

ENGLISH GRADE 7 and 8

The Department's Educational Philosophy

The need to communicate is central to humanity. Young adolescents, in particular, need to communicate their views of self and the world as a means of understanding and defining, and expanding their thinking. Through writing and appreciating the writings of others, we believe young adolescents grow in their ability to think and to understand themselves and their relationships.

Appreciation of written expression, both one's own and that of others, is the core of the R.J. Grey Jr. High School English Curriculum. Through the discipline of writing and through the study of published works of literature, we believe that the students develop not only their communication skills but a life-long love of learning.

The English Department derives its educational philosophy from the published philosophies of the Acton-Boxborough Regional School District and the R.J. Grey Junior High School.

Overview of Curriculum

Essential Skills and Objectives for reading, writing, speaking, and grammar have been determined for the students at R.J. Grey. In general, these skills are developed in grade seven and reviewed, reinforced, and expanded in grade eight. They are the foundation of every activity and align with the state learning standards.

Thematic units which integrate reading and literature activities with the essential skills comprise the curriculum content. These units, from which teachers select three to five each year, are divided between grades seven and eight. Each unit is designed to reflect the interests and needs of the early adolescent. In many units, to provide for individual differences and interests, students have a choice of readings. They are introduced to several novels, varying in story line and reading difficulty, but all on the unit theme. We also use readings from our new literature anthology, the Prentice-Hall *Timeless Voices, Timeless Themes* series. Students also may have independent reading opportunities throughout the year. The choice of thematic units and the literature involved in the unit may vary from team to team and year to year; however, the skills and objectives are consistent for all students.

Helping students make connections between reading and writing, other curriculum areas, history, the world today, and their own lives is an integral component of the curriculum. Frequently, there are lively discussions about current, and sometimes sensitive, topics. To the extent that time allows, teachers work with their other team members to weave curriculum concepts together.

In the classroom, time is divided between teacher-centered and student-centered activities. On student-centered days, the students receive some general directions or instructions from the teacher and then use the class period to complete an assignment or work on a long-term project. In these situations, the teacher acts as a coach checking in with students to address specific questions or concerns. In the class, students work individually or with groups of varying size to actively engage in a range of activities within the communication spectrum. They are at all times encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning and to become life long learners.

For further information: <http://ab.mec.edu/curriculum/abenglish.shtml>