**6TH GRADE**      **Mrs. Erin Ballentine**

**LANGUAGE ARTS    ering.ballentine@cms.k12.nc.us**

Welcome to sixth grade Language Arts! Our focus this school year will be learning and developing our skills as critical thinkers, readers, writers, speakers, listeners, and viewers. The development and mastery of these important literacy skills is not only important to achieving success in the Language Arts classroom, but it is a critical component of achieving success in other school subjects, building strong relationships with others, and attaining a career as an adult. The quality of life you experience now throughout adulthood will depend a lot, on how well you read, write, and communicate with others.

 In order to develop these critical literacy skills, we will be reading a variety of fiction and non-fiction texts and engaging in many informal and formal writing tasks. These will help us to better understand ourselves and our place in the world through various conceptual lenses. We will be gaining new ideas and perspectives through wide reading, discussion, and viewing various media critically. On a regular basis, we will think critically about what we have read, heard, or viewed and effectively articulate our thoughts and ideas through speaking and writing.

**What are We Going to DO This Year?**
Conceptual Lenses and Some Essential Questions to Guide Our Learning

**(Please know that this is subject to change)**

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| **Unit One: Overcoming Obstacles*** What is the biggest obstacle to reaching the American Dream?
* Novel: A Long Walk to Water by Linda Sue Park
 | **Unit Two:****Identity** * How is our identity shaped by the challenges we face?
* Novel: Walk Two Moons by Sharon Creech
 | **Unit Three:** **Man vs. Nature** * Who is really in control, man or nature?
* Novel: Tangerine by Edward Bloor
 | **Unit Four:** **Value and Decisions*** Would you have sold your land?
* Novel: Roll of Thunder Hear my Cry by Mildred D. Taylor
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All units will utilize one novel and multiple supplemental texts. Once novels are finished, the rest of the quarter will be focused on independent reading and/or book clubs. Students will not need to purchase novels unless they want to mark and highlight in their own book.

**Vocabulary:** Both honors and standard plus classes will be utilizing the Word Within the Word root word program for vocabulary. This program is extremely beneficial for helping students decode unknown words. This program requires a lot of memorization but will be helpful to students all the way through college. Students will be quizzed weekly to ensure that they are keeping up and will be tested cumulatively on a two or three week cycle depending on their level of ELA class. Please expect to have homework related to stem words.

**Grammar:** Bailey Middle utilizes the website noredink.com for grammar teaching and practice. Students will have access to a wide range of practice for different aspects of grammar and will be expected to complete assignments through this website often.

**Required materials (Bring to class EVERY DAY)**

✓ 3-ring 2” binder
✓ A spiral notebook that will stay in your binder unless it is being used for Stem vocabulary HW.
✓ Pencil pouch with writing utensils, scissors, tape, highlighters (great to use throughout the day in all classes)
✓ Agenda

**Grading and Assessment**

Student achievement of the language arts standards will be communicated to students and parents using standards-based grading.

**What does that mean?**

✓ Grades will only reflect the student’s level of academic achievement.
✓ Academic grades will NOT be based on behaviors such as participation, social development, or attendance.
✓ All students will have multiple assessment opportunities to demonstrate higher levels of achievement. Additional opportunities may include retakes of assessment, student revisions of products based on descriptive feedback, or alternative methods of assessment. Second or multiple assessments do not mean an endless set of opportunities for students. The summative grade will reflect the most recent evidence of learning.
✓ Students are expected to complete all required work by due dates. If work is not submitted on time, students will receive a 10% deduction per day the assignment is late.

Additional information pertaining to grades can be found in the student handbook at the front of the student agenda.



**Top Five Things to Remember About Our Class**
**5.** Respect every object, person, and idea in this room.
**4.** Take responsibility for your choices and actions.
**3.** Follow instructions: written and verbal.
**2.** Come to class ready to think and participate.
**1.** Ask questions, be curious, and seek answers.

**Please READ the course info, SIGN, and RETURN this sheet to Mrs. Ballentine.**

Students: Please sign below to signify that you have read the course sheet for Mrs. Ballentine’s class, will keep it in your binder, will be responsible for the information throughout the year, and will check PowerSchool at least once a week at school or at home.

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Student’s printed name                                          Student’s signature

**Parents/Guardians:**

**Check all the statements that apply to how you would like to communicate with Mrs. Ballentine about your student’s progress. I will, of course, call for major concerns, but with approximately 125 students, I like to know how you’d prefer to communicate.**\_\_\_\_We have internet access at home, so we will check PowerSchool at least twice each month to check on my student’s progress. We will contact Mrs. Ballentine about any concerns we have.

\_\_\_\_We plan to email Mrs. Ballentine weekly or monthly for an update.

\_\_\_\_We do not have internet access at home, but we would like to have regular contact with Mrs. Ballentine. We will call for an update on a regular basis.

\_\_\_\_Other:

Please sign below to indicate that you have read the course sheet for Mrs. Ballentine’s class and that you’ll help your student be accountable for the information. If you have questions about the course or your student’s work, please do not hesitate to contact me; email is the best way to reach me quickly. See the front of this sheet for my email address.

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Parent/Guardian printed name

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Parent/Guardian signature

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Parent/Guardian email (please print)

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Parent/Guardian’s daytime phone number