



## Honors English 8 Syllabus

### Course Description:

In this course we will be reading, writing and otherwise communicating a lot. I want every student that comes out of my class to be both a mature creator and consumer of written and non-written texts. We will read works from a variety of different genres including novels, a play, a handful of poems, a dozen short stories, a few dozen essays, and other works of contemporary non-fiction. We will also explore the exciting and new genre of graphic novels—a combination of written and visual texts. The goal of this class is for students to develop reading, writing, listening and speaking skills and also to explore ideas of student identity as responsible adults. This is a survey course that dips into all of the different ways we use language in our day-to-day lives.

### What's the difference between English 8 and Honors 8 AKA what did I get myself into?

The Primary differences between the two classes will be caliber of work and expectations. I expect a higher level of work, motivation, and responsibility from my honors students. Everyone matures at a different rate, so this class should be for those who have “gotten it” by the time they’ve finished the 7<sup>th</sup> grade.

The extra time that is freed up will be spent in discussion, more interactive activities, and reading an additional book. In addition to that, we’ll also be reading a lot more than the regular class on our own. My expectation for an 8<sup>th</sup> grade honors student is to be able to read one hundred pages of personal reading per week in addition to in-class reading and homework. Occasionally (but not always), honors will also mean more homework and larger projects.

### Course Objectives - Students will be able to:

- Utilize the classroom community as a shared learning environment
- Foster respect and appreciation for literature and its rhetorical effectiveness
- Recognize and demonstrate proficiency in standard written English
- Recognize stylistic maturity in good writing
- Develop stylistic maturity in their writing
- Identify and analyze rhetorical strategies and stylistic devices in a variety of writing samples

- Write informally to improve fluency
- Write in multiple genres for a variety of audiences and purposes
- Write mechanically sound papers in all genres
- Understand and use both grammar and syntax stylistically and rhetorically
- Use and show evidence of all stages of the writing process in their work
- Acquire both new vocabulary specifically and strategies for acquiring vocabulary in general
- Use strategies for answering questions and addressing prompts like those on the Arizona College and Career Readiness exams

### Primary Texts

- Monster by Walter Dean Myers
- Chains by Laurie Halse Anderson
- The Book Thief by Marcus Zusak
- Maus I by Art Spiegelman
- Romeo and Juliet by William Shakespeare
- Countdown by Deborah Wiles
- Various contemporary short stories and poems
- Various non-fiction texts that are topical and applicable to content we are reading about in class.

### Required supplies:

- One (1) bound, three-subject, three-whole-punched notebook with at least 150 sheets of paper total. Spiral or glue bound. (Bring it to class every day!)
- One (1) three-ring binder with pockets. This will house your notebook and loose handouts. (Bring it to class every day!)
- Writing utensils. Mechanical pencils or pens are recommended. Bring more than one in case your first runs away, flies off into space or breaks down. (Bring them to class every day!)
- You will have whole class books and lit circle books—bring them when asked to.
- An active Edmodo.com account. You will be collaborating, conducting discussions, taking quizzes and turning in assignments on Edmodo.com. Edmodo will also be an alternative source for weekly scheduling information if you miss class or misplace your agenda.
- ✓ Failure to bring any of the above can result in a reduced grade and much embarrassment!

### Technology:

- We will be using technology as much as possible, which is to say, not as often as most of us use technology in our daily lives. We will, however, be using Edmodo.com weekly and my hope is that it will become the primary resource for the class and will be an invaluable tool for me, students and parents. Please contact me as soon as possible if you have questions or concerns about the program or if you foresee any issue accessing/using the site.

- **A note about EDMODO** – We will be using Edmodo frequently. Everything done on Edmodo can be done elsewhere with prior arrangements, but Edmodo is a powerful tool to keep students, teachers, and parents in the digital loop. Students can:
  - **Ask questions of peers or the teacher**
  - **Discuss topics with peers**
  - **See the weekly (and monthly) schedule to see what is coming or what was taught while they were absent**
  - **Participate in optional online enrichment programs**
  
- Many options for Edmodo.com are limited to platform. For instance, only desktop or tablets are able to view the calendar. Smart phones can download the application for free, and it will send notifications for upcoming assignments, but cannot view the calendar (yet) and are limited in other ways.
  
- This year, we have access to a guest Wi-Fi network, which can be used on student computers, tablets, iPods and smartphones. This can be an invaluable tool for students, but please remember that the network is for school. If you play games on your iPads, or attempt to text with your phone, you may lose the privilege to use the device in my class. Otherwise, you are encouraged to bring your devices that can help you research, read, or help in the learning process.

**Classroom Policies:**

- 1-3) Rules 1, 2 and 3: “Three things are important in life. The first is to be kind. The second is to be kind. And the third thing is to be kind.” Robert Coles
- 4) Learning environment: No one has the right to prevent the teacher from teaching or another student from learning
- 5) This is a learning zone: evidence of engagement is expected (and demanded!) at all times.
- 6) Attendance and tardies: Students who come in late are, according to school policy, absent. In case of emergency or unforeseen circumstances, please speak to me directly to let me know what is happening and get what you missed.
- 7) Electronic devices: Use of electronic communication devices for anything unrelated to school are against school policy. Cellphones used for anything but academics will be taken on first offense and will be turned over to the dean of students (Vada Visockis or Sheleena Schorey). E-readers (kindles, nooks, etc.) are always allowed and encouraged as long as they are used appropriately. Other electronic devices (iPads, iPods, etc.) will only be used during specific times and at the discretion of the teacher.

**Academic integrity**

I always expect the highest standards of personal excellence from my students-- both inside and outside the classroom and I don't anticipate any issues of dishonesty, plagiarism or cheating; however, if an issue does arise in the course of my class, any student caught failing to

maintain academic integrity, will receive a zero on all related assignments and/or tests and may face possible disciplinary action per school policy.

**Grading**

Grading will be done on a purely point-based system, with the exception of semester exams. All other grades will represent a percentage of net points earned by the student by the gross points available for the class. Letter grades will be assigned based on the following scale:

**A** 89.5%-100+%      **B** 79.5%-89.4%      **C** 69.5%-79.4%      **D** 59.5%-69.4%

No rounding will be done other than that shown in this syllabus.

**Attendance**

You need to be here to learn. It’s as simple as that. When you must miss class on an emergent basis (sickness, injury, family matters), I will do my best to accommodate you—just contact me at your earliest convenience. For longer absences, please give me as much warning as possible to make arrangements (this includes planned absences).

A note to parents: While I advocate student leadership and self-advocacy, 8<sup>th</sup> grade is still a time for parent involvement. I encourage you to contact me with any questions, comments, concerns or even compliments you may have throughout the semester. E-mail is by far the best way to reach me. [wbaron@northlandprep.org](mailto:wbaron@northlandprep.org) . I also respond to phone calls and welcome in-person contact with prior arrangement.



**Print student’s Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**We,** \_\_\_\_\_ **(parent/guardian/cohabiting adult), and**  
\_\_\_\_\_ **(parent/guardian/cohabiting adult)**

**have read and discussed the guidelines and book list for Mr. Baron’s Honors English 8 class with our child**

\_\_\_\_\_ **(student)**

**Parent primary phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent primary email address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_