

“Students who read the most for fun scored the highest on standardized reading tests.”

-Kelly Gallagher, classroom teacher/author

Dear Parents,

“Research shows: the amount of free reading done outside of school has consistently been found to relate to growth in vocabulary, reading comprehension, verbal fluency, and general information, students who read independently become better readers, score higher on achievement tests in all subject areas, and have greater content knowledge than those who do not.”

AASL website:<http://www.ala.org/aasl/aaslpubsandjournals/slmrb/slmrcontents/volume32000/independent#what>

We would like to welcome you to Poynette Middle School Literacy class, also known as Communication Arts. This class is composed of the basic elements of literacy: reading, writing, speaking and listening. Your child will experience many different types of learning opportunities that will enhance his/her skills in these specific areas.

A portion of the rigor your student will experience in our classrooms is based on required outside reading. This independent reading may be in the form of classroom novels, news articles and/or independent reading selections. **Your child will be documenting their reading progress and be held accountable for demonstrating the information/knowledge gleaned from their independent reading.**

Outside Reading Requirements:

- ***Students will be expected to read a minimum of 30 minutes per night.***
- Students are self selecting books; please be aware of and monitor what your child is reading.
- Monthly “One Pager” : Your student will be required to complete a monthly book review on a specific form which will be provided in class.
- Please be involved with what your child is reading and talk to them about it. Research states that when children are discussing and interacting with their text they become more skilled in their reading.

Article of the Week:

Most weeks, students will receive a teacher selected news article they will be required to read. Some of the reading will take place within their classrooms and some will be homework. Students will be quizzed about the specific components of the article and will have to demonstrate understanding of the article content.

Writer’s Notebook:

Your student is responsible for maintaining a writer’s notebook. The notebook will be used for a variety of tasks and purposes and will help your student to demonstrate growth as a reader and writer.

Additional Writing Assignments:

Based on the Common Core Standards, your student will be performing various types of writing that correlates with specific writing purposes. The assignments will range from short pieces to multiple page papers that follow the draft process.

“ Writing well is not just an option for young people-it is a necessity. Along with reading

comprehension, writing skill is a predictor of academic success and a basic requirement for participation in civic life and in the global economy. "(Graham and Perin 2007,3)

Assessments:

Assessments are based on a growth model comprised of: classroom participation, homework, and various types of reading/writing/speaking activities, projects and papers. For example, larger writing pieces will be given a half-time score. Students will then be able to make changes to improve their writing based on the feedback we give them. Students who pay attention to teacher/peer feedback will improve their writing and show growth on the writing rubrics; this will be reflected in the final grade for the piece. Student assessments focus on the core components of literacy: reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Communication Arts rubrics based on the Common Core Standards will be used to assess student growth.

Resources/Websites:

- Best of Kelly Gallagher's "101 Books My Reluctant Readers Love to Read"
http://www.goodreads.com/list/show/14070.Best_of_Kelly_Gallagher_s_101_Books_My_Reluctant_Readers_Love_to_Read
- Cooperative Children's Book Center- UW Madison
<http://www.education.wisc.edu/ccbc/books/default.asp>
- Scholastic Book Wizard- find books based on reading level, find similar books, and more.
<http://www.scholastic.com/bookwizard/>
- Online Book Reviews
<http://www.amazon.com/> (type in a book interest and search the list of titles provided, then read the reviews and view the star ratings) These are also an excellent source when read with a critical perspective and the specific interests of your child.

Sample Questions to ask your Middle School Reader About Their Reading:

- Tell me about the main character in your book.
- Does this book remind you of, an experience we have had?
- What is the most exciting part of this book and why?
- Have you ever experienced anything similar to the action of this novel, tell me about it?
- What surprised you as you read the book?
- What problems did the characters encounter in this book? How did they resolve them?
- Would you recommend this book to a friend? Tell me why or why not.

We would like to leave you with these final thoughts. Your child needs to talk about what he/she reads and writes and make life connections. You are a role model for your child; enjoy sharing your reading and writing experiences with them. We look forward to the year ahead and are excited to help your student become a lifelong reader and writer.

Sincerely,

Ms. Mutchler	8th Grade teacher
Mrs. Anderson	7th Grade teacher
Ms. Karman	6th Grade teacher