can demonstrate the use of a range of strategies, research techniques, and persistence when engaging with difficult texts or examining complex problems or issues
* I can deliver organized and effective oral presentations for diverse audiences and varied purposes
* I can demonstrate skill in inferential and evaluative listening

Texts:

Beers, Kylene, et al. *Elements of Literature: Third Course*. Austin: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 2003. Print.

Steinbeck, John. *Of Mice and Men*. New York: Penguin, 1993. Print.

Terkel, Studs. *Hard Times.* New York: The New Press, 1986. Print.

Additional fiction and nonfiction readings

**OVERALL EXPECTATIONS: Please read the DHS Student Handbook because I follow these policies especially with regard to tardies (29), cell phones (19), and academic integrity/dishonesty/plagiarism (10).**

**Behavior:** I expect you each day to follow the **6 P’s**: be prompt, be prepared, be polite, possess a positive-mental-attitude, participate, and produce. I also expect you to use the **5 attending skills**: be in the moment, use appropriate body language, use appropriate eye contact, give appropriate feedback, and ask questions to clarify or validate. If your behavior interferes with classroom instruction, we will work together with your parents, counselor, and administrator to modify the behavior. Thank you for following these norms. (see page 16 in the handbook)

**Cell Phones and Other Electronic Devices:** are absolutely **NOT** allowed during tests/quizzes. Perhaps you will need to look up a word or study on Quizlet—if you’re using your phone for instructional/learning purposes, that’s fine. However, if you are using your phone to browse and post to social media, that is not ok. You are not “in the moment” and it’s not “polite”. #notkewl. This is one of my pet peeves, and you can expect me to follow the school policy on page 19 of the handbook, if you are using your phone inappropriately. In general, you won’t need your phone during class. Please keep it silenced and in your backpack.

**Makeup Work:** If you are absent, the expectation is that you will make up the work you missed. Your classmates are an excellent resource. If you need help, please see me before or after school, at lunch, or during my planning time which is 2nd period. You may also contact me by email. If you know you’ll be gone ahead of time, especially for a school-sponsored activity or athletic competition, see me **BEFORE** you leave so you won’t get behind! (see page 23 in the handbook)

**Homework:** You will have homework in this class, mostly independent reading and writing and vocabulary study. Spend a little time each night studying for this class and you will stay caught up and do well. The habits of scholarship you establish now will pay off in your college and career future. Use your planner! Stay organized!

**ALL WORK IS DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS!** Students are expected to work toward content mastery of the standards taught in this class. It is imperative that work is done on time, so as to allow the teacher the opportunity to give feedback to students in a timely manner. Meeting deadlines is a real life skill, so figure this out now!

* **Late Work: It is expected that all students turn all work in on time.**
	+ If you have individual concerns with a deadline, please see me **BEFORE** the due date to make other arrangements.
	+ If you cannot meet a deadline, please approach me individually **OUTSIDE OF CLASS** to make up the learning **prior** to the summative assessment.
	+ End of semester final projects/essays will not be accepted late.
	+ No late work will be accepted the last two weeks of the semester—**no exceptions.**

**Neatness:** The expectation is that all essays and most written assignments, unless otherwise specified, will follow MLA format, be word processed in 12-point New Times Roman font, double-spaced with one-inch margins. We will practice MLA formatting all the time, in case you are wondering! If you do not have access to technology or a printer, you may use our library. Please see me individually if you need help with this.

**Materials/Supplies:** Bring these to class every day; they include: I recommend the AVID way: one 3-ring binder for your morning classes, and one 3-ring binder for your afternoon classes. Divide your binder up by subject. One subject is, of course, just for English!

* loose leaf paper for your binder, writing utensils and a spiral notebook, college rule, for your learning journal
* a flash drive or drop box account is handy for saving your work
* your student ID so you can check out library materials
* a class contribution of sticky notes OR a box of tissue. Please write your name on your contribution. Thanks!

**In general, keep your notebook organized! Put handouts in chronological order; always write the date on them. Save EVERYTHING—all returned work. Date entries in your learning journal. Class notes and reflections go in front; grammar will start in the back.**

**Assessments: Use Infinite Campus to check your grades! I will not post grades, so it’s up to you to check IC for your progress. Your grade each semester will be based on:**

* 35% Formative Assessments (Practice and Activities—homework & daily assignments, learning journal)
* 35% Summative Assessments (Unit/Course Understanding and Performance—tests, quizzes, essays)
* 10% Professional and Positive Behavior Expectations Rubric (responsibility, respect, and perseverance)
* 20% Final Exam:Cumulative Final, which will be worth 20% of your semester grade—each semester! Expect the final to be objective, but also require some writing. More on this later.

**Finally**…During the first semester, we will study the short story, *Of Mice and Men*, essay writing, conventions, Greek and Latin roots/vocabulary words, literary terms, and grammar from Michael Clay Thompson’s, *The* *Magic Lens*. In the second semester, we cover poetry, Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet*, writing refinement, more Greek and Latin roots/vocabulary words, more literary terms, more grammar, and how punctuation affects grammar. Expect to get good at literary analysis as this is one of the big learning targets. Don’t worry, we will practice a lot! Also, you will be expected to read independently, for pleasure both semesters.

We will have some fun in this class, in case you are wondering. I want you to come out of this class having worked hard, played hard, and ready for three more years of challenging high school Language Arts classes. This class will provide the basics of what you will need in those three years: organized writing, knowledge of active reading, study habits, literary terminology and analysis, and the knowledge that hard work pays off. I am super excited about teaching and learning with you this year. Let me know if something I’m doing isn’t working out for you. Please don’t hesitate to ask questions if you are confused, and do come in for help any time. I know I will learn a lot from you, and this is why I love teaching teenagers! Remember learning is active, challenging, meaningful, public, and collaborative. Engage yourself! Now let’s get to work and have some fun!

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**Fill out and return this page, please, by Monday. Also, don’t forget to answer the questions on the back of this paper! This is your first assignment! Whoo hoo!**

**I have read this course expectation/syllabus, understand it, and will follow it to best of my ability.**

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Student name (please print) Student signature date

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Parent/guardian name (please print) Parent/guardian signature date

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Parent/guardian email Parent/guardian cell phone or best phone #

**☺ PARENTS:** Thank you for sharing your child with me this year. Please allow and encourage your teenager to practice advocating for himself/herself by talking to me **BEFORE** you contact me. We can solve almost any problem this way. I recommend checking IC once a week (I grade a lot on the weekends and try to update grades every 2 weeks), talk to your student first, and then have him/her talk to me. It’s important that your child stay on top of his/her grades and assignments. **ALWAYS** feel free to contact me after your student and I have had a conversation. Thanks so much! I look forward to seeing you at Open House on September 1st! Feel free to write any comments, concerns, or questions you have here:

1. What extracurricular activities/athletics are you involved in now or hope to be involved in this year? If you aren’t involved in anything, why aren’t you?
2. What would be the most useful thing for me to know about you as a student/person?
3. What do you think teachers think about you and what do you wish they’d think about you?
4. What is one thing you’ve heard about the class or me that makes you anxious, excited, nervous, concerned, or thrilled?
5. What is your favorite book ever of all time, a book you’d sell your soul to read again sometime?
6. How do you feel about writing? Be honest.
7. Draw a portrait of yourself here: