

# ★ MS. AVIÑA ★

## 8<sup>th</sup> GRADE CORE SYLLABUS & GUIDELINES

### LANGUAGE ARTS, LITERATURE, & UNITED STATES HISTORY

#### ★ COURSE DESCRIPTION ★

The 8<sup>th</sup> grade Core program at Redwood Middle School engages students in a comprehensive and unique course of study. All subjects are integrated to aid students in understanding the relevance of literature, history, and language across time and place. This will be a year of challenge and high expectations, but your learning and development will be both stretched and supported in a way that shows respect for you as a learner. I will do my best to tailor lessons to match my students' gifts and learning needs.

You will continue to improve your writing and speaking skills, study the English language, read a broad range of classic and contemporary literature, and learn about U.S. history and geography from the colonial period through World War I.

There will be opportunities for you to work individually and collaboratively on written, visual, and oral projects. You will complete research projects on various subjects, utilizing multiple resources to further your insight into and appreciation of language, literature, and history. Major projects will be documented by a written and/or an oral report. You will also compose organized narrative, expository, persuasive, and technical pieces; give extemporaneous and formal presentations; practice doing timed writing; generate responses to primary sources; and engage in creative writing. Above all, you will develop and practice skills which allow you to be successful, creative, participating members of our society.

**Texts** – all books will be provided.

- ★ *History Alive!, Discovering Our Past, and A History of US* (history)
- ★ *Language of Literature* (literature)
- ★ *Language Network* (grammar)
- ★ *Vocabulary for Achievement 2* (vocabulary)
- ★ *The Giver* by Lois Lowry
- ★ *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee

#### ★ MATERIALS & POLICIES ★

**Class Climate:** See the student handbook for school rules and consequences.

Ensure everyone's safety and success by:

- ★ showing respect for yourself and others;
- ★ having the integrity to do what you know is right;
- ★ being responsible and accountable;
- ★ co-operating with others and being dependable;
- ★ and making every effort to do your personal best at all times.

**Daily Materials:** These items will be used regularly. If you cannot afford them, I will purchase them for you:

- ★ red pen AND blue or black pens;
- ★ standard #2 pencils, erasers, sharpener;
- ★ binder paper;
- ★ a glue stick (not liquid);
- ★ a ruler and pair of scissors;
- ★ a set of at least 8 colored pencils;
- ★ a set of highlighters (6 different colors);
- ★ a package of durable 1"wide sticky flags;
- ★ a bound composition book (not spiral);
- ★ a folder/labeled binder space for handouts;
- ★ access to a *paper* dictionary and thesaurus at home.

**Homework:** There will be daily homework for each class, per SUSD guidelines and California Standards for 8th Grade English and History. Assignments are listed in class and on your weekly calendar listing all assignments and due dates; however, you are responsible for keeping track of your work. Homework is not intended to be done over the weekend; it should take you no more than 50 diligent and uninterrupted minutes each day; if you are unable to complete the work during this time, have a parent sign off the unfinished part. If you consistently need more time to complete your work, please see me to discuss possible alternatives.

**Late Work:** Assignments are collected daily. Work not turned in by the end of the class period will be considered late. You may be required to stay in during break/lunch to complete your work for that

day. Submit a parent-signed late form with all late work. Late work negatively affects your conduct grades and is not accepted after a unit is complete.

**Resubmissions:** If you are dissatisfied with your grade for a specific assignment, you should resubmit it with changes and/or corrections AND a completed resubmission form. Resubmissions can earn back up to half of the points missed. Work with an A grade may not be resubmitted.

**Absences, Makeups, & Retakes:** School is your job. In order to do it well, you must be present and ready to work. If you are absent, consult the weekly calendar, the website, or a classmate regarding missed work. See the teacher for clarification on assignment instructions, but remember that it is *your responsibility to find out what you missed*.

If you miss a test or quiz, make an appointment to take it Tuesday or Thursday before school. Missed tests/quizzes must be made up *within one week* of returning, or they become zeroes.

Tests may be retaken for an average score ONLY if your original score was below 75%. Quizzes may not be retaken.

**Academic Integrity:** Redwood will not tolerate acts that violate academic integrity—a student who cheats or plagiarizes does not learn. These acts violate your academic integrity. You are responsible for doing your own work, and all work is expected to be completely original and individual, unless specifically stated by the teacher. If caught, you will earn an 'F' on the assignment in question. Consequences include a referral to the Assistant Principal or teacher/parent conference. Repeat offenses result in Saturday School or suspension.

\*\*Source: Redwood Middle School Student Handbook

*Allowing* someone else to cheat/plagiarize from your work will have similar consequences.

**Enrichment:** Good thinkers take an active role in learning by digging deeper into a novel or historical event.

A grade of 70-80% generally means that you have met the grade-level standard. In order to earn a higher grade on some assignments (unit packets, literature journals, some projects), you must exceed the

grade-level standard by exhibiting additional thought and effort for mastery.

Many options will be offered in class and on the website, but you may also create your own. A running list of suggestions is kept on the board, and other information is available online. This work is not extra credit.

### ★ACADEMIC SUCCESS★

You earn and are responsible for your grades—they are not simply assigned. Most assignments are graded on accuracy, effort beyond basic expectations, and thoughtfulness. However, the most important part is the process of doing the work, not just the end result. If you focus on the process, the product will be successful.

**Progress Reports:** In order to keep yourself and your parents informed, please check PowerSchool often. As part of your conduct grade, you must periodically demonstrate that you are responsibly communicating your progress with your parents by turning in a parent-signed printout of the assignment pages OR via parent email. Failure to do so will result in a lunch detention and/or an email or call home.

**Questions about Grades:** In order to encourage self-advocacy, you should approach the teacher on your own with questions about grades and scores before/after school, at break, or at lunch—NOT DURING CLASS. Be sure to also bring with you the assignment(s) in question.

### Grading Scale

(see Student Handbook for percentages)

- A = excellent evidence of achievement; substantially exceeds standards
- B = very good evidence; exceeds standards
- C = adequate evidence; meets standards
- D = limited evidence; below standards
- F = needs a great deal more evidence; far below standards

**★OTHER NOTES★**

How exciting to welcome you to a new school year—your final year at Redwood before venturing off to high school! I look forward to meeting all of you. Parents and students should feel free to contact me using the information below.

As a way of getting to better know your student, I would very much appreciate your response to my online parent questionnaire located at <<http://msavina.squarespace.com/pq/>>. The information you share will help me tremendously.

Please have your student return the bottom portion of this page completed by **Wednesday, August 26**. This packet belongs to you. Your child will keep another copy at school. Additional copies may be downloaded from my website.

Thank you,

Shannon L. Aviña  
Redwood Middle School

Email: [savina@saratogausd.org](mailto:savina@saratogausd.org)

Website: <http://msavina.squarespace.com>

Room 44

Office Hours: 7:30-8:00am, 3:15-4:00pm, all other times by arrangement

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**My parent and I have read and understand the syllabus and guidelines.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Print Student name**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Print Parent/Guardian name**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Student signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Parent/Guardian signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

Please initial the following items indicating that you understand these key parts of the syllabus:

Parent      Student

\_\_\_\_\_ & \_\_\_\_\_

If the student does not turn in the day's assignments, he/she may be required to stay in during break/lunch to complete the work for that day.

\_\_\_\_\_ & \_\_\_\_\_

It is the student's responsibility to find out what he/she missed when absent by looking at the board, weekly calendar, or website, and by asking a fellow student.

\_\_\_\_\_ & \_\_\_\_\_

It is the student's responsibility to schedule appointments for make ups & retakes.

\_\_\_\_\_ & \_\_\_\_\_

**ONLY INITIAL IF YOU ARE \*NOT OPTING OUT\* OF THIS NOTIFICATION:**

Students will periodically turn in parent-signed printouts of the Core assignment pages on PowerSchool. An email from the parent will also suffice.