**8th Grade American History & Language Arts—St. John School 2015-2016**

Teacher: Mr. Thomas

Email: jthomas@stjohnsea.org

Website: From the St. John School website, go to Parents, Teacher Pages, and then Mr. Joseph Thomas

Voice Mail: 206-783-0337 ext. 322

**About the Courses**

The study of Language Arts is one piece of an overarching curriculum designed to help students become better readers, writers, and speakers. The Common Core State Standards will guide our Language Arts instruction. Information about these standards can be found at [www.k12.wa.us/corestandards/](http://www.k12.wa.us/corestandards/). During the year we will focus on argumentative, informational/explanatory, and narrative writing. We will also be working to improve our skill at using the standard conventions of English grammar. As part of our Language Arts curriculum we will also study Greek & Latin roots and their relation to vocabulary.

The study of American history and government is designed to help prepare students to become responsible citizens. This course is structured to evaluate the important events and influential ideas of early American history through the integration of geography, civics, economics, current events, and decision-making skills. We will cover historical events from the Revolutionary War through the early 1900s. We will accomplish this through use of the textbook, supplemental reading, and audio/visual materials.

**About the Books**

Our textbook is *The American Journey*, published by McGraw Hill/Glencoe. (ISBN978-0-07-877712-7) Students will have access to a hard copy of the text at school and may also check one out to take home for short periods to study if they wish. The best way to access this rather large book at home is online. A link to the login page can be found on my classroom webpage. (login: **STUDENTS455**, password: **stude525**)

Our Language Arts Book is *Voyages in English* Level 8, published by Loyola Press. (ISBN: 0-8294-2091-6) As with the Social Studies text, students will have access to a hard copy at school and will be able to take one home upon request.

**General Information**

* I will work with you to make it possible for you to do your best. I will treat you fairly and with the respect that you earn. I will be honest with you. Please keep in mind that I want to help you in any way that I can so that you can be successful. If you have special circumstances that are making it difficult for you to do your best, please let me know.
* **Classroom Expectations:** In addition to the St. John school rules, the following will be expected in my classes to help create a positive learning environment in which all students can be successful.
	+ **Be safe:** Come to class on time without rushing to the doorway. Use materials appropriately. (Avoid damaging school or personal property.)
	+ **Be respectful:** Respect yourself and others! Use positive and appropriate language (refrain from name calling and avoid swearing/using offensive language). Focus on the teacher/speaker (listen, follow directions, and avoid interrupting others.) Remain seated until you are dismissed.
	+ **Be Responsible:** Take responsibility for your choices! Your grades and your behavior are YOUR responsibility. When you know you’ve been caught messing around in class, CHOOSE to avoid making the problem worse by lying about it or being more disruptive. CHOOSE to bring your materials and use class time wisely. CHOOSE to do your BEST on your work and turn it in on time so that you will be satisfied with the grades you earn. CHOOSE to study for assessments so that you will be as prepared as possible.
* **Behavior:** Disruptive, disrespectful, or inappropriate behavior will be handled accordingly. Consequences range from a verbal warning to a referral. I reserve the right to conference with a parent, or administrator. Remember: Negative choices will lead to negative consequences. Positive choices will result in positive outcomes.
* **Passes/Bathroom Use:** Please try to use passes for emergencies only, not as a clever excuse to get out of class.
* **Materials:** Becoming and staying organized is extremely important to your success as a student. You need to bring all necessary materials to class daily, before the class begins. Books and notebooks will be kept in the at school but students may always sign out a book to take home to study.
* **Retakes:** Students may attempt a major assessment a second time if they meet the requirements of the “Request to Retest” form including a parent signature. Smaller assessments like weekly Greek and Latin roots quizzes are not eligible for retakes.
* **Absent Work:** When you are absent it is your responsibility to check with classmates and PowerSchool and to make up any missing assignments. If you need copies of a handout you need to write down the handout(s) you need and give the list to me. I will provide you with copies as soon as possible. Assignments missing for more than 2 weeks will receive a grade of zero.
	+ If you are absent for an extended period of time, see me to work out an individual plan for make-up work.
* **Cheating/Plagiarism:** Cheating and/or plagiarism will not be tolerated and will result in a failing grade on the assignment, and a detention. You will also be asked to notify your parents. This includes copying homework, classwork, test answers, talking during a test or quiz, allowing someone to copy your work, and trying to pass off someone else’s work as your own. If you feel the need to cheat, speak with me about getting help with the material.

U.S History & Language Arts Commitment

I have received and read a copy of Mr. Thomas’s US History & Language Arts course requirements. I agree to follow the classroom rules and procedures, which follow the St. John School guidelines of safety, respect and responsibility, and I understand the consequences should I choose not to follow these rules.

I understand that I need to stay organized. I need to bring a writing utensil, binder, and all other necessary materials to class each day.

I understand that active participation and organization are essential to my success. This means I will pay attention in class and ask questions when I am confused or need help, complete all of my assignments on time, participate actively in all class activities, and take the time to study effectively for tests.

I must turn in this commitment by Friday, September 4th for 10 points.

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Student email: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Parent email: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_