



Deer Valley Unified School District



“Colt Strong”

Course: English Language Arts
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Teacher: Mrs. Carrie Costello
Prep Hour: Period 1
Tutoring Times: By appointment only

Course Description

Arizona’s English Language Arts Standards work together in a clear progression from kindergarten through 12th grade. This document provides a brief overview of the skills a student will learn at this grade. Each standard builds on the standard that came before and towards the standard that comes in the next grade level. Each standard is expected to be taught as appropriate for the grade-level. Some standards appear to have similar wording at multiple grade levels; however, it is understood that they are to be applied with increased focus to progressively more challenging texts and tasks.

Arizona Department of Education. (2016). *Arizona Department of Education*. Arizona English Language Arts Standards. <https://www.azed.gov/>

Course Objectives

Reading Standards for Literature:

- Independently and proficiently read grade-appropriate and increasingly complex literature from a variety of genres
- Analyze the central ideas or themes of a text, including analyzing the roles of dialogue or incidents in developing the depth of the plot
- Analyze the intentional choices authors make by comparing modern works of literature to traditional pieces, and citing their evidence to support their analysis
- Develop vocabulary by determining and analyzing the impact of specific word choice on meaning and tone

Reading Standards for Informational:

- Analyze individuals, events, and ideas in informational text
- Use evidence from the text to support the inferences they draw from the text, and write an effective summary of a variety of texts
- Analyze the claims made in a text by evaluating the supporting reasoning and evidence an author uses, and recognize conflicting and irrelevant evidence
- Evaluate the use of varying perspectives and mediums on the portrayal of subjects/topics by different authors.

Writing Standards:

- Produce clear and coherent writing for a variety of tasks, purposes, and audiences using argumentative, informational, or narrative writing types
- Develop arguments supported with reasoning and evidence gathered from multiple, credible print and digital sources
- Acknowledge and address opposing viewpoints in response to their claims
- Routinely plan, draft, revise, and edit a wide variety of writing tasks

Speaking and Listening Standards:

- Collaboratively discuss and analyze a variety of subjects using diverse media and formats while considering the motives behind the presentation of information
- Develop respectful communication skills in order to clarify, extend and challenge information presented in a variety of contexts
- Adapt and present information using technology, multimedia, and visual formats effectively for a variety of audiences and purposes

Language Standards:

- Demonstrate mastery of grade level conventions (grammar, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling)
- Utilize various strategies to determine the meaning of unknown words and phrases, as well as figurative language

Arizona Department of Education. (2016). *Arizona Department of Education*. Arizona English Language Arts Standards. <https://www.azed.gov/>

Grading Policy

Deer Valley Middle School believes that authentic grading accurately measures and reflects a student's performance based upon mastery of the standards.

Deer Valley Middle School implements a research-based, unified grading and reporting policy that is focused on a standards-based mindset in which all grades are proficiency-based that effectively communicate what students know and can do, so students can focus on growth and learning. Grades will have consistent meaning throughout the system and be based upon grade level standards.

In order to increase grading consistency, accuracy, equity, and focus on learning, Deer Valley Middle School strives to employ the following tenets:

- A student's grade should reflect academic learning and should never be used as a punitive tool.
- Grades are for reporting the status of academic learning, not behavioral conduct.
- The primary purpose of assessment and grading is to provide detailed feedback to inform student learning.
- Learning is a process that takes place over time and at different speeds for different students.
- A coordinated assessment and grading system clarifies the expectations for all students and maximizes academic opportunities.

Grade Scales

Students in 3rd through 12th grades will receive marks for their proficiency toward the grade level standards using the following scale.

- 4 = Highly Proficient
- 3 = Proficient
- 2 = Partially Proficient
- 1 = Minimally Proficient

Students in 3rd through 12th grades will receive marks for their overall performance in each course of study using the following letter grade scale.

- A = 90-100%
- B = 80-89%
- C = 70-79%
- D = 60-69%
- F = 0-59%

Grades of "D" and above are passing marks. A course grade of "F" indicates that the student has failed the course.

Social Behavior Agreement

We at DVMS believe that all students have the right to learn, all teachers have the right to teach and that all students will have the opportunity to demonstrate their learning. We believe that we do not leave this decision of learning up to choice. Thus the reason for the Social Behavior Agreement.

Social emotional learning (SEL) is an important process through which students are supported in social skill development to engage in positive relationships with their peers, teachers, and other adults while learning to access their emotional intelligence to foster awareness of self and others.

Integrated through a whole-school approach in the teaching and learning communities, school climate and culture, and supporting structures, SEL can promote good decision-making, positive relationships, and self-care. By implementing SEL in a school-wide approach, educators can help students become more successful for their future.

There are five interrelated sets of cognitive, affective and behavioral competencies. These along with our Standards Based Mindset Academic Behavior Framework and Flowchart. Assist our teachers in helping our students make good educational choices, along with assisting students with self-advocating, responsible and self-awareness of their academic choices.

- **Self-awareness:** The ability to accurately recognize one's emotions and thoughts and their influence on behavior. This includes accurately assessing one's strengths and limitations and possessing a well-grounded sense of confidence and optimism.

- **Self-management:** The ability to regulate one’s emotions, thoughts, and behaviors effectively in different situations. This includes managing stress, controlling impulses, motivating oneself, and setting and working toward achieving personal and academic goals.
- **Social awareness:** The ability to take the perspective of and empathize with others from diverse backgrounds and cultures, to understand social and ethical norms for behavior, and to recognize family, school, and community resources and supports.
- **Relationship skills:** The ability to establish and maintain healthy and rewarding relationships with diverse individuals and groups. This includes communicating clearly, listening actively, cooperating, resisting inappropriate social pressure, negotiating conflict constructively, and seeking and offering help when needed.
- **Responsible decision-making:** The ability to make constructive and respectful choices about personal behavior and social interactions based on consideration of ethical standards, safety concerns, social norms, the realistic evaluation of consequences of various actions, and the well-being of self and others.

DVMS will be utilizing the categories and weights associated with DVUSD Grading Practices changes, specifically the use of Assessment, Coursework, and Practice categories for all entries in the gradebook. A breakdown of these changes are listed below:

All grade entries in the gradebook will be attributed to one of the following categories.

ASSESSMENT: This category includes all items used to measure a student’s proficiency toward the learning standards once the student has had sufficient practice and at a specified point in time. This category can include summative tests, performance assessments, reports, unit or module assessments, quizzes, long-term projects, short-term projects, presentations, capstone projects, research papers, and lab reports.

COURSEWORK: This category includes formative work that provides students with the opportunity to learn content and skills and to receive feedback on their learning. Coursework is assigned to provide meaningful, independent practice, reinforce learning targets, and extend learning. This category can include in-class assignments, exit tickets, checks-for-understanding, and daily activities.

PRACTICE: This category includes formative student work that a student completes while in the process of learning specific skills. Student work that is done inside and outside of the classroom, such as classwork and homework, falls into this category.

Category Weights (3rd-12th Grades Only)

Each category will be weighted as follows:

ASSESSMENT CATEGORY	80%
COURSEWORK CATEGORY	20%
PRACTICE CATEGORY	0%

Missing Work (3rd-12th grades)

An assignment is considered missing work when it is not submitted by the due date.

Missing work will be treated as such:

- The assignment will be marked with the “Missing” special code in the gradebook
- A zero (“0”) will be entered as the score for the assignment in the gradebook
- No Evidence (NE) will be entered for the standards attached to the assignment

Late Work

An assignment is considered late work when the assignment is not submitted by the due date that was established but is submitted within the parameters listed below.

For **Late Work** to be accepted, students must meet the following parameters:

- Assignment is not due within the class period
- Assignment is not a timed activity (such as a Quick-Write Essay)
- Assignment is not a Long-Term assignment (over multiple weeks)
- Assignment is turned in within the following time frame
 - K-2 Grades: By the end of the marking period
 - 3-8 Grades: Within 5 school days after the end of the unit
 - 9-12 Grades: By the end of the unit

Reassessment

Retakes are allowed for assessments for full credit, if reperformance opportunities (another assessment on the same learning target later in the marking period as part of the instructional cycle) will not be available during the marking period or in addition to reperformance opportunities during the marking period.

To earn a retake opportunity, a student must complete all of the following:

- Complete all formative coursework related to the content/skill assessed
- Consult with the teacher
- *Submit a reassessment plan or application, if required by the teacher*

A reassessment plan must be scheduled within the following time frames:

- **K-2nd Grades:** Until the week before the end of the marking period
- **3rd-8th Grades:** Within 10 school days of receiving the assessment score
- **9-12th Grades:** Within 5 school days of receiving the assessment score. The student must communicate with the teacher to create a reassessment plan.

Classroom Behavior Expectations

All students will:

- 1) demonstrate independence by bringing all materials needed for class everyday
- 2) communicate with the teacher if help is needed
- 3) be willing to step outside of their comfort zone
- 4) being respectful of the teacher and peers by:
 - a) waiting patiently for a turn to speak - quietly raise a hand
 - b) returning borrowed materials
 - c) respecting personal space
 - d) not damaging property of any kind
 - e) demonstrating appropriate inside and outside behaviors
 - f) welcoming new students
 - g) providing help to others as needed
 - h) following all district and school rules

Electronic Device Use

Technology (cell phones, Chromebooks, hand-held devices, etc.) use in the classroom is intended to **enhance** the learning environment for all students; however, any use of technology that degrades the learning environment, promotes dishonesty or illegal activities, is prohibited. If the instructor determines that the use of technology is a distraction to the learning process, either of the student using the technology or to those around him/her, the student may, at the discretion of the teacher, be asked to discontinue the use of technology in the classroom.

School Devices to Facilitate Learning:

Deer Valley Middle School utilizes Chromebooks **as a learning tool** in the classroom. The classroom teacher will inform students as to when they may use their device and for which purposes. Students must adhere to their teacher's guidelines for use and appropriate times for use. Any student who violates the teacher's guidelines will be subject to disciplinary action.

Please note- students may not access their personal devices, whether for entertainment or learning, if the teacher has stated that the classroom activities at that time do not warrant use. For example, during testing or assessments.

Academic Integrity Statement

To be college-, career-, and community-ready, students in the Deer Valley Unified School District are expected to demonstrate academic integrity. Academic integrity is all about being honest and fair in your schoolwork. It means doing work that is entirely your own and giving credit to others (including generative Artificial Intelligence tools) through proper citation when you use their ideas or words.

If you have questions about the guidelines for academic integrity, you should discuss them with your teacher.

Academic Dishonesty Statement

Academic dishonesty refers to any action that compromises the integrity of academic work or evaluation processes. This includes but is not limited to:


- Copying or stealing another person’s work or data (plagiarism);
- Allowing another person to copy one’s work;
- Doing another person’s classwork;
- Creating more than one copy of one’s work for distribution;
- Providing another person with the answers on tests or quizzes;
- Noncompliance with teachers’ test-taking procedures;
- Unauthorized copying or development of software; and
- Unauthorized use of generative Artificial Intelligence.

Consequences for instances of academic dishonesty range from a conference and loss of credit (student will be given another opportunity to show mastery of learning) up to a 5-day suspension and loss of credit.

Artificial Intelligence

In the Deer Valley Unified School District, we are committed to providing our students with the best possible education while ensuring their safety, privacy, and well-being. As part of our ongoing efforts to enhance learning experiences, teachers may incorporate generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the classroom for students.

Students must adhere to the specific guidelines provided in the assignment details. If no guidance around the use of generative AI is provided, students should follow the “restrictive” level (see chart). Teachers should direct students to contact their teacher before submitting classwork if the student is unsure if the tool or website they are using is permitted on a specific assignment.

AI Use Traffic Light	Level	Description	Example Instruction
	Restrictive No!	AI tools are prohibited for the assignment, and all work must be the student’s original creation.	“Do not use AI tools for this assignment. All content must be original, and any use of AI will be treated as plagiarism.”
	Moderate Whoa!	Students can use teacher-approved AI tools from the district list for specific parts of their assignments, such as brainstorming or initial research, but the core content and conclusions should be original. Proper citation is required for any AI-generated content.	“You can employ AI tools to assist brainstorming or initial research, however, the main content, arguments, and conclusions should be your own.”
	Permissive Go!	Students can utilize district-approved AI tools to assist in their assignments, such as generating ideas, proofreading, or organizing content. Proper citation is required for any AI-generated content.	“You may use AI tools as you see fit to enhance your assignment and demonstrate your understanding of the topic.”

C.U.T.S. Program

School attendance is required by state law. Arizona State Law (15-802.A, 15-803.E) requires every person who has custody of a child between the ages of six and sixteen years shall make sure the child attends school for the full time school is in session unless unable to attend due to illness or another legitimate reason.

To encourage and improve school attendance, Deer Valley Middle School has implemented a truancy program in partnership with Maricopa County Juvenile Court. This truancy program is called C.U.T.S. (Court Unified Truancy Suppression). We will be tracking attendance very closely. Your child is expected to be at school every day, unless there is an excused reason not to be. An absence is defined as a minimum of one missed class period per day. An unexcused absence will count as a truant day as defined by law. A student is "habitually truant" if he/she has five or more unexcused absences from school. A student that is absent more than ten percent (18 days) of the required number of school days per year is considered to have "excessive absences" whether the absence is excused or unexcused.

When a student has five or more unexcused absences or 18 excessive absences (excused OR unexcused), the student can be cited to the CUTS Program through the Juvenile Court. The hearing will be held on the school campus with representatives from Deer Valley Middle School and the Juvenile Court. A parent or legal guardian must be present with the student at the time of the hearing. Consequences at the hearing may include the following: required attendance of the parent and the child at an education class (to be held on Saturdays), work hours assigned to the child, counseling, etc. The parent will be assessed a Diversion fee. Failure to complete these consequences may result in suspension of your child's driver's license, or inability to get a driver's license until their 18th birthday and/or formal court proceedings. It is the parent's or guardian's responsibility to ensure their child's attendance in an approved academic setting. If you fail to take the necessary steps to provide your child with appropriate education you may receive a citation. If convicted, it is a Class 3 misdemeanor punishable by jail time and/or fine.

Communication

Please contact the teacher for any student concerns. It is crucial that teachers, parents, and students maintain open lines of communication in order to ensure the best support for student success. Contact information is provided at the top of the first page of this syllabus.

The Deer Valley Unified School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age in its programs and activities. For any inquiries regarding nondiscrimination policies contact the Superintendent's Department, 20402 N. 15th Avenue, Phoenix, AZ 85027. 623.445.5000.

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Please return this portion by August 6th, 2024.

I have read the 8th Grade ELA Course Syllabus and Guidelines.

Student Name (Printed) _____ Class Hour _____

Student Signature _____

Parent Phone Number _____ Preferred (Circle)

Parent Email Address _____ Preferred (Circle)

Parent Name (Printed) _____

Parent Signature _____

Date _____