**Creative, Performing, and Media Arts Middle School**

**“BE THE CHANGE”**

**Sixth Grade English**

**Course Syllabus 2019-2020**

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**Room: 102**

**Students and Parents:**

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| **2017-2018 6th Grade English “At-a-Glance”** | | | |
| ***Grading Period 1*** | ***Grading Period 2*** | ***Grading Period 3*** | ***Grading Period 4*** |
| **NARRATIVE** | **ANALYZING LITERATURE** | **RESEARCH**  **(EXPOSITORY)** | **ARGUMENT/**  **PERSUASION** |
| *Summative Assessment:*  **Writing a Narrative** | *Summative Assessment*:  **Writing a Literary Essay** | *Summative Assessment:*  **Writing a Research Essay** | *Summative Assessment*:  **Writing a Persuasive Essay/PSA** |
| *Umbrella Themes*:   * Building Character * Hero’s Journey * Coming of Age | *Umbrella Themes*:   * Social Responsibility * Multiple Cultural Perspectives * Tolerance | *Umbrella Themes*:   * Cultural Conflict * Ethical Conflict * Technological Conflict | *Umbrella Themes*:   * Social Justice * Environment * Identity |

**Please monitor PowerSchool for information on specific assignments and assessments. Assignments include specific descriptions regarding all assignment expectations.**

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**I. Course Description:**

This course promotes sophistication and critical thinking at the middle school level to engage students in analyzing, evaluating, and critiquing grade level appropriate texts. This course will also develop students understanding of higher-order thinking, expository writing, research techniques, grammar skills, and vocabulary.

**II. Course Content, or, Units of Study (*Taught within Reading, Writing, Listening, and Speaking Workshops)*:**

* *There will be additional Mini-Units of Study embedded into the curriculum throughout the year, which may include some or all of the following: a Test Prep Unit, Verbal Presentation, Shakespeare, Film Study/Review, Public Service Announcement, Poetry, Functional Documents, etc…*
* CPMA has four 9-week quarters, and each grading period focuses on various themes within a major unit of study:

**III. Course Materials *(The following materials must be brought to class EVERY day. Students are marked down on their preparedness grade each day they do not have an English notebook or independent reading novel)*:**

* Black and White or Colored Cover Composition English Notebook.
* An Independent Reading Book and a Back-Up Reading Book. Proficient reading is the goal of this course, and as such, books are the heart of this course. Without bringing reading materials every day, students cannot progress properly through the curriculum. Books, the fundamental tools for success, are simply a must have on a daily basis. Every day, students will be monitored for being prepared with a book, back-up book, and notebook.
* Writing Utensils. Preferably a pen, or pencils sharpened by the beginning of class. Students should come prepared with multiple writing utensils every day of school.
* Folder: Reserved for English class materials.
* Post-It Notes. These are provided to the student as much as possible during the year based upon availability, but please remember that it is important for a student to have his or her own back-up supply. ***Students that donate a bulk amount of post-it notes will receive extra-credit for their generosity and/or an enhanced citizenship grade.***

**IV. Course Polices *(Important General Information to Remember)*:**

* Line-up outside before being invited into classroom
* Sharpen pencils before the bell rings
* Must be reading (or writing in English notebook) in seat by time bell rings. **This is a 6th grade hallway expectation, for all classrooms**
* You may not get up without permission
* Only allowed to have one book checked-out from my library at a time, but may be reading as many books at one time as you’d like (school library is always accessible)
* Keep English notebook organized as instructed
* Must read *at least* 30-45 minutes every night, preferably more, including your **Reading Plus** responsibilities
* Keep notebooks as neat and organized as possible
* Must complete all assigned homework (please see planner for assigned homework on a daily basis). Please monitor grades on PowerSchool on a weekly basis (and always in Homeroom)
* For a good participation grade, must raise hand and talk during lessons
* If released for a break in between class periods, must be back ready to work by end of passing period, or privilege to leave for breaks will be revoked
* Unless otherwise informed, all final drafts of major writing or reading assessments are required to be typed. Specific format will be provided. Students will have plenty of advance notice of each due date for each final writing project. We will most likely be using class laptops to write all of our final drafts, but students are responsible of a typed final writing product regardless

**V. Assignments *(Assignments include Notebook Entries, Independent Reading/Post-It work, and Final Essay Drafts)*:**

All assignments are due on the date given withno exceptions (except for lengthy absences). Please arrange an absence contract for excused absences if student will be absent for 5 or more days. All final due dates for final writing and reading assessments are given plenty of time in advance of actual due dates. Final writing assignments should be typed in 12pt. font in the standard print font of “Times New Roman”. Students may have access to computers for typing final assignments if they request to use them with plenty of advance notification, or they may have access to the school’s computer labs and the library, although ample time will be provided in class to complete all summative assessments. We will be using Google Classroom to submit electronic work. Requests to use computers during lunch must be made in advance. Not handing in a typed final paper because a computer is not available at home is not a sufficient excuse for not completing final assessments. Disks or flash drives may also be used, and work may be sent via email in certain situations, but an essay typed and printed IN CLASS itself is ideal.

***2 of the Main Keys to Success: Posty Booklets (Independent Reading Work), and Reading Plus (Our Online Reading Program)***

***Posty Booklets***:

It is very important to monitor the amount of reading students are accomplishing. Post-it notes (*postys*) will be used as a meta-cognitive tool to help assess this; they will be used whenever a student is independently reading during class or at home. Whenever a student is reading, they should be writing about what reading strategies they are using to make better sense of their books on the postys. Specific instructions will be given for how to use them within the first few weeks of school, can be found in student notebooks, and when a student completes a book they will put all the notes together to construct a “Posty Booklet”, which they will then submit for credit. These play a major role in Sixth Grade English as they provide students with the opportunity to demonstrate their accountability for reading many novels during the course of the year. Post-It work not only provides normal class credit for reading multi-genre texts throughout the year, but also **extra-credit** to students who are reading a superfluous amount of texts. The construction of Posty-Booklets is a strict requirement.

Posty Credit is one of the most significant grades students will receive each of our quarterly 9-week grading periods. Students are asked to use various metacognitive reading strategies during their independent reading in class and at home every night (see Table of Contents in notebook to access models of these strategies). Students are expected to read at least 1 hour every day (about 15 minutes of independent reading in class, on average, and 30-45 at home, or 60 minutes on Saturday and Sunday) this whole year. Although each student is expected to read approximately 3 average-sized books each 9 week grading period, it is understood that students read different size books and at different rates, so book size as well as posty size are also taken into account along with the posty quality and usage of a variety of the strategies that were taught (as well as if unique ones have been adopted). This is a grade that must be worked on for the entire grading period in order for students to be successful when the grade is given at the conclusion of the quarter. Another expectation is that posty booklet quality as well as size shows consistent improvement throughout the year.

***Reading Plus***:

Reading Plus is an ongoing activity for the duration of the school year. The entire school uses this online reading program, and our own data supports the general consensus that if students use this program with fidelity, their reading level will significantly increase. All sixth graders at CPMA are accountable for completing **100 SEEREADER LEVELS** during the year, or 25 per 9-week quarter. Ample time in class will be devoted to the program (approximately one hour per week), and it is recommended that students work on the program outside of school. If a student completes an average of 3 levels per week (which takes on average 1 hour), then they should achieve the maximum number of points available for Reading Plus for a specific quarter, 25 points, a significant amount of points; in order to achieve an A or a B in English class, students must be devoted to not only their independent reading (see below), but Reading Plus completion as well. In computers are not available at home, students must take advantage of the technology available at school, and work on Reading Plus in the library, as well as during Homeroom when study hall is taking place.

Again, students are expected to complete 100 *SeeReader* levels (at 80% success completion or higher) for the year, or 25 *SeeReader* levels per grading period. One level completed at 80% or higher equals 1 point. A large chart will be maintained throughout the year and posted for all students to see, and this chart will be updated once per week so students know precisely how many levels they currently have completed. If a score is listed on PowerSchool under their quarterly Reading Plus grade, it represents their current score for the 25 point assignment; when the conclusion of the quarter arrives students will have one bonus weekend to complete levels, as the online program updates every Monday morning. On the Monday following the conclusion of a quarter, the posted Reading Plus grade is their permanent Reading Plus grade for that quarter.

Students receive about 45-60 minutes of Reading Plus time in class every week, on average, and they are expected to supplement their independent reading and posty homework with Reading Plus homework. It is very important that students remain responsible with keeping up with this online program as it is worth a very significant 25 points and the final grade on this assignment is given only at the end of each grading period; it is advised that students complete about 3 levels per week to keep up with this assignment, A chart in our classroom clearly indicates how many SeeReader levels a student has completed, and they are fully aware that technical issues or lack of technology at home does not excuse the completion of this ongoing task. Students should make arrangements to use our library, a public library, a friend's computer, or a computer during lunchtime in my room (appointments must be made in advance), in order to complete the expected number of levels on-time. Although iBalance and Read Around are highly recommended to increase student reading, writing, and vocabulary levels, these aspects of the program aren't mandated and will not be assessed. The program updates student levels every Monday, and so students actually have a bonus weekend to complete their SeeReaders at the conclusion of each Quarter.

**VI. Late Work**:

We expect all students to honor the due dates.A late assignment will affect your citizenship grade and/or academic grade. However, after one week **no credit** will be given for that late assignment. If absent, it is the **student’s responsibility** to find out what was missed in class and to make up the missing work. Please email me when absent for your missed work.

**VII. Homework:**

**Students *will* have** homework every night **in reading and/or writing,** although it is predominately in ***reading, as well as READING PLUS.*** Students can therefore never say they “have no homework”, although homework will not count for more than 10% of the overall class average. Since they are at least required to read every night and construct post-its, even if no writing homework is given.

**Reading:** Students are always **reading and responding to literature.** The district goal in reading for all middle school students is 1,000,000 words at grade level, per year, or approximately 60 minutes of reading per day in their novel. *Students must read every night for at least 30-45 minutes!* They will be given time in class as much as possible but they will **STRONGLY** benefit from lots of additional reading at home. ***This is one of the most important things a parent can monitor to ensure their child’s success!!!!***

***\*\*\*Student homework will only count for approximately 10% of the student’s over grade, although it is a firm belief that students that practice at home what they learn in school will definitely perform at a higher level. When we are writing compositions and essays, a student’s success will be greatly enhanced if they are completing their assignments at home, so parents, PLEASE help to monitor that homework is being completed. Homework assignments can be found in the student planner under LANGUAGE ARTS.***

**VIII. Grading Policy:**

Students earn their grades by demonstrating proficiency in skills and strategies taught, with reading and writing assessments, as well as online formative assessments. Since reading and writing are processes, both the steps of the process and the final product are evaluated for an academic grade. While the point value for some of the process work may not be equal to the final product, by not completing all of the steps the academic grade can suffer, and likely, a student’s understanding of the skills being taught. Students may receive extra-credit for reading a superfluous amount of books, close to or full credit on the 9-week preparedness grade for being prepared most or all of the time, and possibly donating books to the classroom library (books are accepted with approval from teacher and with great appreciation due to budget cuts). Credit for these 3 things can enhance a student’s overall grade by only 5%-10%, on average. The following marks are used:

**A = 90-100**

**B = 80-89**

**C = 70-79**

**D = 60-69**

**F = 59 and Below**

**IX. Student Behavior *(Students are expected to “Be The Change” by doing the following):***

* Be on time…At CPMA we believe that students should be in their seats, and WORKING, by the time the class bell rings. Students have plenty of time to get to their classes, and although you are not marked tardy if you are not necessarily in their seats at the bell, it is still greatly appreciated so we can start on-time, without distractions
* Be prepared
* Follow directions the first time, without talking back or arguing
* Respect the ideas, opinions and belongings of all peers and adults
* Be polite and courteous to all peers and adults
* Raise hand before speaking
* Have permission before getting out of seat
* Keep hands off other people and their property
* Show academic integrity
* ***Respect and follow the directions of a substitute teacher 100%...disrespect and disobedience to a substitute will not at all be tolerated.***

**X. Participation:**

Daily participation is assessed by the instructor each meeting. Students are expected to actively participate in the learning process. Participation points are earned by contributing to discussions in the meeting area and during all class lessons.

* **There may be occasions during the year when I show a movie (or an excerpt of one), or a 20-minute television show. None of these showings are rated higher than PG-13, and all videos are educational in nature or compliment our curriculum, and are approved and have been deemed appropriate by 99.9% of all parents and guardians for 15 years. If you are in the .1%, by all means, please contact me regarding any concerns so I can find an alternate assignment for your child to complete in lieu.**