

# Dear Parent,



We're excited to have your child in English Language Arts at Whitmore Lake Middle School.

This is a very important year in your child's life, and we're pleased to be part of it.

At school, we're building on the skills that your child has already learned and we're introducing new ones. See this side of the brochure for details about what we're doing this year in English and Language Arts.

At home, your child can practice the skills we're learning at school. See the other side of this brochure for easy things that you can do to encourage that practice.

By working together, we can make sure that your child acquires the skills he or she needs to be successful in school and life.

We look forward to working with you and your child this year. When you have questions, please feel free to contact us at 449-4715.

Sincerely,  
The Middle School  
English Language Arts Teachers

## In every grade, we teach English/Language Arts skills that will help students:

### Communicate Ideas

- Read and understand fiction and non-fiction materials.
- Write clear and correct sentences, paragraphs and compositions.
- Create meaning as they listen, speak, view, read and write.
- Use language to express ideas to different audiences and for different purposes.

### Understand Literature

- Read, respond to, and reflect on ideas found in a variety of materials.
- Explore and reflect on universal themes in oral, visual, and written texts.
- Apply what is learned to everyday life.

### Use Language

- Identify and use correct spelling, grammar and punctuation.
- Describe and use various story elements.
- Use main ideas with supporting details in writing.
- Express ideas creatively.
- Explore and use tools found in books and media to help with understanding.

### Apply Knowledge

- Develop and use strategies to connect what they're learning to their life.
- Check their own progress when using these strategies.
- Evaluate their work using set guidelines.

## In Middle School, we teach English/Language Arts skills that will help your child:

### Communicate Ideas

- Compose a three-five paragraph essay including an introduction and summary.
- Present orally to audiences; essays, reports, plays, stories, scrapbooks, presentations and research reports and book reports.
- Study, listen to tapes and discuss themes (i.e., diversity).
- Write narrative, persuasive, expository, and descriptive essays to tell stories, convince, explain and describe in detail.
- Read and discuss short stories with universal themes like change, conflict, challenge and justice.

### Understand Literature

- Identify authors' devices and approaches to characters and plot (i.e., settings and plot structure, author's mood or tone, flashbacks, and character description).
- Identify and study first and third person narratives and points of view.
- Study other cultures' literature.
- Study and identify poetry, fiction, non-fiction, biographies, autobiographies, and legends.
- Identify a common theme in various types of literature.
- Demonstrate understanding of various types of literature.
- Study different human experiences through literature.

- Read, discuss, analyze, create and recognize examples of foreshadowing, flashback, simile, metaphor, irony, and personification.
- Be exposed to Caribbean, Native American, African, Eastern European, Hispanic, and Anglo short stories, folk tales, tall tales, and novels.

### Use Language

- Spell correctly.
- Use proper capitalization, punctuation, and subject-verb agreement.
- Identify and master the use of the eight parts of speech.
- Learn the proper way to write dialogue.
- Use a dictionary and thesaurus to support writing.
- Study words: etymologies, glossaries.
- Study parts of words, specifically roots, prefixes, and suffixes.
- Write for different purposes: to inform, persuade, describe, etc.
- Connect lessons in literature to "real life" experiences.





### Apply Knowledge

- Use a self-evaluation rubric to analyze writing in order to improve writing skills.
- Proofread all work
- Paraphrase and summarize.
- Complete a grade-level research report, following an outline, using the internet and citing sources correctly.
- Use the library and computer lab to access information.
- Learn interpersonal skills.
- Use a rubric to evaluate work.
- Use checklists, rubrics, and peer editing to complete a research paper.



### In General

- Get your child a library card and visit the library together, regularly.
- Read aloud to your child every day. Choose all kinds of material.
- Reinforce any work your child brings home by reading or asking questions.
- Talk with your child about books being read in school by asking questions that require more than a yes or no answer.
- Encourage your child to write in a variety of ways (i.e., diary, journal, lists, poetry, directions).
- Discuss current events with your child.
- Discuss how books being read are linked to the real world or your child's own personal experiences.
- Give your child a magazine subscription as a gift.
- Help your child study for tests and prepare for presentations and reports.



Whitmore Lake Middle School

In Middle School, we're teaching your child important reading and language skills.

*What are these skills?*

*How can you help your child practice them?*



*...exceptional,  
personalized education*

**For more good ideas, ask your child's teacher, or contact:**

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