By-Class English/Language Arts descriptions and expectations:

English IV

Seniors spend most of the first semester reviewing English grammar and composition skills for college—even college placement tests. Their challenge is in the length and difficulty of sentence structures such as phrases and clauses. Nevertheless, they also have usage for improving speaking and writing, which is centered more at the beginning of the second semester.

To improve vocabulary, we spend fifteen units on Latin roots and combining them. They will have five unit tests along with the weekly assignments, learning how to ‘take apart’ words without using a dictionary and thereby going across-curriculum to help them in social science and natural science classes, too. The second semester focuses on nine units of Greek, too.

During the second semester, the seniors read British literature, beginning with Beowulf and going through into the Renaissance period, in which the highlight is Shakespeare’s Macbeth. There will also be a bit of exposure to other British authors, but these are supplemental and not in their anthology.

English III

Juniors also spend most of their first semester reviewing English grammar and composition skills for college—especially for the ACT test that our school generously provides for in the spring. Their focus is definitely on word choice, usage, and improving sentence variety and purpose.

They are introduced to Latin and Greek vocabulary, here, too. They also complete a variety of creative writing and short skills compositions.

Their major composition is a research paper that is a biographical study on a person of their choice. This usually occurs while they are delving into an anthological and supplemental study of American literature and classic authors and stories. It culminates in the study of Shakespeare’s Hamlet.

English II

Sophomores have one year of mastery of English skills ‘under their belts’ to help them in writing for purpose and correct structure. They do many reviews, but also expand grammar for college preparation and work-force readiness. Their major composition is a research paper on a curiosity or topic of interest to them.

Their literature focus is world literature, poetry, drama, Greek mythology in the Odyssey, and Shakespeare’s Julius Caesar.

English I

Freshmen focus on grammatical skills so that they write better sentences, paragraphs and essays, expanding on usage and transformational analysis. They also have reviews with vocabulary, spelling and basic speech skills. Literature for them is a fun potpourri of classic stories, famous authors’ works, and analysis of the figurative language of such. They also read Shakespeare’s Romeo and Juliet in depth with a study of the author for the rest of their high school career.

Language Arts 8

The eighth graders focus on review ofsentence and grammatical basics for expanding skills to writing and speaking correctly. They also have vocabulary, spelling, and short creative writings. Compositions will include a variety of essays and applied structures. They have an excellent anthology in literature--which includes drama, poetry, classic short stories, and mythology. We are looking at adding an Agatha Christie novel this year.

Language Arts 7

The seventh graders come into high school preparing them for the eighth grade skills. Theirs is mostly introductory but also a concentration on basic English writing and grammatical skills, breaking down work for usage and correct structures. Like the eighth graders, there will be a unit on vocabulary and on spelling to increase their skills. They also have an anthology in literature and a possible Agatha Christie novel.