

## Mrs. Uhlarik-Boller – Da Vinci Academy

### Language Arts Information For Parents

#### Communicating With Me

If you need to speak with me or schedule an appointment, please call either before school (7:30-8:30 a.m.) or after school (3:15-4:00 p.m.). Email is by far the most efficient way to contact me during the day. I will always respond before I leave for the day. My school extension is #224 and my school email is [muhlarik@dvacademy.org](mailto:muhlarik@dvacademy.org).

#### Classroom Materials

All students are required to have an LA notebook. In addition, students will generally have a novel to read throughout the school year. 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade students will have a monthly *Scope Magazine* for homework. All students will have homework in their grammar skills book and/or vocabulary building worksheets.

#### Attendance

It is essential that students maintain good attendance throughout the school year. It is difficult to make up work after long absences or vacations.

#### Homework and RRJ's

Homework will vary but students should read on a nightly basis as a lifelong habit and in preparation for their monthly RRJ (Reading Response Journal) assignment.

Any and all literature (including magazines and comic books) are accepted for RRJs. Each student will have access to the RRJ packet of questions which will serve as the basis for this monthly assignment. Students have the right to choose which questions they can use for RRJs, but the number of questions chosen will henceforth be recorded. Over the course of a year, a variety of questions must be used. Students choose the quantity of questions they respond to, therefore determining their grade. Ten well answered questions may earn an A; eight may earn a B; six a C and so on.

The RRJ packet found on the homework page includes the grading rubric used to determine the final RRJ grade. Along with correct grammar and sufficiency of response length, students are expected to make connections between the literature read with other books, world events and personal experiences. Expectations for responses raise as the student ages—thus the expectation for a 7<sup>th</sup> grader will be much higher than for a 5<sup>th</sup> grader.

Literature checkpoints are stopping points in every novel (short story or article) where comprehension and knowledge of the novel's elements are explored and where synthesis, analysis and evaluation of thematic issues are

encouraged. Upper middle school students are expected to utilize quotations from the written material to defend the positions they take. Here again, connections between other books, world events and personal experiences should be explored.

### Differentiation

Differentiation is addressed in many ways in the LA class. Multiple texts and supplementary materials are used, material is compacted, tiered activities are encouraged, higher order thinking skills are stressed and choice- driven products are negotiated jointly by student and teacher. Students are given opportunities for making connections within and across systems of knowledge by focusing on issues, themes, and ideas. Sometimes they work alone, sometimes in pairs, sometimes in groups. Tasks may be based on readiness, individual interests, learning style, or a combination of all three.

### Student Assessment

Quizzes in LA cover grammar or vocabulary material and occur about twice a trimester. End of the book tests cover events from the novel and always include an essay test. Often essays tests are of the take-home variety. Clear directions are included for such tests. Another aspect of evaluation is projects and presentations. Students always have choice in preparing their projects and the work that they do is expected to be thorough and neatly prepared. Presentations are a huge aspect of our curriculum. Students are expected to prepare what they present and utilize some form of visual aide to help in their presentation.

At least 20% of student evaluation is based on their ability and willingness to discuss the material we are studying. Upper middle school students in particular need to show their ability to make connections between what they have read and the world around them.

### Grading Scale

Magazines/Mini-quizzes	5%
Drama & General participation	10%
Poetry/Creative writing	10%
Grammar/Presentations	15%
RRJs/Literature Checkpoint	20%
Tests/Projects	40%