

# Junior High English Language Arts Course Outline/ Communication Plan



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## To My Students and Those Who Love Them,

Welcome to Junior High English Language Arts!

Our goal in ELA is to help students become confident, thoughtful communicators who can read, write, speak, and listen effectively in a variety of contexts. Throughout the year, students will explore diverse texts and perspectives, collaborate with peers, reflect on their learning, and develop the skills needed to communicate clearly and creatively.

Our classes are structured using a workshop model that encourages active participation and gradual skill development. Most classes follow this format:

- Time to Teach (10–15 minutes): Introduction of a skill, strategy, or concept.
- Time to Practice (25–30 minutes): Independent, partner, or small-group application.
- Time to Share and Reflect (10–15 minutes): Discussion, reflection, and goal setting.

## Reading Workshop

Reading Workshop provides students with opportunities to strengthen their reading comprehension, critical thinking, and literacy skills through individual, small-group, and whole-class activities. Students will read a variety of texts and will have regular time for independent reading. Books may be selected from the school library, classroom library, the Sora app, or brought from home.

## Writing Workshop

Writing Workshop focuses on developing students' writing skills through the full writing process, including brainstorming, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. Students will create a variety of written pieces throughout the year and will submit final drafts through Google Classroom.

## Speaking and Listening

Speaking and listening skills are integrated throughout both Reading and Writing Workshops. Students will participate in discussions, presentations, collaborative learning activities, and reflective conversations designed to strengthen their communication skills and confidence as speakers and listeners.

**Learning Resources:**

Novels, Poems, Advertisements, Websites, Blogs, Short Stories, Videos, Short Clips, News Articles, Documentaries, Picture Books, Magazines, Plays, Cartoons, Interviews, Speeches.

**Potential units of study, (not limited to):**

<u>Grade 8</u> Narrative Fiction and Nonfiction Writing Conventions and Grammar Informational and Expository Texts Persuasive and Argument Writing Poetry Workshop Media Literacy Book Club and Novel Studies	<u>Grade 9</u> Narrative Nonfiction and Fiction Identity Inquiry Unit Poetry Workshop Media Literacy Novel Study Literary Analysis Essay Writing	<p><i>These units are subject to change as student interest/engagement will steer the direction this course can take.</i></p>
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**Provincial Achievement Levels, (as reported on Gradebook/Powerschool):**

Achievement Level	Description
4	In-depth knowledge and understanding of content and concepts. Able to extend the application of related skills.
3+	Competent +
3	Competent knowledge and understanding of content and concepts. Appropriate application of the related skills.
2+	Developing +
2	Developing knowledge and understanding of content and concepts. Developing in the application of the related skills.
1+	Limited +
1	Limited knowledge and understanding of content and concepts. Limited application of related skills.

**Course Outcomes:**

**The Nova Scotia English Language Arts 8 Curriculum contains 6 outcomes. Throughout the year, students will be assessed in each of them.**

Learners will:

- reflect on how the cultures of communities, inclusive of Mi'kmaq, Acadians, African Nova Scotians, and the Gaels, are expressed through a range of communication forms.
- comprehend a range of communication forms using listening strategies, reading strategies, and viewing strategies.
- plan oral, written, and visual personal and critical responses, in relation to audience and purpose.
- create oral, written, and visual communication forms for a range of audiences and purposes.
- analyse the accuracy, reliability, validity and bias in a range of written, audio, visual, and digital communication forms.
- implement speaking and writing strategies for effective communication in relation to audience and purpose.

**\*Provincial Assessment:** Grade 8 students will have a scheduled Reading, Writing and Mathematics 8 Assessment. The assessment is a provincial assessment that is administered to all students who live in Nova Scotia. This assessment takes place during the month of May and into June. The students will be prepared for this provincial assessment during the course of the year, and all of the preparation for this assessment counts toward their term grade. This assessment is evaluated by the province and parents/guardians can expect results during the following school year sometime in first term.

**The Nova Scotia English Language Arts 9 curriculum contains 9 outcomes. Throughout the year, students will be assessed in each of them.**

Learners will:

- speak and listen to explore, extend, clarify, and reflect on their thoughts, ideas, feelings, and experiences communicate information and ideas effectively and clearly, and to respond personally and critically
- interact with sensitivity and respect, considering the situation, audience, and purpose
- select, read, and view with understanding a range of literature, information, media, and visual texts
- interpret, select, and combine information using a variety of strategies, resources, and technologies
- respond personally to a range of texts
- respond critically to a range of texts, applying their understanding of language, form, and genre
- use writing and other ways of representing to explore, clarify, and reflect on their thoughts, feelings, experiences, and learnings; and to use their imagination
- create texts collaboratively and independently, using a variety of forms for a range of audiences and purposes
- use a range of strategies to develop effective writing and other ways of representing and to enhance their clarity, precision, and effectiveness

**For Grade 9: Exam (10% of Final Grade for the course)**

- The exam will focus more on the students skill set in English Language Arts and their application of these skills rather than their memorization of course content. It will involve comprehension and critical analysis of various texts as well as different forms of writing. Students are prepared for this exam throughout the semester.

**Assessment and Evaluation:**

Students will be evaluated based on outcome achievement. The teacher may use professional judgment when considering the student's learning over time and will consider more recent student work. Students will be provided with multiple opportunities to demonstrate their progress toward achievement of outcomes.

ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING is the day-to-day feedback given to students on their progress with a certain outcome. No formal grade is given for assessment FOR learning. Its intention is to prepare students for any evaluations and assessment OF learning to come, as well as to inform future teacher instruction.

ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING comes in the form of products, assignments, presentations, tests, etc. where the level of student's understanding of certain outcomes taught is assessed. With assessment OF learning, a formal grade is given.

It is important to note that assessment, whether it be OF or FOR learning, will be occurring frequently, and that a variety of assessment tools will be used. Some examples of possible assessment tools are: written assignments/projects, posters, tests, observations, oral presentations, class participation, self/peer assessments.

## **Expectations for Success**

All students are capable of success in Junior High English Language Arts. To support a positive and productive learning environment, students are expected to:

- Treat themselves, their peers, staff, and school property with respect.
- Contribute to an inclusive classroom where discriminatory or disrespectful comments are not tolerated.
- Come to class prepared to learn, with writing materials, a reading book, and a writing journal.
- Engage fully in learning and work toward their educational and personal goals.

## **Recognition and Support**

Students who are meeting expectations and staying on track for learning will receive positive recognition, praise, and, when appropriate, communication home through phone calls or emails.

When students are off track for learning, support will be provided through a progressive process: a cue or reminder, a warning, and then a conference to develop a plan for improvement. If concerns continue, communication with home may occur. In cases where additional intervention is needed, a referral to the office and parent/guardian contact may be made.

## **Opportunities for Success:**

Respecting the learning environment.

Participating in all class learning.

Completing assigned work.

Self-advocating when help is needed.

Problem solving when challenges arise.

Being a supportive peer to classmates.

## **Late Assignments**

I understand that unexpected situations and circumstances can arise, and there may be times when assignments are submitted late. When there is a valid reason, flexibility and support will be provided. Students are encouraged to plan ahead and manage their time so that assignments can be completed by the due date whenever possible.

When an assignment is not submitted on time, the following process will be used:

- An alternative due date will be established, and parents/guardians may be contacted.
- If the alternative due date is not met and no explanation has been provided, a temporary mark of 1 may be entered until the work is submitted.

## **Missed Class:**

When students are absent, it is their responsibility to catch up on missed learning and assignments. Students should:

1. Check Google Classroom for posted materials and assignments.
2. Connect with a classmate to gather notes or information about missed lessons.
3. Arrange a time to meet with me if additional clarification or support is needed.

Extra support time will be available upon request.

## **Extra Help and Support for Missing or Late Work**

Students will always have opportunities to receive additional help, whether during lunch, by appointment, or through scheduled support times. These opportunities can be used to clarify learning, complete missing work, or receive assistance with assignments.

Extra help is intended for students who are making a genuine effort in class and actively working toward completing their responsibilities.

## **Academic Integrity and Responsible Use of Sources**

Learning to use sources responsibly is an important part of becoming a successful student, both in high school and beyond. Students are expected to submit original work and to properly acknowledge any ideas, words, images, or information that come from another source.

Plagiarism, including copying another person's work or presenting someone else's ideas as one's own, is taken seriously. If plagiarism occurs, the assignment may receive a mark of zero. However, because learning is our primary goal, students may be given an opportunity to redo the assignment for a passing grade if they can demonstrate that the plagiarism was unintentional and are willing to learn from the experience.

Throughout the course, students will receive instruction and support in how to cite sources correctly, avoid plagiarism, and use research responsibly. Students will also learn how to use artificial intelligence (AI) tools ethically and appropriately as supports for learning, while ensuring that all submitted work reflects their own thinking and understanding.

## **Communication**

Student progress will be communicated throughout the year via telephone calls home and/or emails as well as updates to PowerSchool Gradebook. Once per term, progress will also be communicated via a report card and parent-teacher interviews.

Parents and guardians can contact me with any questions and concerns at (902) 889-4300, ext. 1702203 or [abigger@hrce.ca](mailto:abigger@hrce.ca).

**I look forward to a year of learning, growth, and literacy exploration with you!  
Let's have a successful year together!**