Grade 9 English Language Arts Course Outline
Room 6 Period A - September 2013 to June 2014
Mr. T. Letkeman

Course Description and Objectives
The ELA course focuses on the development of communications skills through writing (40%), reading (25%), speaking (15%), representing (10%), viewing (5%), and listening (5%). It is an integrated program that runs both semesters and is worth one credit. Class activities will be designed to improve oral and written communication skills, promote critical thinking, and foster an appreciation for literature in many forms, such as short prose, novels, media, and plays. A variety of literature and writing styles, including aesthetic, academic and professional, will be explored throughout the course, thereby allowing students an opportunity to develop well-informed preferences.

Students will also be participating in “Take Our Kids To Work Day” and will be completing a unit in career education. This unit takes approximately two weeks to complete and includes a one-day field trip to Brandon’s Career Symposium in the second semester.

Many of the discussions that will take place in this course will deal with issues on a global scale; students will be asked to read newspapers in class and watch television news clips as a means to broaden their awareness and understanding of what is going on in the world outside of Brandon. As their understanding of local, provincial, national, and international issues grows, their perspectives evolve and responses reach a deeper level.

In addition to thematic units, students will have a variety grammatical exercises, games, and challenges every Friday. The purpose of these weekly grammar activities is to further students’ communication skills, especially in written language, which by nature must be even more precise than spoken language in order to be understood. Also, throughout the year students will submit new words they have encountered while reading to the monthly tournament of words, where students get to vote on which of the words the class has discovered deserves to be the new word of the month. This allows students to expand their vocabulary and develop an appreciation for the variety and complexity of the English language.

In Grade 9 ELA, students complete an individual novel study per semester of a novel of their choice. Students will begin every class with 10 minutes of silent reading, and every Friday they will have some time to respond to their readings in their reading log. (Reading responses not completed during class on Friday must be completed as homework and hand in on Monday.)

Note: All Grade 9 ELA students will participate in a division wide entry assessment to determine the literacy levels of Grade 9 students entering high school. This assessment is not used in the calculation of a student’s final mark.
General Learning Outcomes
Students will listen, speak, read, write, view, and represent to...

1. Explore thoughts, ideas, feelings, and experiences.
2. Comprehend and respond personally and critically to oral, literary, and media texts.
3. Manage ideas and information.
4. Enhance the clarity and artistry of communication.
5. Celebrate and build community.

Course Evaluation Structure

- 85% Course Work (includes projects, tests, assignments)
- 15% Final Assessment

Course work marks will be based on the learning outcomes, which will be distributed throughout the units. Students will have multiple opportunities to demonstrate achievement of each outcome and the final mark for each will be based on their best demonstration, regardless of how many times it takes.

- The final mark for course work will be the cumulative total of the learning outcomes.

Program Adaptations, Accommodations, and Modifications
Adjustments to course content and evaluation could be made for individual students if the student’s programming requires an adapted program, a modified program, or an individualized program. Adaptations, accommodations, and modifications to programs require approval of Vincent Massey High School’s Student Management Committee.

- **Adapted Program**: Intended for those students whose learning needs warrant changes to the teaching process, materials and/or student product to help them achieve the expected learning outcomes of the curricula.
- **Modified Program**: Intended for those students with special needs whose cognitive challenges require modifications in curricular goals, objectives, or outcomes of 50% or more to accommodate their individual learning requirements.
- **Individualized Program**: Intended for those students whose cognitive challenges require significant changes to programming such that they are not evaluated by the standards of the regular curricula.
- **Parent/Guardian Involvement**: Parent/guardian involvement is essential when changes to student programming is required. The classroom teacher is responsible for providing parents/guardians with the information of programming changes as deemed necessary through the school’s Student Management Committee.
- **Parent/Guardian Concern/Dispute Resolution Process**: Should a parent/guardian have concerns regarding his/her son’s/daughter’s programming, he/she should first approach the classroom teacher. If he/she still has a concern that has not been addressed, he/she may appeal in the following order:
  - A member of the school support team (case managers, counselors, resource teachers)
  - Vice Principals of the respective departments
  - The Principal
Student Responsibility Guidelines for Assessment and Evaluation

Students actively engaged in their learning are the essence of the Brandon School Division’s mission of educating the whole child.

The assessment, evaluation and reporting of student learning and achievement involves students, teachers, principals, parents, superintendents and the Board of Trustees. It is the responsibility of professional educators to assess, evaluate, and report on each student’s degree of engagement and resulting learning outcomes. Such assessment, evaluation and reporting is a continuous and fundamental part of the student’s learning process. Students are responsible for:

- their own learning with the expertise, assistance and motivation of their teachers;
- engaging individually and collectively in school/community learning opportunities;
- improving their learning involvement
- playing an active role in assessing their own learning
- providing evidence of their learning within established timelines

The purpose of this document is to identify student responsibilities in assessment and evaluation practices, provide clear guidelines and consequences so students can make informed decisions, and to provide structures that improve the relationship between student learning and assessment.

All assessments and/or evaluations will be assigned a reasonable completion date by the classroom teacher.

When a student demonstrates negligence and/or disregard towards the assessment and/or evaluation due date, the teacher can assign a “0” grade for the incomplete assessment and/or evaluation.

For a “0” grade to remain permanent on the student’s record for that unit of study, a teacher’s records will demonstrate that he/she had advised the student and the parent/guardian that there was an opportunity to complete the original assessment or an alternate assessment, but that it would have been penalized in accordance to divisional guidelines.

Penalization for late assessments is as follows:

- **Grade 9 – 10%**
- Grade 10 – 15%
- Grade 11 – 20%
- Grade 12 – 25%

Example: Grade 9 student receives 80% for a late assessment. The penalty for the late assessment would be (80)(0.10)=8. The adjusted mark would be 80-8=72%.

Once the late assessment is marked, the penalized assessment mark will replace the “0” grade that was originally assigned to the student by the teacher.

If the original or alternate assessment is not submitted by the new completion date or if the student refuses to submit a required assessment, the “0” grade assigned to it will remain on the student’s evaluation records. The “0” grade(s) will be calculated into the student’s final mark for the unit of study and will be used in the calculation of the final grade of the course.
Course Syllabus - Time Frame and Unit Descriptions

Note: The units may be covered in a different order than presented in this outline depending on learner interests and abilities.

**Unit 1: Introducing... Me!**

Approximate Instructional Time: 2-3 weeks

Unit Description: Students will first learn about their individual learning style by completing a Multiple Intelligence Inventory. This group of assignments is a way to express who you are, what you believe, and where you are heading in the future and allows the students and teacher to build relationships and get to know each other on an individual level.

Evaluation: Paper Bag Speech
Memory Behind the Picture
Dear Me: A Letter to Yourself
Personal Opinion Essay

**Unit 2: Short Stories and the Elements of Fiction**

Approximate Instructional Time: 3-4 weeks

Unit Description: If a novel can be compared to a feature film, a short story is like a Pixar short or Vine video. Short stories capture a moment in time and very frequently end with a bang. Students will explore the elements of fiction (plot, setting, character, conflict, symbol, point of view, and theme) through reading a wide range of short stories. As students learn about each element, they will progress through the writing process, from draft through editing to a final piece. By the end of the unit students will be able to unite all the elements into one cohesive story.

Evaluation: Element Analysis
Short Story

**Unit 3: Take Our Kids To Work & Career Symposium**

Approximate Instructional Time: 1 week in November and 2-3 weeks in March

Unit Description: All Grade 9 students in the Brandon School Division participate in a one day “on the job” experiences during “Take Our Kids To Work Day” in November. They will also be given the opportunity to participate in Brandon’s Career Symposium in March. Students will create an employability portfolio and resume, and will participate in interview training. Career education will take place throughout both semesters.

Evaluation: Inquiry Process (research and library skills)
TOKTW Day assignment
Resume and Skills assignments
Career Symposium Poster assignment
Employability Portfolio

**Unit 4: The Forbidden City Novel Study**

Approximate Instructional Time: 4-5 weeks

Unit Description: Students will be involved in an in-depth study of the novel *The Forbidden City* by William Bell, which is set in China. Though the characters are fictional, the story portrays a very realistic account of the
Tiananmen Square Massacre. Students will regularly complete chapter questions in order to assess the level of comprehension as we read the novel. Throughout the duration of this unit, class discussion will cover topics such as Chinese culture, communism, war, tolerance, and freedom of speech. We will also be viewing the film Hotel Rwanda, and investigating human rights violations around our contemporary world.

**Evaluation:**
- Character Study
- Elements of Fiction Analysis
- Literary Analysis Essay

**Unit 5: Media & Persuasion**

**Approximate Instructional Time:** 3-4 weeks

**Unit Description:** Adolescents are avid consumers of media, but they must learn the techniques and conventions of the various media with which they are inundated every day in order to become more conscious, discerning, critical, and appreciative readers and viewers. Using various forms of media (newspapers, television, magazines, films), students will examine the role that media plays in our society. Students will focus on the five writing variables: Audience, Purpose, Form, Context, and Central Idea. Using the various forms of media, students will consider and discuss opinions and meanings behind the forms while exploring the various tactics employed by the creators to deliver and persuade an audience in the direction of the author’s purpose. Some examples for students to consider will include advertising, speeches, and documentaries. Students will have ample opportunity to reflect on their own opinions, express their thoughts, and respond (both orally and in written form) to the opinions of the authors and their peers.

**Evaluation:**
- Infomercial
- Media Collection and Personal Responses
- Commercial Form Analysis
- “These Aren't the Droids You’re Looking For” Stereotype assignment

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**Unit 6: The Hobbit Novel Study**

**Approximate Instructional Time:** 5-6 weeks

**Unit Description:** Students will be involved in an in-depth study of the novel The Hobbit by J.R.R. Tolkien, which is set in the fictional world of Middle Earth. Students will follow Bilbo Baggins, hobbit and reluctant burglar, on his quest to help rid the ancestral home of the dwarves from a dragon. Bilbo's experiences and new found skills will be recorded, in resume form, and interpreted, during a job interview, by students, so that in the future Bilbo will be able to get a job he wants, not unexpected ones. Students will also explore the similarities and differences between textual and audio/visual forms of literature through trying to faithfully recreate sections of the book as videos and examining the recent feature film adaptations of The Hobbit in light of the text, as well as their video interpretations.

**Evaluation:**
- Hobbit Uncut Video
- Movie Analysis and Comparison
- Resume
- Job Interview

**Unit 7: Introducing... The Bard!**

**Approximate Instructional Time:** 8 weeks

**Unit Description:** A familiar story from long ago and far, far away will be used to introduce students to Shakespearean language and devices. Students will explore the life and works of William Shakespeare, with
particular emphasis on his comedic play, *Twelfth Night*. Students will examine the complexity of the language of this time and the themes of romance, young love, and conflict. Students will participate in dramatic reading, summarizing and reinterpreting the play through modern social media, acting, and a comparative analysis of the film version of the play.

**Evaluation:**
- Twitter Character Study
- Film Study
- Act Summary Video/Skit

**Unit 8: Mythology and Storytelling**

**Approximate Instructional Time:** 4 weeks

**Unit Description:** Students will undergo a journey into the world of mythology covering First Nations, Greek, and Norse cultures. They will experience storytelling firsthand, learn about the use of ceremonial masks, and analyze metaphors hidden in “the moral of the story”. Through this unit, students will come to understand the role that mythology played in societies past, and the impact of mythology on our literature throughout the centuries.

**Evaluation:**
- Myth Anthology
- Storytelling Circle

**Unit 0: Individual Novel Study**

**Approximate Instructional Time:** Throughout each semester

**Unit Description:** Each semester, students will complete an individual novel study. This unit is designed to allow students the opportunity to read a novel of their choice and respond to various literary aspects. Students will be allowed 10-15 minutes of silent reading at the beginning of every class, but they are also expected to read their individual novel at home in order to not fall behind. Each Friday, a portion of the class will be spent working on their novel study projects, which include journal entries and a creative representation. These assignments must be completed and handed in three weeks prior to the end of each semester.

**Evaluation:**
- Journal Entries
- Choice Project
- Literary Essay

**Final Assessment**

Grade 9 students will take part in a school-wide assessment.  **15%**

**Classroom Expectations and Guidelines**

Welcome to Vincent Massey and welcome to my classroom. Like you, this is my first year here. I look forward to learning alongside you and working with you this year. The following are my expectations and guidelines for this course. In making them clear here, I hope to prevent future misunderstandings and disagreements, and, most importantly, help ensure your success.

I am committed to working hard to give all my students the best chance of success, but I am only a small part in your ongoing education. The person who has the greatest say in your education is YOU. Through working together we can achieve our common goal.

It is important that you know I have high expectations for our class. I expect us to work hard and push ourselves to improve. Our classroom will be characterized by mutual respect: we will treat everyone, classmates, teachers
and guests, with kindness and courtesy. We will respect one another’s right to a safe and positive learning environment.

As mentioned in the Brandon School Division’s Student Responsibility Guidelines for Assessment and Evaluation unfinished assignments will receive a zero. I do not want to give anyone a zero, but I do expect you to complete and hand in your assignments by the due date. All due dates will be calculated to give you ample time to complete each assignment. Also, while not every assignment counts towards your final grade, every assignment I give is meaningful. For example, if you do not write a practice essay, you get no feedback on it and will not develop the skills necessary to do well on the final essay. However, unforeseen circumstances do arise and extensions can be arranged if you discuss it with me prior to the due date. You can expect the same from me; I will mark and return your assignments in a timely fashion, and provide frequent and relevant feedback and assessment.

Regular, punctual attendance is essential in this course, since the process is as important as the final product. Regular attendance not only maximizes your own opportunities for success, but also shows respect to your classmates by minimizing distractions and interruptions in their learning experience. I expect you to be in class, ready to learn, on time. If you are absent from class, a binder of extra handouts is in the classroom and it is your responsibility to get what you’ve missed and come to me as soon as possible for instructions, extra information, etcetera.

I will be using Remind 101 to communicate reminders, any changes, and important information with you. Remind 101 is a free service that sends text messages or emails anonymously from teachers to students. No personal information, like phone numbers and email addresses, are visible to either party. A page on how to sign up to this class is attached. If you sign up for text messages, be aware that standard text messaging rates apply. I recommend those that do not have an unlimited text message service sign up for email alerts.

If you have any questions or find yourself confused with an assignment or idea presented in class, please let me know, either in person or through email, and we can make arrangements to meet. I am very happy to come early, meet you at lunch or stay late to give you the help that you require. Once again, my goal in this class is the same as yours: to have you succeed.

**PARENTS:**
If at any time you have questions about your son’s or daughter’s progress, please do not hesitate to contact me at school (204-729-3170) or email (letkeman.tyler@bsd.ca). If you would like to receive the Remind 101 alerts to keep up with what is happening in the course feel free to sign up as well. After reviewing this page with your child, please sign the portion below and have them return it to me tomorrow. Please feel free to add any comments you feel to be appropriate. Thank you.

____________________________________  ____________________________
Student’s Name                                      Parent’s Signature
How to sign up for Mr. Letkeman's Eng10A messages:

To receive messages via text, text @mrletk to (204) 800-5954. You can opt-out of messages at anytime by replying, 'unsubscribe @mrletk'.

Or to receive messages via email, send an email to mrletk@mail.remind101.com. To unsubscribe, reply with 'unsubscribe' in the subject line.

WHAT IS REMIND101 AND WHY IS IT SAFE?
Remind101 is a one-way text messaging and email system. With Remind101, all personal information remains completely confidential. Teachers will never see your phone number, nor will you ever see theirs.
Visit www.remind101.com to learn more.