

Patricia Gillen
English 8
Course Description

Texts: Houghton Mifflin, Grammar and Composition, Second Course; Scott Foresman Literature and Life and Sitton Spelling for Eighth Graders

In grammar, students begin the year by completing a grammar scrapbook, in which they review the basic parts of speech. In addition they learn the importance of neatness, organization and attention to detail. Throughout the year, grammar is studied toward the goal of improving sentence structure in composition. A basic research paper is undertaken and students learn more about the resources in the library.

In spelling, students learn more about prefixes and suffixes. They have frequent spelling dictations and proofreading practices.

Literature exposes students to people, places and situations they would otherwise not know. There are ample opportunities for writing experiences throughout the year.

Free Samples – Contains two Native American stories and a play by Milne.

Uncertainties – Students read “Flowers for Algernon” and view the movie. They also read “The Lady or the Tiger?” a perennial favorite with a surprise ending.

Poetry – Students are exposed to a variety of styles of poetry by many different poets. Students have the opportunity to compose their own poems as well.

The Well-Told Tale – This section contains short stories and two narrative poems. The short stories are by noted American authors. Students develop the ability to attend to longer pieces of literature.

American Kaleidoscope – This section is a sampler of different genres and authors, allowing students to learn more about people in this world.

Generations – The literature chosen allows students to explore the relationships between parent and child and grandparent and child. They learn the value of love in enduring familial relationships.

Greek Myths – Some of the treasured myths which are part of our culture heritage are included. As time permits, students act them out in small groups.

The Diary of Anne Frank – The play by Goodrich and Haskett serves as a springboard to an introduction to the Holocaust. A short research report is part of this unit.

During the winter, students engage in a month-long speech unit. They learn the basics of good speechmaking and practice what they have learned by giving a number of short speeches, covering among others pet peeves, speech to inform, speech to persuade and speech to entertain. They also work on good listening skills.

Eighth graders read three novels. The Outsiders by Hinton is a favorite. The study of fantasy leads to A Wrinkle in Time by L’Engle. Students broaden their knowledge and appreciation of SW Native American culture by reading When the Legends Die by Borland.