



Eighth Grade Language Arts  
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Class Page: <http://www.quia.com/pages/mshuntsclass1.html>  
<http://mshuntsclass.edublogs.org/>  
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Rolling out the red carpet for you!

### Welcome to Class!

Welcome to 8th grade Language Arts! I am very happy to have you in our class and I think this school year is going to be your most successful to date. We, your 8th grade teachers, are very excited to be here with you and look forward to watching you grow academically and as the special person that you are.

To assist you in getting the hang of 8th grade, I have composed this newsletter for you and your family to go through together. We will also discuss these items in class plus the many more that I could not fit on these pages! Please have your parent or guardian sign the attached parental review form indicating they have received and read this information.

Now, let's get this school year started!

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**Dear Students:**

I believe in you. I trust you. I know you can handle life's situations. Please know that you are listened to and cared for immensely. You are very important to me and I will not give up on you.

Let's have a wonderful 2009-2010 school year together.

Love,  
Ms. Hunt

### Class Expectations

Students will maintain an atmosphere in which learning can occur. *There will be no behavior that distracts from our learning environment.*

1. Students will come to class on time, prepared, and ready to do their best.
2. Students will treat others and themselves with respect.
3. Students will take responsibility for their actions—completing all homework and projects on time.

### Consequences

Students who are unable to follow the classroom expectations will first receive a warning. Then dependent upon student actions, the incident may be dismissed or I may opt for parent notification, lunch detention, a student-team conference, student-parent-team conference, or an office referral.

### Communication

Beware, my background is information management and technical documentation. These two fancy terms basically mean one thing—communication. I plan on contacting parents and guardians in good times and bad via telephone, email, U.S. Postal Service, and in person. However, I think that as we outline, discuss, and rehearse classroom procedures and policies that "the bad" will be minimal to nonexistent.





## Grading Policies

### LJPS Grading Scale

A	100-90
B	89-80
C	79-70
D	69-60
F	59-50

### Your nine weeks' grade will come from the following:

- Daily work (homework, class work, grammar work, and reading and writing assignments)
- Participation (positive contributions to class discussions, reading aloud, random writing journal checks, and sharing writings with class)
- Writing assignments (get ready to become the next Maya Angelou or William Shakespeare because the writing process is alive and well in our class)
- Response to literature via our new literature textbooks, outside reading assignments, and Interactive Readers
- Reviews aka tests (weekly vocabulary reviews, grammar checks, and reading comprehension assessments)

**Everyone can be successful in our class!**

### Classroom Binder and Carry Home Folder

Your binder and carry home folder are your keys to good organization and success. Keep these items organized and I promise you that not only will you have great peace of mind, you will also be able to find that needed assignment or piece of paper quickly and painlessly!

#### Class Binder

Your 2-inch binder should stay in the classroom and not depart these walls unless you ask specifically to take it home and are given approval to do so.

You are expected to keep all of your assignments in an organized manner by using labeled tab dividers (a total of 5 tabs) to create different sections of your note-

book. Reference handouts, daily class work, and graded assignments should be added to your binder. Guess what? I have had LJPS alum tell me that they continue to use their 8th grade Language Arts' binder in high school. No kidding! *Do not throw anything away!*

**Carry Home Folder** Welcome to back pain relief! By keeping your binder in class and utilizing a lightweight folder your aching back thanks you! For each of your classes, you should have a three-prong pocket folder to assist in transporting current assignments and reference materials to and from school.

Suggestion: color code your folders by class/subject area. Pick a vibrant color for our class that says, "Wow, Language Arts!"

### Online Information

#### Grades Online

LJPS will continue to utilize Pinnacle this year so that students and his/her parents or guardians may be able to access grades online at any time. Simply go to the Liza web page for access. Another tidbit of information: I do my best to keep grades up-to-date at *all* times!

#### Class Web Site

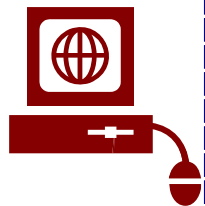
If you have not already figured out, I am a computer geek. I absolutely love to communicate and put helpful (hopefully) information out there for you and your families. With this in mind, I have created a class web page using quia.com where parents and students can review an up-to-date calendar, assignment information, helpful links, and pearls of teacher wisdom from your beloved teacher. There are also fun vocabulary and grammar games to help students become more familiar and comfortable with this material. All the who, what, where, when, and how of 8th Grade Language Arts is published here for your review. I strongly urge students and their families to utilize this site.

<http://www.quia.com/pages/mshuntsclass1.html>

#### Blog

Next, we have a class blog where students can post comments and reviews concerning books read or books they would like to read. This venue also offers us the opportunity to publish writing pieces. Please look for more information to come home about this fantastic site.

<http://mshuntsclass.edublogs.org/>





# VIVID WORDS!

## Vocabulary

LJPS middle school Language Arts classes are vocabulary based classes. Meaning a strong emphasis is placed on spelling, learning, and using new vocabulary words.

To begin our vocabulary journey, we will use dictionary and thesaurus scavenger hunts, puzzles, and games. This will help ease us into the school year and familiarize ourselves once again with these resource materials.

### Weekly vocabulary expectations.

Words and accompanying worksheets will be distributed every Friday. With very few exceptions, time will be given in class to complete vocabulary work.

Students will be responsible for not only learning the definition, as well as the correct pronunciation, parts of speech, and spelling of the 10 words, but also how to apply and use each word in their every day conversations and writing. On Friday, there will be a vocabulary test which will consist of spelling, definition, and usage. The second week, the students will have ten new words to define and complete exercises. Every three weeks there will be a test of the 30 words.

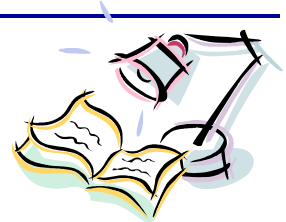
The following items are weekly vocabulary homework assignments. Specific due dates will be discussed in each class.

- Complete accompanying worksheets that outline word origin, usage, and reading comprehension.
- Write each word in pen ten times each in columns.
- Complete a graphic organizer—concept map or vocabulary squares—that helps you better understand the words
- Draw a color illustration depicting the word’s meaning.
- Discuss, act out, and teach the words to your classmates. Make these words become your very own! These activities are ongoing throughout the week.
- Remember to use the quia site to help familiarize yourself with the vocabulary words.
- Surpass your own expectations by giving 110% on Friday’s vocabulary test.

I know that each of you can beautifully accomplish big things this year!

## Homework Expectations

First and foremost, I expect great things for and from the LJPS 8th grade Class of 2010. Therefore, like all of the LJPS administrators and teachers, I expect quality work and timely work. Next, please let me be very clear, *I do not assign homework just to assign work.* Homework is assigned as a follow-up and reinforcement of class discussions and activities. It is assigned to strengthen learning not to try to make me feel or look like ruler of the universe. I assure you that I am not on any kind of power trip of any kind. Each assignment is given for a specific reason and not connected to a secret agenda. If you have any problem that may deter either quality or getting assignments turned in on time, see me immediately. Let us work something out before the situation gets out of control.



As stated in your planner: Students are expected to turn in work on time and at an acceptable level of quality.

“On time” means when the teacher asks for the assignment, and not “by the end of the period or day”. Late work may be turned in the following day with a 30% penalty. After the second day the assignment will be marked “zero”.

**Student Responsibility Note and Label** If you do not have the assignment on the date due, I ask that you complete a red Student Responsibility Note and Student Responsibility Label located on the silver cart in the front of the room. Answer all of the questions and complete all blanks on the note and label. The note should be turned in as papers are being collected and the completed label should be placed in your planner. Bring your planner to me at an appropriate time—during a lesson is not an appropriate time, however, any other moment that does not interrupt the class is an appropriate moment—for me to initial and circle the label in your planer. Save any theatrics for drama class. These items help you be accountable for your work, assists me in helping you, and aids in keeping all lines of communication open between you, me, and your folks.

In the event of absence, a student has up to five school days to complete the make-up work. It is the student’s responsibility to schedule a missed test. If a student fails to makeup a test within the five days after the absence, the student’s grade will be recorded as a “zero”. It is in the student’s best interest to make up missed work as expeditiously as possible.

At anytime you feel that you need extra help, please see me to setup a time to work together before or after school.



## Daily Bellringers—Plus Grammar

**Bellringers** When you come into class, you are expected to pick up your binder when you come in the door and get to work on either our Daily Oral Language (DOL) or the day's Bellringer. It will be self explanatory by either looking at the board for direction or a classmate may be passing out our Bellringer. Do not wait for everyone to come in to decide to then get your binder and start to work.

**Grammar** Our approach to grammar is a multi-prong attack: we will use our textbooks, Language Network, discuss, practice and review, sing and dance it, and LOVE IT! We will look at sentence structure and word choice from our favorite authors and emulate their work. Fun! This is the best way to visually see and interact with grammar.

Per LJPS policy and following solid reading research, all students are to have a book for reading with them at all times. You never know when the opportunity will present itself for a moment or two of reading. Plus this helps you with your outside reading projects!



## Writing and Journal Writing

I love to write. You love to write. A match made in heaven, right? We will continue on the same writing path many of you started in your 7th grade Language Arts class and write daily. I plan on joining you and hope to keep up with your wonderful word plays and imaginations.

Prepare to dive in and immerse yourself into the writing process and to let the words flow. We will frequently have writing assignments that you begin in class and complete at home. Some of these will also ask for your parent's active participation. Peer reviews, rubrics, and publishing also play into our work.

I expect you to write and let your mind brainstorm and wander as you put the words down on paper. I also expect you to write for the entire time given for journal writing. This timeframe may range anywhere to 5-20 minutes or perhaps even longer. When you get caught up in writing, the time passes very quickly.

Everyone is asked to share his/her writing periodically and I will ask for volunteers first. Usually, two-three people get to read aloud a day. You should expect to share about once a week. This contribution goes into your class participation grade. Everyone is to respect each other's writings and opinions. Remember, everyone's opinion matters and deserves respect.

## Literature

Without a doubt reading and literature will be a major focus in our class this year.

First, I look forward to seeing your summer reading projects and discussing the books you selected. Guess what? I read quite a few of them myself as did your other 8th grade teachers. Some we loved and, well, some we could have done without. I look forward to hearing your book preferences as well.

In class throughout the year, we will read a number of short stories, novels, poems, and many other genres from all sorts of authors. For example, I hope to read selections from S.E. Hinton, Edgar Allen Poe, Lois Lowry, and Elie Wiesel with you.

All middle school Language Arts classes are required to read a novel of your choosing outside of class—meaning on your own time—each nine weeks. An accompanying project similar to the one you created for your summer reading is also required.

Don't sweat it, I am going to be reading (and grading) along with you. Get ready to have fun with books!

