

English Language Arts 8 Course Outline

Windsor Secondary



Aboriginal Mural Art – Victoria, BC

Intention: It is our hope that students connect with our community of storytellers and thinkers while learning about themselves, each other, and the world we inhabit. In this course we encourage students to share their stories and ideas in a variety of ways and to acquire a continuing appreciation for the stories and ideas of others. Students learn how and why stories and thoughts are organized and shared while developing a greater proficiency with the five skills of language arts: reading, writing, listening, speaking, and viewing.

Competencies – Skills And Processes

1. Students will access information and ideas for diverse purposes and from a variety of sources and evaluate their relevance, accuracy, and reliability.
2. When encountering and composing a variety of written, visual, and spoken works, students will use multiple strategies and processes to determine the following in each case:
 - Does the work meet its purpose?
 - Is there a relationship between content and form?
 - Is it meaningful?
 - Does it contribute to an understanding of self and others?
 - Does it adhere to the features, structures and conventions of the English language?

Big Ideas

Language and Stories are sources of creativity and joy.

Stories and other texts help us understand ourselves and others.

People understand stories and texts differently depending on their worldviews and perspectives; stories and texts are socially, culturally, and historically constructed.

Questioning what we hear, read, and view contributes to our ability to be educated and engaged with the world.

Themes/Focus Areas

Human nature, personal journeys, and identity

Collective wisdom, inspiration, entertainment

Individuals and their societies

Interrelationship of a work's author, audience, content and form

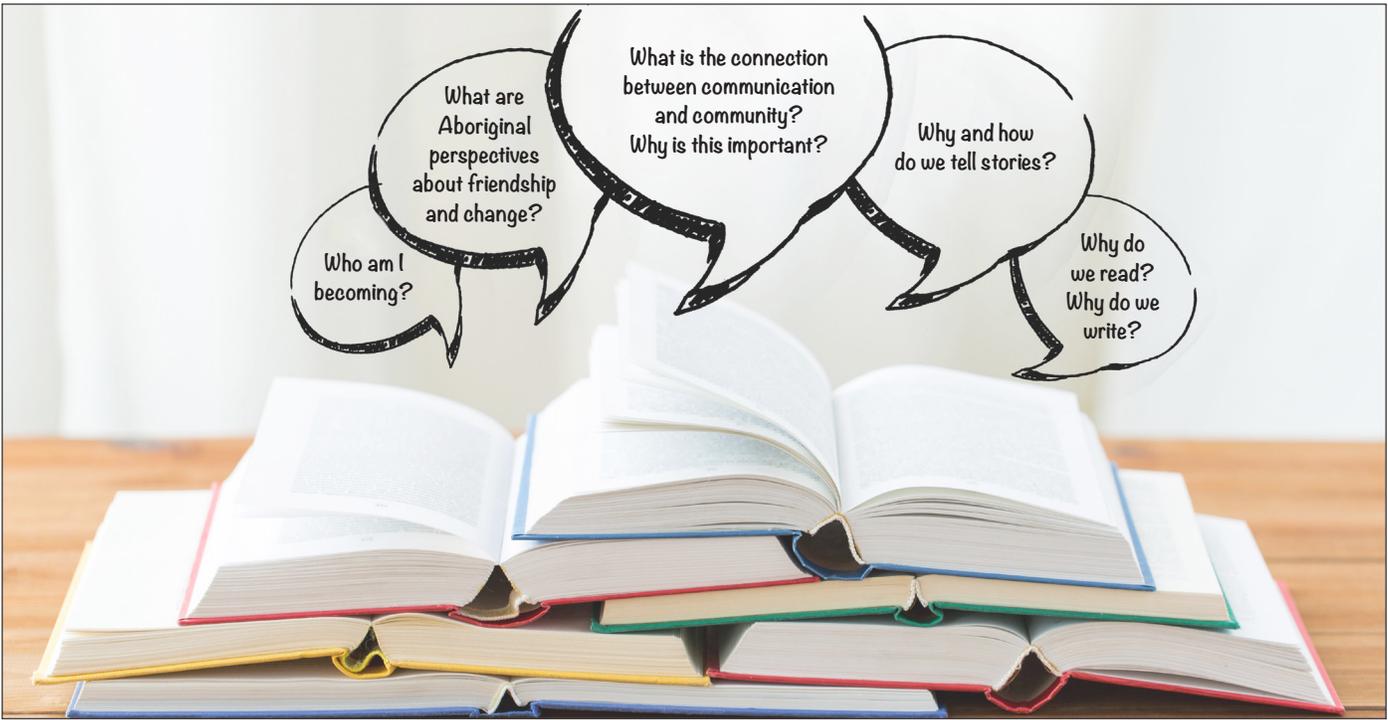
The Big Ideas provide some focus areas and themes for our course, and help explain some of the reasons why Language Arts is important. At the heart of our course are the questions **“Where do I belong?”** **“What is friendship?”** and **“What is community?”** along with our exploration of how the Big Ideas relate to the formation, expression, and influence of individuals in their societies. To do this we practice skills and processes called Competencies – analyzing, interpreting, and composing fiction, non-fiction, and poetry – and use these Competencies to both generate and answer questions that are personally, socially, and culturally important. We make as many contemporary and personal connections as possible to the literature we study.

That is part of the beauty of all literature. You discover that your longings are universal longings, that you're not lonely and isolated from anyone. You belong.

— F. Scott Fitzgerald

School-Wide Goals

At Windsor we aspire to be a vibrant learning community where individuals respect and encourage one another to develop the competencies needed for our rapidly changing world. We strive to foster critical thinking and compassionate, educated citizenship.



They grew up on the outside of society. They weren't looking for a fight. They were looking to belong.

— S. E. Hinton, *The Outsiders*

Course Expectations

Students will participate with a few codes in mind:

- mutual respect – treating students, teacher, and learning space with dignity, safety, calmness, and joy
- self-reliance – taking responsibility for one's actions, attendance, work habits, expected workload, deadlines, and progress
- balance – acknowledging there is a suitable time in class for everything: attention to teacher, students, groups, self – talking, listening, laughing, writing and reflecting
- curiosity – asking thoughtful questions of one's self, teacher, and classmates, and asking for help when it's needed.

Technology: Cell phones, tablets, etc. can be great learning tools for collaboration, research, and composition. They can also draw students away from the classwork, teacher, and other students. There will be times when gadgets will be encouraged, and times when they must be put away.

In exchange for students heeding these expectations your teacher will work to make the class time positive and productive, minimize homework, and keep the focus on critical thinking, meaningful connections, and strong learning about our topics.

English Classroom Policy

Notebook: Students will keep a neat notebook, organized appropriately for the course work.

Plagiarism: Plagiarize (verb) – *to take and use as one's own the thoughts, writings, inventions, etc. of another; especially, to take and use a passage, plot, etc. from the work of another writer. Plagiarism is theft.* At Windsor, plagiarism also occurs if one uses the same material in more than one subject area without the teacher's permission, or if one uses another student's work, even with that student's permission. A significant portion of evaluation is based on the writing process. Therefore, all rough work and drafts must be available upon request. Hard copies of intermediate drafts must be printed. The penalty for plagiarism will be a mark of "0" and the assignment cannot be redone.

Approximate Timeframe

- 25-35% Oral Language (Speaking and Listening)
- 35-50% Reading and Viewing
- 30-45% Writing and Representing

"Where do I belong?"

"What is friendship?"

"What is community?"