

## 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Language Arts with Mrs. Steffen

**Description:** In language arts at the fifth grade level, we will focus on strongly developing students' reading comprehension and writing skills. This year students will be reading many books individually, in small groups, and as a class. The goal of the reading program is for students to grow in their ability to read independently, fluently, and accurately, and to comprehend the text at grade level. Students will be using their life experiences and their reading notes and reflections to create essays for the writing workshop. We will spend much time planning, piecing together, drafting, and publishing their writing. The writing goal is for students to sustain writing for longer periods of time and learn how to develop their writing creatively and professionally.

### Curriculum:

- *On-demand writing assessments:* At the beginning of a unit, students will be asked to write "on-demand" without reminders or help. This is purely formative assessment – a way for me to learn what the students already know about a specific type of writing
- *Reading workshop:* Students will learn to read to self for up to 30 minutes at a time, writing "short" (notes) and "long" (reflection) as they read
- *Writing workshop:* Students will work on writing independently and for up to 30 minutes at a time during a class period and sometimes at home. These writing pieces, along with the writing notes from literature, will be used to gather ideas, plan, piece together, and draft in genres such as narrative, argumentative, informational or expository, and research-based essays.
- *Mini-Lessons:* My teaching will consist mostly of mini-lessons to help students learn skills for reading comprehension and writing effectively.

### Grading:

- I will keep anecdotal records and use on-demand writing assessments to check students' mastery of the core standards. This will be used to determine students' literacy goals.
- Students will be given 1-2 short assignments per week to review and assess the mini-lessons learned in class.
- Students will keep a writing journal and will be assigned writing pieces to help develop students' writing professionalism.

*"Maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose..."*  
*Philippians 2:2*

*Looking forward to a great year!*

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### *A Note About Writing Assignments*

*Parents often ask how much help they are able to give students with writing. My answer is that it depends on the type of writing we are doing. The following notes should help clarify my expectations.*

- **On-demand writing assessments:** These will be completed in class and will be used for my teaching purposes only; they will not be graded.
- **Writing Workshop Drafts:** Students will work on these drafts during class, but occasionally they will need to work on these at home. I ask that parents let students do this drafting independently. Parents may feel free to answer questions or help with spelling, grammar, or sentence structure, but the ideas and actual writing should be the students' own work.
- **Writing Workshop Published Pieces:** Students will work on these essays both in class and at home. If a draft has already been checked and graded by me, I welcome parents to help students with revision. This usually includes reading through the notes and comments on the old draft and revising for a finished, "published" draft.
- **ISTEP+ Preparation essays:** Two or three times a year students will be writing to a prompt similar to what is asked of them on the ISTEP+ test. This will usually be done in class, but if a student is absent and needs to do this at home, please be sure this is done independently. This may also take two days, and often we type these drafts on Google Docs, which is accessible from home. I ask that students not work on these ISTEP+ essays at home if they were in class to do the work.

**Student's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent's Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_