



## 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Reading 1 & 2

Instructors: N. Box, J. Weckstein  
Course Description

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### Overview

Welcome to your first intensive secondary level reading course at SLJ! The objectives of this course are to build your skills at textual comprehension, analysis, and response, and to provide an avenue for critical thought and discourse. This course builds its foundation upon the principle that reading is not only one of the most effective ways of gaining and sharing information, but that it can also enrich the reader's life by offering a multitude of perspectives and experiences. As a reader in this course, you will glimpse the difficulties of growing up in foster care, experience the fear of being on trial for murder, struggle through the unfairness of high school peer pressure, encounter the hardship of trying to protect your best friend from himself, and bear the disgrace of being forced into a romantic relationship you do not want. We will explore these and other texts through reflection, writing, discussion, and creative projects.

To be successful in this class requires discipline and dedication. This course is designed to provide you with numerous opportunities to learn and develop, and I strongly believe that every student can excel in this class.

### Course Objectives

The primary objectives of this course are to foster your growth as a lifelong reader, to prepare you for the New York Regents examination, and to equip you with the habits of mind and academic skills you will need to succeed throughout the rest of your high school and later, college, career and beyond. We will achieve this through an individualized independent reading curriculum and through the exploration of shared texts.

If you or your parent/guardian has any questions about the course, please speak to me. Ms. Box can be reached by e-mail at [nbox@sljhs.org](mailto:nbox@sljhs.org) or by phone at 404-791-0711. Mrs. Weckstein can be reached at [jweckstein@sljhs.org](mailto:jweckstein@sljhs.org) or by phone at 646-964-4069.

Sincerely,

Ms. N. Box and Mrs. J. Weckstein

**Required Materials**

In addition to basic school supplies and the supplies required by SLJ, the following materials are necessary for this course. If you are not able to supply these materials, please see me before they are due.

- Two marble composition notebooks (a one-subject book is sufficient)
- Post it Notes (sticky notes – any color)
- A public library card
- One pocket folder (I will provide the first one for you. If you lose it, you'll need to replace it.)

**Grading**

A rubric will be provided to you for each task (homework, quiz, exam, and project) based on the instruction and assignment. Each marking period your grades will be calculated as such:

10%	20%	20%	25%	25%
<b>Professionalism</b> (Attendance, timeliness, dress code, behavior, attitude, personal presentation)	<b>Homework</b> (Notebook assignments, short writing assignments, rough drafts, brainstorm maps, etc.)	<b>Minor Assessments</b> (All reading, grammar, writing quizzes and tests)	<b>Classwork</b> (Notes, in class assignments, journals, collaborative work, independent reading work)	<b>Major Assessments</b> ( <b>Final</b> drafts of essays and all major projects)

**Late Work**

Late work is NEVER accepted for full credit. All missed work must be made up. **If your work is one day late, it will receive half credit. If work is more than one day late, it will be marked as completed, but you will not receive any credit.** Any work missed as a result of an excused absence must be handed in no later than the day after the student returns to class in order to receive full credit.

**Improving Grades**

As a rule, you are expected to put your best effort into assignments at the time they are given, not at the end of the marking period. Students concerned about their grades should attend an after-school homework help session **before** an assignment is due. Only students who have completed and turned in every assignment may request a conference to discuss ways of improving their grades. Please note that most requests for additional assignments will be denied. In order to receive extra credit, you must first receive regular credit.

**Course Routines**

Reading class will follow a consistent routine:

<p><b>Entering (3 min)</b> Students will quietly enter the room, retrieve their folders from the filing cabinet, put any homework in the homework bin, and take out their independent reading book and log.</p>	<p><b>Independent Reading (15 min)</b> During this time, students will silently read a book of their choice. Students may also conference with the teacher or select a new book. The last five minutes will be devoted to logging reading activity and sharing out with reading partners.</p>	<p><b>Reading Workshop and Class Text (25 min)</b> Includes lessons on reading strategies, literary elements, and thematic topics. We will read class texts at this time.</p>	<p><b>Independent Work (15 min)</b> This time will be used for independent or group work, class discussions, and review.</p>	<p><b>Departing (2 min)</b> Students will exit the room only when dismissed. They will leave their desk areas tidy, push in their chairs, and neatly return their folders to the appropriate place.</p>
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**Curriculum Overview**

Unit	Description	Major Assessments
<p><b>Unit 1: Me, Myself, and I</b></p>	<p>Students will understand the rituals and routines of our class; how to choose “just right” books for independent reading; habits of good readers; character analysis; point of view; how to annotate a text; how to empathize with characters, how to identify literary themes. Major Text: <u>Finding Fish</u> by A. Q. Fisher</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diagnostic essay</li> <li>• Reading Response Journals</li> <li>• Reading Quizzes</li> <li>• Journal Project</li> <li>• Final exam</li> </ul>
<p><b>Unit 2: Me, My Circumstances, and My Choices</b></p>	<p>Students will understand how personal bias affects decisions and where bias comes from; how a criminal trial takes place; how jury selection and jury deliberation take place; how to compare two separate literary texts. Major Texts: <u>Monster</u> by W.D. Myers, <u>Twelve Angry Men</u> by R. Rose</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Class Presentations</li> <li>• Reading Quizzes</li> <li>• One Pagers</li> <li>• Comparative Essay</li> </ul>
<p><b>Unit 3: Me, My Voice, and My Peers</b></p>	<p>Students will understand the power of speech; elements of fiction; point of view; voice; how to write a literary introduction; how to analyze literature; produce an expository essay; participate in Socratic Seminar; how to recognize and discuss the elements of figurative language. Major Text: <u>Speak</u> by L. H. Anderson</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading Quizzes</li> <li>• Mandalas</li> <li>• Expository essay</li> <li>• Socratic Seminar</li> <li>• Gallery Night</li> </ul>
<p><b>Unit 4: Me, My Stories, and Our Traditions</b></p>	<p>Students will familiarize themselves with major stories in the Old Testament and important Greek and Roman myths; they will understand how these stories are evident in modern culture and English language literature from all time periods. Major Texts: <u>Heroes, Gods, &amp; Monsters</u>, Evslin; <u>King James Bible</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading Quizzes</li> <li>• Storyboard</li> <li>• Final Exam</li> </ul>
<p><b>Unit 5: Me, Our Friendship, and Our Dreams</b></p>	<p>Students will understand the development of literary elements / devices throughout the novel, such as themes, motifs, and symbols; the connection between the experience of the characters with current issues in their lives; how to analyze the author's development of a literary theme, character or use of literary device in an appropriate written form. Major Text: <u>Of Mice and Men</u> by J. Steinbeck</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading Quizzes</li> <li>• Thematic analysis essay</li> <li>• Routine Socratic Seminars</li> </ul>

<p><b>Unit 6: Us, Our Desires, and Our Conflicts</b></p>	<p>Students will understand and translate Shakespearean English; the history and significance of Shakespeare; the structure of the five act play; poetic devices. Major Text: <u>Taming of the Shrew</u> by W. Shakespeare</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading Quizzes</li> <li>• Translations</li> <li>• Performances</li> </ul>
<p><b>Unit 7: Me, My Progress, Our Successes</b></p>	<p>Students will reflect on their year's work and prepare to present portfolios to peers and parents at a Portfolio Celebration evening.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflections</li> <li>• Presentations</li> <li>• Portfolio Night</li> </ul>

**Attendance and Lateness Policy**

Class attendance is mandatory. Failing to attend class *will* affect your grade and *will* result in detention. Lateness results in points deducted from your professionalism grade, lost learning time for you, and a disruption to your classmates. You are expected to attend class regularly and promptly. A three day or more absence without a note constitutes an unauthorized absence and it will be noted on your permanent attendance record. It is your responsibility to find out what you have missed by attending homework help on the day you return to school. Missed assignments will not be excused for absence.

**Restroom Use**

Learning happens in the classroom, not in the restroom. No student will be dismissed from class during independent reading time. Students who need to use the restroom should indicate their desire to do so by silently raising their hand showing two fingers. Please have your bathroom passes ready on your desk and wait quietly and patiently until I have found a moment that is least disruptive to the class to come to you and sign your pass. Under no circumstances will students be permitted to leave the room without a pass. Under no circumstances will students who disrupt class by verbally announcing their desire to be excused have their request granted. You will not always receive permission to be excused; please plan your day accordingly.

**Classroom Entry and Exit Procedures**

You will line up outside of room 335 and wait patiently for me to greet you at the door. When you enter, you will quietly collect your folder with your independent reading book and notebook from the filing cabinet and then be seated in your assigned seat and begin reading. You are to hang your coat on your chair and place your book bag under your seat or desk. Upon exiting, collect all of your belongings and tidy your desk area by pushing in your chair and making sure there are no loose papers around you. When you are called, return your folder to the filing cabinet. Put any classwork or homework in your section's box. Leave the classroom immediately and quietly make your way to your next class. I dismiss you, not the clock, not the bell, not your peers, and not yourself.

**Concerning Plagiarism**

All writing assignments that you submit for this course must be either entirely your own or properly footnoted. If they are not, you are guilty of plagiarism, which is not tolerated at SLJ. I want you to have a clear idea of what plagiarism is from the start so that there can be no mistake later (unintentional plagiarism is still plagiarism).

There are three major types of plagiarism:

- Word-for-word copying, without acknowledgment, of the language of another writer. Having another person write or dictate all or part of one's composition is plagiarism of this kind and is clearly forbidden.

- The unacknowledged paraphrasing of an author's ideas. The student should not take credit for another person's thoughts than for another person's words. Any distinctive, original idea taken from another writer should be credited to its author.
- Incorrectly copying or paraphrasing. In a verbatim copying of a source, involving the use of quotation marks and the acknowledgment of the author, the student does not have the right to change or add any words, even if the original author made a mistake. A paraphrase should be in YOUR words.

### **Code of Respect**

I expect all of my students to behave appropriately in my classroom. Earning an education is our number one goal, and we have no time for disruptive behaviors. I believe that every student has the right to learn without distraction and that no student has the right to disturb the learning process. I strive to maintain an organized, balanced, and firm classroom. In order to adhere to the SLJ code of conduct based on the 3 Principles of Respect (Respect for Self, Respect for Others, and Respect for Property), and in order to guarantee all the students in my classroom the excellent learning climate they deserve, I am using the Code of Respect outlined on the next page.

#### **CODE of RESPECT**

**Respect yourself** = Please value your own self and your own intelligence; show that you deserve respect by giving respect. Be accountable for yourself.

**Respect Ms. Box / Ms. Weckstein** = Please do not talk while I am talking; listen while I speak, and address me with respectful language at all times.

**Respect one another** = Please do not talk while others are talking and please address others with respectful language. Listen to the person who was given permission to talk.

**Respect our room** = Please do not eat, chew gum, or drink; do not throw items on the floor, and do not abuse classroom materials (furniture, books, etc). Please keep in mind that we work as a team to create a safe and comfortable classroom.

**Respect your role as a student at SLJ** = Come to school on time and be prepared and in dress code. Please remember there is to be no fighting, personal grooming, or otherwise inappropriate behaviors. Please remember when entering SLJ that you are to remove hats, sunglasses, etc., and turn off cellular phones, games, mp3 players, etc. The teacher and/or dean reserves the right to confiscate these items.

#### **If a student chooses to break our code of respect:**

1st offense –Reminder (student-teacher conference)

2nd offense – Intervention (removed from classwork/possible detention/phone call home)

3rd offense - Consequences (detention; demerits; stripped of privileges to participate in collaborative learning - field trips, cross-age tutoring)

**Severe Disruption** – a. Student will immediately be sent to the dean.

b. Parent will be required to come in for a conference / possibly shadow student.

#### **Exceptions**

There is a zero-tolerance policy in this classroom towards cell phone and electronics use. If I can hear or see your electronic device or cell phone, (including having it in a cell phone case clipped to your belt), even if you are not actively using it, it will be immediately confiscated. I will not debate this with you; refusal to surrender your electronic device immediately and quietly will result in a referral to the dean and more severe disciplinary action.

Our classroom, in its most successful form, is its own reward. In this class, students spend a lot of time working through the literature and their writing individually as well as collaboratively. This allows for a greater sense of self-worth among students and also provides a solid base on which to build sound ideas, questions, and literate expressions.

Please sign and return this page. Please keep the syllabus for your records.

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I have read the policy sheet and the discipline plan. I will abide by the discipline plan and policies and procedures outlined for Ms. Box's Reading course.

Student's signature \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's signature \_\_\_\_\_

Home Number \_\_\_\_\_

I greatly look forward to an excellent year together.

Thanks,

Ms. N. Box and Mrs. J. Weckstein

**STUDENT'S COPY**

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