Dear Families,

Welcome to your eighth grade Humanities ELA class! We are excited about our plans this year, and we look forward to working with you. This year we hope to support our students' development as critical readers and writers through multiple opportunities for them to engage with a variety of texts. By the end of this school year, our students will be prepared to enter high school with the skills they need in order to be successful, insightful readers and writers.

In this initial unit students will examine a variety of literary texts, considering the profound and dynamic tension between the needs of the people in the text—the characters—and the great and powerful forces of the time and society in which they live. The goal is for students to learn that successful readers of literary texts think about their personal connections to a text while also considering the significance of the context in which the text is situated. This approach will help to position our young readers to situate their analysis of characters, plot, setting, and theme within the real world.

This unit establishes the level of rigor for the year by challenging the way students think about the ideas of what causes they stand for, what wars or revolutions are worth fighting, and what freedom means to them and those around them. They will begin the unit with a brief look into poetry and drama that deals with various causes worth fighting for, such as social injustice. Students will then choose and read novels in literature circles. Finally, they will delve into their project of writing their own short story over a past or present social issue. These will be submitted to the district's short story contest.

We encourage you to speak with your students about what they are reading, writing, and learning in class. Please be sure to review your student's performance via Skyward Access, and contact his or her teacher if you have any questions or concerns. We look forward to working with you this year!

Respectfully,

EMS-ISD 8th Grade ELAR Teachers