

**JAMES WELDON JOHNSON COLLEGE
PREPARATORY MIDDLE SCHOOL**

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TEACHER: Mrs. Dayna Yarbrough
COURSE: 6th Grade Gifted Language Arts
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GRADE PORTAL: <http://dcps.mygradeportal.com> **WEBSITE:** www.mrsyarbrough.com

WELCOME & TEACHER BIO:

Welcome to 6th Grade Language Arts. I am Mrs. Yarbrough. This is my 12th year of teaching, all of which has been here at JWJ. I was born in central Ohio and graduated from the University of Rio Grande (Ohio) in 2001 with my Bachelor of Arts degree in English, with a second major in education. I recently earned my Master's degree in Reading through Grand Canyon University. In addition, I am a National Board Certified Teacher in Early Adolescent Language Arts. Beyond school, I have two daughters, Peyton (3) and Kenzey (3 months). Please don't hesitate to e-mail if you ever have any questions at yarbroughd1@duvalschools.org (please do notice that there is a 1 after my last name, first initial). I generally return e-mail messages within a few hours (telephone messages will be returned during my planning or after school). I look forward to a great year!

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

The purpose of this course is to teach students skills to strengthen their reading and writing. Throughout our journey, we will be working on reading and writing strategies, test taking strategies, and the major genres of literature: nonfiction, fiction, poetry and drama. In addition, we will explore the components of literature, complete thematic analysis, discuss author's purpose and voice, as well as the influence of figurative language in literature. This is an advanced level course, so we will be going at an accelerated pace and level.

CURRICULUM OVERVIEW:

Each quarter will include instruction in the following categories: Examining the Author's Style, Understanding the Text, and Analyzing the Author's Craft. Writing will also be included within each unit during which your child will learn the JWJ Writing Plan, the fundamentals of expository and persuasive essays, as well as creative writing. In addition to teacher-created unit tests and quizzes, students will be given district assessments throughout the year, including at the end of each quarter.

TEXTBOOK/RESOURCES:

McDougall Littell: Literature. We will use our textbook occasionally, but overall it should be kept in the student's locker. Much of our reading material will come from our novel studies (see below).

STUDENT MATERIALS:

Supplies that will be needed for this class include:

#		#	
1 pack	Notebook paper (<i>college ruled</i>)	1 pack	Pens (blue or black only)
1	1-1 ½ inch binder with pockets for your Language Arts Notebook and portfolio (<i>stays in classroom</i>)	1 pack	Pencils
5	Subject dividers		

Additional Supplies (*not required, but useful*): Red ink pens, highlighters, Post-it notes and art supplies (crayons, colored pencils, markers, construction paper, etc).

Donations – We are always in need of supply donations for the classroom. Big need items are: tissues, hand sanitizer, disinfecting wipes and extras of any of the supplies listed above. In addition, we could also use college dictionaries and thesauri, used books, expo markers, a broom and dust pan, and an electric pencil sharpener. Any donations would be greatly appreciated!

ASSIGNED NOVELS:

- The Devil’s Arithmetic by Jane Yolen
- The Giver by Lois Lowry

DO NOT begin the novels until you are asked to do so. It is requested that assigned books not be read in advance as certain reading strategies will be applied during the novel study, however, it is okay if the book was already read prior to this school year. For the most part, these books can be found at Barnes and Noble, Books-a-Million, or the local library. Keep in mind, though, that 360+ 6th graders from JWJ will be reading these same books at the same time. **DON’T** wait until the last minute or they will be hard to find. Not having the books due to waiting until the last minute will not be an acceptable excuse. JWJ is teaming up with Barnes and Noble to make buying the books easier (information will be forthcoming). Proceeds from this sale will help fund our Readers’ Beach celebration at the end of the year!

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

Academic integrity must govern every level of teaching and learning. Tests will be administered and taken with complete honesty. Suspicions of copying, cheating or plagiarism will be addressed.

- All work submitted must be student’s own. Sources and quotes will be cited.
- All ideas submitted will be student’s. This includes homework.
- The student will use no extra materials during testing, including notes, unless directed to do so.
- The student will not discuss tests with other students; questions, answers, level of difficulty, etc...

Failure to follow these guidelines ***will result in a zero for the assignment, regardless of the assignment type. The student will also earn a discipline referral.*** Students will NOT be permitted to ‘redo’ or ‘remediate’ zeroes earned for violating this policy.

CLASS EXPECTATIONS/POLICIES & PROCEDURES:

<p><u>Classroom Rules</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect others and their property • Understand directions and/or ask questions • Listen and think before speaking • Ensure you have all needed supplies for class • Spit out all gum and candy. No food or drinks. 	
<p><u>Beginning of Class Rituals</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enter quietly (no screaming!) • Make sure you have all needed supplies (check the board). • Have your homework out, on your desk and ready to turn in (headed and stapled). • Be seated and silent when the bell rings. • Check the board for bellwork. 	<p><u>End of Class Rituals</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clean up your area, including any supplies you may be using. • Put away your notebook (if applicable). • Throw away all garbage. • Make sure your desk/chair is in its proper place. • <u>Quietly wait</u> to be dismissed.

GRADES:

Averages will be determined on a “points-earned” system. The larger the assignment, the more points it will be worth. For example, tests and projects will usually be worth 70-100 points, while homework and class-work will be worth significantly less. Please check the Grade Portal in OnCourse frequently as grades are updated and changing often!

Grading Scale:

A 90-100 % **B** 80-89 % **C** 70-79 % **D** 60-69 % **F** 59 % & below
NC/0 – No Credit (No work was turned in) **X** – Excused (the student was absent and is exempt)

TYPES OF ASSIGNMENTS FOR LEARNING, PRACTICE AND MASTERY MAY INCLUDE:

- ❖ Tests and quizzes
- ❖ Class work and homework
- ❖ Projects (individual & group)
- ❖ Paideias (group discussions)
- ❖ Presentations
- ❖ 25 Books (reading logs)
- ❖ Writing explorations

HELP SESSIONS:

I am available before school to help students as needed. I am usually at school by 7:30 a.m. The student must request this help as he/she must obtain a pass from me prior to getting help in the morning.

WORK SUBMITTED POLICY:

All **homework** submitted should be written in either regular blue or black ink or pencil, unless otherwise specified. No gel pens or pens of any color are permitted. No typing of regular homework unless prior permission has been given. All **projects, reports, and final drafts** should be handwritten in regular blue or black ink, or typed. No pencil or colored pens are permitted unless otherwise specified. All **typed** work should be double spaced, 12 pt font, Times New Roman, with 1”-1.25” margins.

AGENDAS:

On the first day of each week, the students will be required to write the homework for the week into their agendas. The agendas will be checked for completion for 2 points each week (1 point for writing down the information, 1 point for writing it in the agenda).

25 BOOK STANDARD (aka 3750 PAGES):

Every year the students are required to read 25 books, as per the State Standards. In middle school, the number of pages to equal one book is 150 pages. As a rule, pages are counted, not physical books, so write down **every** book read, whether it is 60 pages or 450 pages. Every page counts. On or around the 15th of each month there will be a book goal check (specific dates will be assigned throughout the year). A grade of 20 points will be assigned for each of these checks. At the end of the year, the student will receive a grade out of 40 points for achieving the standard (3750 pages total). **NOTE:** Books that are assigned as class novels will earn credit once all work has been completed successfully.

READERS' BEACH/READING CELEBRATION:

For the past several years we have been able to have a celebration at the end of the school year to celebrate and reward those students who have met the 25 book standard (3750 pages). Students are encouraged throughout the year to meet the standard in order to be eligible to go, have fun and relax. Readers' Beach is really a lot of fun, so please encourage your child to read 25 Books/Book equivalents!

LATE WORK AND MISSING WORK:

- ❖ Each assignment will have a **due date**. This is the date by which COMPLETED assignments are expected to be submitted.
- ❖ A deduction of **up to 20%** will be administered to assignments that are late. A “Language Arts Excuse For Late Work Letter” with a parent signature will be required to turn in anything late. Late work must be turned in by the following class, which gives the student two school days to complete and submit the late work. Remember, only COMPLETE work will be accepted for credit at any time. Missing work will be recorded as zero points.
- ❖ Additionally, there will be two Amnesty Days each quarter in Language Arts, one before progress reports and one before the end of the quarter. Work submitted on Amnesty Day will earn **no more than 70%** credit. Amnesty Work will also require a “Language Arts Excuse For Late Work Letter” with a parent signature.
- ❖ If absent, the district policy is one day per each day absent to make-up work. If the late assignment is a project that has been assigned well in advance, it will be due on the date of return to school.

WEBSITES:**CLASS WEBSITE:**

This year I have condensed two of my class websites into one: www.mrsyarbrough.com. On this website, you can find agenda information, such as when assignments are due, what is going on in class, and upcoming important dates. The website also contains links to download worksheets, power points and other computer-based information that is discussed or passed out during class. This is a wonderful tool for both parents and students, as it keeps parents informed, and allows students access to extra copies in case material have been lost, misplaced, or left at school.

ONCOURSE/GRADE PORTAL:

The school will be utilizing the online grading and recording program, OnCourse, which can be located at <http://dcps.mygradeportal.com>. The information for how to access OnCourse should have been given to you already (if not, please see an administrator). Besides grades, you can also access the school calendar and my homework assignments from this page, though assignments are usually a little less detailed than on Schoolnotes. Periodically, I will also be sending e-mails via OnCourse; some for announcements, others to send current grades and/or scholarship warnings. I can usually help with general questions regarding OnCourse, but anything more in depth should be referred to an administrator.

CONFERENCES:

This year we are pretty limited on the time available for conferences. When determining whether a conference is necessary, please first contact me to discuss any concerns or problems. Many times, this can remedy any concerns and a further conference is not necessary. If you still wish to meet for a conference, call or e-mail me to set that up (conferences are no longer scheduled through guidance, but through the teachers). It would be helpful if, when scheduling, the nature of the conference was mentioned so I can prepare any materials you might wish to see.

If you would like additional copies of the syllabus, please go to www.mrsyarbrough.com.

LANGUAGE ARTS PARENT INFORMATION SHEET

PLEASE PRINT:

Your Child's Name (First and Last)

Parent/Guardian 1 Name

Daytime Contact Number

Parent/Guardian 2 Name

Daytime Contact Number

Street Address (to be verified with school files)

ZIP Code

Parent/Guardian E-mail Address (to update OnCourse/Parent Portal – please print clearly)

Which is the best way for me to contact you?

E-mail

Telephone

Either Is Fine

Are there any specific question you have about this Language Arts Class (not individual student information)?
Please use the back if you need more space. If you checked contact me by E-mail or Either is Fine, I will
respond to your question in an e-mail.

Have you visited www.mrsyarbrough.com yet this school year? Yes No No Access

SYLLABUS ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This is acknowledgement that I have received and read the information in the syllabus and am aware of the information and expectations given. Furthermore, I have read the section on Academic Integrity and understand the consequence of violating that policy.

Parent Signature

Date

Student Signature

Date

Thank you for filling in this information sheet. I look forward to a wonderful school year!