

"The answers you get from literature depend on the questions you pose" (Margaret Atwood)

Mr. Williams

Burnaby North Secondary School

English 8 Course Outline

All English courses are designed to help students develop their skills in reading, writing, speaking, and representing. English 8 provides students with opportunities to develop their appreciation for different genres of literature and refine their own creative voice. Some learning goals are for students to...

- Think critically, creatively, and reflectively to explore ideas within, between, and beyond texts and consider how the parts of a text (literary elements) contribute to the “whole”
- Respond to text in personal, creative, and critical ways and transform ideas to create original texts
- Write clearly and effectively and engage the audience through precise diction and engaging sentence variety.
- Speak clearly and effectively and participate thoughtfully and respectfully in academic conversations, and exchange ideas with others to build shared understanding and extend thinking

For more information, see: <https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/curriculum/english-language-arts/8>

The class will include the study of:

- Grammar – from the ‘building blocks’ (parts of speech, punctuation, types of sentences) to aspects of style (sentence combining, sentence variety)
- Writing—paragraphs/essays (persuasive, expository, descriptive, synthesis), creative pieces, poems, narratives/stories
- Short fiction (from anthologies)
- Novel study / literature circles and independent Reading
- Poetry and drama

Evaluation:

- English is a skill-based course. The grading for this class will be ***cumulative*** in nature -- your term marks will *not* be averaged to calculate your final grade for the course. We become better writers over time with practice, so assessment of your work must take this into account in order to be accurate.
- Students cannot redo or rewrite tests/assignments except in rare circumstances at the discretion of the teacher. On such an occasion, the student would write an alternate assignment focusing on the same learning objective. Evaluation will be on-going, and the focus for evaluation will be on specific learning objectives, not just an accumulation of “points”.
- Students will be provided with on-going feedback in the form of rubrics and conferences/conversations, and this feedback is more important than specific numbers. Please make a record of this feedback in your portfolio record sheet.
- **Students will be given letter grades, but not percentages**, and your final grade is a product of your overall progress throughout the course.
- I am available for extra help during **flex time** (see the schedule), and other times as well if you arrange a specific time. I will not have conversations about grades /percentages or discuss final marks until the end of the course, but I am always happy to discuss your learning/progress.

- **Comprehend and Connect: In-class Reading and Writing: 45%**

(In-class writing assignments, reading assessments, tests, quizzes)

Most writing assignments will be completed **IN CLASS** (*unless* you are told otherwise) – not taken home. If a writing assignment needs to take more than one class period, then the writing will be kept in an in-class writing folder. Assignments written by hand must be completed in **pen** (not pencil). Students who miss an *in-class* writing assignment (or quiz, etc) will need to make-up the assignment within a timely manner, or they may lose the opportunity to write that particular assignment. If you are ill, you must stay home (you can stay in touch via email and MS Teams), but you need to be responsible and find out what you missed, and also bring a note from a parent to verify the reason for your absence.

- **Create and communicate: Outside class writing/creative assignments: 45%**

The main type of homework you will for this class is to READ, but you will also have more creative assignments so you can communicate or represent your understanding. It is important to complete all assignments on time in order to receive timely feedback. Some assignments will be completed and submitted on the computer via Microsoft Office 365 Teams.

- **Engagement and Speaking / Discussion: 10%**

You will be expected to share your ideas with the group to contribute to the group knowledge of the class. (You will be evaluated for your ability to speak clearly to communicate your ideas in “book club” literature circle reading groups, class discussion, and presentations/speeches).

Independent reading: *“If you want to be a writer, you must do two things above all others: read a lot and write a lot.” (Stephen King)*

Reading widely is the best way to improve your vocabulary and composition skills, and will help you in all of your subject areas. **Students are required to bring a silent reading book of their own** to class every day, as each class will begin with 15 minutes of silent reading. If you have a library card, you can even borrow books electronically and download books to your device by using the Libby app.

When you finish a book, bring a new book to class. You must bring *novels* (not magazines or other reading material). You will need to share your response to your reading through in-class activities and on-going independent reading assignments.

Writing Contests: Students are encouraged to participate in writing contests (to be announced, with details posted in the classroom and on MS Teams): Burnaby Words Writing Contest, B.C.T.E.L.A. writing contest, etc.

Organization -- Organization is one of the keys to success in high school. Therefore, students should bring to each class:

- Paper, pens (blue or black), pencils (write compositions in pen, not pencil)
- Agenda planner (you should use this every day)
- A silent reading book (keep bringing books for class for your independent reading).
- A binder, divided into the following sections (using dividers or stickies or even pieces of paper and tape!)
 - Grammar/ Writing
 - Short fiction
 - Novel study / Literature Circles
 - Poetry
 - Drama
 - “Writer’s Notebook” (a section of lined paper for you to write creatively, and occasionally develop a creative piece to the ‘published’/ finished stage).

Classroom Routines This Year:

- **Social distance** as much as possible from other people – I will arrange a seating plan, so please use the same desk (the seating plan may change!)
- **Wash hands** frequently and sanitize your hands on entering the building.
- Show respect towards other students in their choice of whether to wear a mask or not

Extending the class online: Microsoft Office Teams

*You can see instructions for MS Office Teams on the school website:

<https://north.burnabyschools.ca/blog/2021/08/15/office-365-for-students-at-north/>

- I will use **Microsoft Office 365 Teams** to post a “Shape of the Day” in the General discussion channel. I may also include readings, and resources. If you are away, check the “Shape of the Day” post.
- *If* the school were to temporarily close to in-person classes, the class would move to Microsoft Teams.
- Any assignments submitted on MS Teams:

Many assignments will be written by hand in the classroom. However, some assignments will be submitted on MS Office Teams -- these will be posted in the “Assignments” tab (but will also come up under the post for the day), and already formatted for you to complete.

*Open the document on MS Teams, *edit* the document and submit it.

If you happen to be working first in a Word document, or even in googledocs, copy and paste your work *into* the document posted in “Assignments”.

Do not attach a PDF, or links to googledocs.

- Photographs of your writing will **not** be accepted (they are really too hard to read!)
- Use size 12 font, double-spaced, in Times New Roman or Arial or Calibri.
- Put your first and last name and block at the top of the document

Use of MS Teams:

We *may* also use MS Teams for “chat” book club discussions (one of the tabs on the left under “General”). Remember that this platform is an extension of the classroom; Office Teams is a place where we do course work – it is not for casual conversations, and conversation must remain respectful and “professional”.

You can also post any questions you might have in the “Questions / Assignment Help” *channel* (do not post in the General Discussion channel).

Contact me:

If you or your parents have any questions, please contact me at Bryn.Williams@burnabyschools.ca.

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