**** **East Cobb Middle School  
Mrs. Damaris Cortes -*Damaris.Cortes@cobbk12.org*  
8th Grade-English Language Arts**

The eighth grade English Language Arts program is a true integration of literacy skills: reading, writing, creating, communicating (listening, speaking, and presenting) and collaborating. In this course, students will learn and practice critical reading, thinking, and writing skills through a variety of genres, including short stories, novels, poetry, non-fiction essays, articles on current events, cultural trends, and/or issues pertaining to particular student interests. Students will learn and apply a variety of strategies to uncover hidden layers of meaning in literary texts and to examine sophisticated literary techniques in order to strengthen their own abilities to use language purposefully and skillfully. Acquisition and application of 21st Century Skills, including global awareness and Digital Media Literacy will be fully integrated into the curriculum.

**Text: Spring Board English Language Arts**

*Spring Board* is a strategically developed comprehensive instructional program combining rigorous instruction and performance based assessments.

**Reading** - The only way to become an accomplished reader is to read…A LOT!

Students will be reading a variety of genres throughout the year. Students will receive a grade for each reading assignment based on various assessments. The types of assessment may include but are not limited to: written assessments, presentations, cooperative projects, etc.

**Writing** - The only way to become an accomplished writer is to write…A LOT!



Students will be assigned a variety of writing projects throughout the year. Each of the curriculum assignments involves taking a piece of writing of a specified genre through the entire writing process. The writing process takes place over a period of time and is not completed in a single step at the last minute. The expectation is that these finished pieces will reflect the student’s best effort and will be assessed accordingly. Students will be aware of the grading criteria, process/stage requirements, and timelines for both process/stage and final completion at the time the assignments are made.

**Listening, Speaking and Presenting** - The only way to become an accomplished listener, speaker and presenter is to listen, speak and present…A LOT!

As mentioned above, students will have numerous opportunities to develop listening, speaking and presenting skills. First and foremost, students are expected to develop proficient listening skills. This is a vital skill both as it pertains to delivery of instruction and class/group/pair discussions. As such, these skills will be taught, practiced, and assessed on an ongoing basis.

**Grading and Evaluation**

Most of all student products will be evaluated using scoring guides or rubrics that target specific objectives. On certain products, assessments will be made solely by me, at other times the assessment will be made with input from other students. Occasionally, the student will evaluate his or her own work. Assignments are weighted as follows:

* Major Grades – 45% (Tests, process papers, projects, and major presentations)
* On-going weekly assignments and Quizzes – 30%
* Daily Assignments-15%
* Homework/Warm Ups - 10%

**Homework**

The purpose of homework is to provide an opportunity for students to apply skills independently. Since I believe that students learn best when they collaborate with others and the fact that our classroom structure allows for both collaborative and independent demonstration of competence, there will be very little “officially assigned” homework.

**Late Work Policy** As a practical matter, this should not be a significant impact on the student’s grade due to the fact that all assignments and due dates are given on a weekly basis with ample class and homework time devoted to their completion. Students that do not turn in work timely will have an opportunity to complete and turn in the assignment with the following penalties: 1 day late = 75% is the maximum grade attainable 2 days late = 50% is the maximum grade attainable. After the second day, the student will receive a zero.

**Communication** The easiest way to contact me is via e-mail . I check my email throughout the day but please allow at least 24 hours to respond.

**Expectations** On the most basic level our mission in the 8th grade is to prepare students for the next level of education – High School. Therefore, we raise the level of expectation on academic effort expended, personal responsibility, academic and personal behaviors.

**\***8th grade students are expected to put forth their best effort.

**\***8th grade students are expected to keep up with their assignments! Students MUST be able to answer these questions regarding assigned tasks independently: What they are? What is required? When they are due?

**\***8th grade students are expected to develop sound and consistent organization and study skills. This is the number one predictor of academic success in high school, college, and career.

**\*** 8th graders are expected to assess, monitor, and correct, if necessary, personal behaviors that have a negative impact on their learning and achievement.

I look forward to working with you and your student towards a successful and enjoyable 8th grade experience.

**\*Note: this syllabus is a guide and is subject to change in order to accommodate class and individual needs. Students will be made aware of any changes that may occur\***



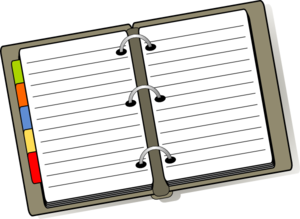
**Class Binder Organization**

Each student will need to maintain a 1-inch binder with 5 dividers and label them as follows:

* Vocabulary
* Grammar
* Reading
* Writing
* Keepers

**Parent and Student Signatures:**

*I have read the 8th Grade ELA class syllabus.*



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Student Signature Date  
  
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Parent Signature Date