**8th Grade Syllabus  
2014-2015  
Ms. Caler**

The following is the syllabus for your class. Because I am incredibly flexible, and find that each class works at its own pace, I plan lessons weekly. I adjust my lesson plans and daily goals according to my class’s learning, understanding, and mastery of skills and concepts. I use the Common Core Standards to guide my planning, along with the needs and skill level of not only my individual classes, but individual students.  
  
**First Semester**

***Unit One: The Poetry Unit***We will be reading and exploring a variety of poems from *Literature: Timeless Voices, Timeless Themes; Silver Level* and *Quotables: A Poetry Anthology*.  
  
**Prepare and Engage:** We will be exploring a variety of poetry/literary devices in relationship to poetry. These are all devices that students will use not only in this unit, but throughout the rest of their high school career.

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| **Style:** | **Structure:** | **Activities and Assessments** |
| Metaphor, Simile, Symbolism, Imagery, Diction, Onomatopoeia, Personification, Alliteration, Allusion, Rhyme,  Assonance, Hyperbole, Connotation, Denotation, Theme | Line Break Sense Units (End Punctuation) Stanza Rhyme Scheme Repetition | Persona Poem Bio Poem Where I’m From Poem Autobiographical Free Verse Poem Sonnet Haiku TPCASTT SOAPSTone Poetry Anthology Book |

***Unit Two: The Hero***  
We will be exploring the concept of the hero through tall tales, poems, and short stories. We will be reading a variety of stories from *Literature: Timeless Voices, Timeless Themes; Silver Level*.  
  
**Prepare and Engage:** We will read to comprehend and interpret, relate fictional pieces to personal experiences, predict, analyze, build vocabulary in context and use forms of skeptic, develop skills in varying sentence beginnings, write a nomination using only important details, and respond to stories/tales/poems through writing, speaking, listening, and projects.  
  
Some activities will include journaling, paragraph writing, exploring and analyzing figurative

language, various projects, and writing poems/tall tales/short stories.

***Unit Three: The Family Tree***  
We will combine both units one and two into a family tree project where we write about our families in a variety of genres and discover how every-day people can become heroes.   
  
**Prepare and Engage:** *Major Concepts: family, similarities, differences, uniqueness, needs, chores, traditional, blended, extended, single-parent, diversity, habitat, home, time*Students will learn that each student is a unique individual and valued person within a family, define family, learn that everyone belongs to a family, that not all families are alike, that families are alike in some ways and different in other ways, and that families differ in size, make up, roles, rules, beliefs, and traditions. Students will also describe and discuss families, appreciate their families and the families of others, earn the family's importance within their own lives, and work cooperatively in group tasks.  
  
Some activities will include: Creating a family tree picture, writing a letter to a family member, interviewing at least three family members, writing an interview, and writing a family tree paper.  
  
***Unit Four: The Immigration Unit***  
We will begin the second semester with an exploration of immigration. We will read a variety of texts, poems, and the novel *Letters from Rifka* as we explore this unit. Within the immigration unit, we will be exploring the holocaust and we will be having a choice read of fiction for novels written about the holocaust. Potential books include, *Waiting for Anya, Daniel’s Story, Diary of a Young Girl, The Boy in the Striped Pajamas* –As is my policy, if a parent has a concern with a choice novel, said parent can request an alternative. We will also read *…If Your Name Was Changed at Ellis Island, Immigrant Kids,* and *“A Library of Congress Book: Immigrants.*

**Prepare and Engage:**  Students will demonstrate an ability to recall various facts about the following:

1. Various waves of immigration to the U.S.
2. Why the immigrants left their homelands
3. Why they chose to come to the U.S.
4. Where they settled when they came

Students also will demonstrate an understanding of the many difficulties that the immigrants faced when they arrived in America, and how these problems would be dealt with through charitable organizations and demands that the American government legislate reform. In order to embrace diversity students will learn about the different cultures present in our society and their own community.

***Unit Five: The Holocaust Unit***  
We will continue to explore immigration through our Holocaust Unit. We will look more closely at why people immigrate, which will lead us to our main focus: The Holocaust. From there we will participate in a literature circle, in which students will, in groups of 3-4, pick out a holocaust novel to read and explore together. The novels of choice are *Anne Frank: Diary of a Young Girl, Daniel’s Story, The Boy in the Striped Pajamas,* and *Waiting for Anay.* As is my policy, if a parent has a concern with a choice novel, said parent can request an alternative.

**Prepare and Engage:**  Students will raise and consider key questions regarding the Holocaust, realize that man’s inhumanity to man can surface in a variety of historical circumstance recognize that genocide is a threat to all humanity and the loss of one group is a loss to all and that a bystander makes an active choice that may result in escalating harm to others. Students will understand also that prejudice has had a long history and is still alive today, and that when tyranny prevails, individuals can make a difference by acts of moral courage. Students will carry the message so that acts of genocide cannot happen again.  
 **Additionally…**  
We will also continue to work on the essay process. Students will write expository, persuasive, analysis, and narrative essays, and a wide variety of reflections. Our focus will be content and ideas, voice, fluency, word choice, organization, and grammar/punctuation. Students will begin moving away from basic explanation/summary of text, and into the analysis of author purpose, audience, and subject.

**Outside of Class Reading:**

Accelerated Reading:Students will continue to complete the AR program. Each semester, totals are as follows:   
**First Quarter: 15 points  
Second Quarter: 20 points  
Third Quarter: 20 points  
Fourth Quarter: 15 points**

Independent Novel Responses In addition to the AR, students will read a book of their choice, and either weekly, or bi-weekly, they will receive an “Independent Novel Response” prompt on the novel they are currently reading. The prompts will require the students to be reading in and out of class, find specific textual evidence, reflect and analyze literary elements such as plot, theme, character development, setting, motivation, conflict, figurative language, prediction, etc. Each INR is worth approximately 10 points.

**EVALUATIVE CRITERIA:**

Students’ assignments are evaluated on the following grading scale:

A 100-90%

B 80-89%

C 70-79%

D 60-69%

F 59% and below

Test scores, daily work, papers, and projects are not weighted, but each assignment is given a particular value. Students’ interim and quarter grades are based on total points received. Each quarter is worth 50% of the student’s semester grade.

**Washington State Common Core Standards:** The CCR anchor standards and high school grade-specific standards work in tandem to define college and career readiness expectations—the former providing broad standards, the latter providing additional specificity. Throughout this year, we will be meeting the required CCSS for our state. You may access the Common Core online at <http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/> and follow the links provided.