



EAGLE MOUNTAIN SAGINAW ISD

Fostering a Culture of Excellence

Dear Families,

Welcome to your final middle school English Language Arts and Reading (ELAR) 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 the workshop model in both reading and writing. 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 in their high school English classes.

Our ELAR TEKS, the foundation of our curriculum, ask students to engage in reading, writing, listening, speaking, and thinking in an integrated, recursive way. Additionally, students will no longer have a textbook in their middle school ELAR classroom; rather, they will have access to a classroom library of grade-appropriate texts to further their engagement as 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.

At the beginning of this grading period, all eighth grade ELAR students in EMS-ISD will have a pre-assessment that addresses their knowledge of fictional story elements and their ability to write about what they read. During this six weeks, students will create an open-ended response to a literary work that states a valid claim, sites meaningful evidence, and provides ample reasoning to support and extend the claim. This will prepare them for the assessment that will be administered at the end of the unit. The writing component of the final six week assessment will be graded using a common standards-based rubric. Teachers will use these assessments to drive instructional decisions and measure growth in reading and writing over the course of the year. Moreover, these assessments create an opportunity for teachers to evaluate their students' ability to transfer the skills that have been taught when students read and write independently. Ultimately, this makes them better writers and readers.

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