

# Eighth Grade English

## Overview for Parents

**Teacher:** Steven Glazer

**Goals:** In English 8 we continue mastering the fine arts of close reading, deep listening, thoughtful analysis, clear writing, and articulate speech. Our essential question for the school year is "What is justice?" In consideration of this question we read *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *Night*, *Animal Farm*, *Life of Pi*, *A Tale of Two Cities*, "Letter from Birmingham City Jail," excerpts from the Kabbalah, the New Testament, the Quran, the Bhagavad Gita, and other texts.

**Schedule** English classes meet four times each week. Each class is broken into two parts, a preliminary and main lesson. The preliminary sequence is as follows:

**Monday:** Vocabulary – Led by Magistra Lechner  
**Tuesday:** Grammar  
**Thursday:** Poetics & Rhetoric  
**Friday:** Spelling

**Readings** The main lessons are rooted in our study of literature. We read novels, plays, short stories, poems, essays, and speeches. Novels include: *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *Night*, *Animal Farm*, and *A Tale of Two Cities*. We will read and perform scenes from *Twelfth Night* by William Shakespeare. A short story unit in the spring includes "The Garden Party" by Katherine Mansfield, "Why I Live at the P.O." by Eudora Welty, "God Sees the Truth but Waits" by Leo Tolstoy, and "Dr. Heidegger's Experiment" by Nathaniel Hawthorne. As students begin composing their graduation speeches, we read a number of essays, speeches, and memoirs, including Martin Luther King's "Letter from Birmingham City Jail," and Maya Angelou's "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings."

### Spelling/Vocabulary Goals

1. Understand new words associated with assigned readings.
2. Use words introduced in the vocabulary book and in readings in daily work.
3. Understand and apply spelling rules and edit work for spelling errors.

### Grammar/Mechanics/Usage Goals

1. Understand sentence structure, paragraph construction, and the citing of sources.
2. Understand punctuation, including the use of apostrophes, colons, italics, parentheses, semicolons, and quotation marks.
3. Understand rules governing usage: subject/verb agreement, using verbs and pronouns, and making appropriate word choices when speaking or writing.

### Literature Goals

1. Read and understand a variety of genres including poetry, plays, essays, stories, & novels.
2. Develop the vocabulary and conceptual framework required to examine and discuss significant literary works.
3. Develop the ability to respond to a variety of textual questions, including factual, interpretive, evaluative, and stylistic.
4. Understand how each literature selection connects to its historical context.

### Composition Goals

1. Understand and use the writing process effectively to construct essays.
2. Understand a variety of purposes of writing.
3. Practice writing expository, narrative, and persuasive essays, analytical research papers, and the Crossroads Academy graduation speech.

### Oral Speaking Goals

1. Understand how to make effective classroom presentations.
2. Understand the basic elements of rhetoric and how to deliver a formal speech.
3. Understand how to present dramatic readings and speak in character.
4. Understand how to participate civilly and productively in classroom discussions.

### Expectations for Students

1. Work needs to be written neatly and headed appropriately.
2. Papers need to be kept and filed appropriately in the English notebook. Notebooks will be checked periodically.
3. Students need to read independently in addition to completing their daily work.
4. Daily preparation and participation are essential components of the classroom experience and therefore will comprise a significant portion of the final grade. The grade breakdown is as follows: grammar, 12.5%; spelling, 12.5%; vocabulary, 12.5%; composition, 25%; literature, 25%; participation, 12.5%. Late homework will lose a letter grade per each late day. Missing homework will result in a zero.
5. Students will maintain a high standard of scholarship and behavior by:
  - a. Treating others as they would like to be treated
  - b. Being respectful when others speak
  - c. Coming to class prepared
  - d. Using class time well
  - e. Being responsible for one's own work

### Homework Requirements:

1. A homework listing for the week is given so that the students may plan their home time around their other commitments. This weekly sheet can be found on my Crossroads Academy web page.
2. Students should not be spending more than an *average* of thirty minutes per night on English.
3. Parents should inform me if students consistently require more than thirty minutes to accomplish the homework.

### Contacting the Teacher

I am happy to discuss your child's progress with you at anytime. I am always available by e-mail at [steve.glazer@crossroadsacademy.org](mailto:steve.glazer@crossroadsacademy.org) or by phone. During the day, I can be reached at Crossroads Academy at (603) 795-3111 extension 211. You may also call me during the evening at (802) 785 - 2415.

