

Eighth Grade English

Overview for Parents

Teacher: Steven Glazer

Goals: In English 8, Crossroads Academy students continue to master the fine arts of close reading, deep listening, thoughtful analysis, clear writing, and eloquent speech. “What is justice?” is our essential question for the school year. As students reflect on this question, they learn to read, discuss, and respond to essays, films, novels, plays, poems, political documents, short stories, and speeches.

Schedule English classes meet four times each week. Each class is broken into two parts, a preliminary and main lesson. The preliminary sequence is as follows:

Tuesday: *Vocabulary from Classical Roots*

Wednesday: *Grammar*

Thursday: *Poetics & Rhetoric*

Friday: *Spelling*

Readings Our main lessons are rooted in the study of literature. We read novels, plays, short stories, poems, essays, and speeches. Novels include *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *Night*, *Animal Farm*, *Life of Pi*, and *A Tale of Two Cities*. During the winter, students survey the literature of the Atomic Age: anime, black comedy, manga, non-fiction, poetry, political documents, primary source materials, science fiction, and speeches. A short story unit in the spring features “The Garden Party” by Katherine Mansfield, “Why I Live at the P.O.” by Eudora Welty, “The Lottery” by Shirley Jackson, “God Sees the Truth but Waits” by Leo Tolstoy, and “Dr. Heidegger’s Experiment” by Nathaniel Hawthorne. As students begin composing the graduation speeches, we read a number of essays, speeches, and memoirs, including Martin Luther King’s “Letter from Birmingham City Jail” and Frederick Douglass’s “What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?” The school year ends with reading, analyzing, and performing scenes from Shakespeare’s *Twelfth Night*.

Spelling/Vocabulary Goals

1. Understand new words, along with tier 2 and 3 vocabulary words associated with the assigned readings.
2. Use words introduced through the *Vocabulary from Classical Roots* program.
3. Refine daily work with attention to word choice and spelling conventions.

Grammar/Mechanics/Usage Goals

1. Understand punctuation, including the use of apostrophes, colons, italics, parentheses, semicolons, and quotation marks.
2. Understand syntax, paragraph construction, and the MLA conventions.
3. Understand rules governing usage: subject/verb agreement, using verbs and pronouns, and making appropriate word choices when speaking or writing.

Literature Goals

1. Read and understand a variety of genres, including poetry, plays, essays, stories, & novels.
2. Develop the vocabulary and conceptual framework required to examine and discuss significant literary works.
3. Develop the ability to respond to a variety of textual questions, including factual, interpretive, evaluative, and stylistic questions.
4. Understand how each work nests within an author and historical context.



Composition Goals

1. Understand and use the writing process effectively to construct essays.
2. Understand a variety of purposes of writing.
3. Practice writing expository, narrative, and persuasive essays, analytical research papers, and the Crossroads Academy graduation speech.

Oral Speaking Goals

1. Understand how to make effective classroom presentations.
2. Understand the basic elements of rhetoric and how to deliver a formal speech.
3. Understand how to present dramatic readings and speak in character.
4. Understand how to participate civilly and productively in classroom discussions and Socratic seminars.

Expectations for Students

1. Work needs to be written neatly and headed appropriately.
2. Papers need to be kept and filed appropriately in the English notebook. Notebooks will be checked periodically.
3. Students need to read independently in addition to completing their daily work.
4. Daily preparation and participation are essential components of the classroom experience and therefore will comprise a significant portion of the final grade. The grade breakdown is as follows: grammar, 12.5%; spelling, 12.5%; vocabulary, 12.5%; composition, 25%; literature, 25%; participation, 12.5%.
5. Late homework will be marked down five percentage points each day. Missing assignments will result in a zero.
6. Students will maintain a high standard of scholarship and behavior:
 - a. Treating others as they would like to be treated
 - b. Being respectful when others speak
 - c. Coming to class prepared
 - d. Using class time effectively
 - e. Practicing academic honesty.

Homework Requirements:

1. A homework listing for the week is given so that the students may plan their home time around their other commitments. This weekly sheet can be found on my Crossroads Academy web page.
2. Students should not be spending more than an *average* of thirty minutes per night on English.
3. Parents should inform me if students consistently require more than thirty minutes to accomplish the homework.

Contacting the Teacher

I am happy to discuss your child's progress with you at any time. I am always available by email at steve.glazer@crossroadsacademy.org or by phone. During the day, I can be reached at Crossroads Academy at (603) 795-3111 extension 201. You may also call me during the evening at (802) 785 - 2415.