



Cristin Ford
Grade Level: 8
Semester: 2026-2027
Conference Period: 5th

School email: cford@rfisd.us

School Phone Number: (361)790-2230

COURSE OVERVIEW:

Tutoring Times: Tuesdays 7:45-8:25am

Google Classroom Codes: coming soon

Supplies Needed: Composition Notebook, 2 Folders, Pencils, Colored Pencils, 1 Pack of Sticky Notes, 2 Highlighters

Course Description: 8th Grade Reading Language Arts (RLA) focuses on developing students' reading, writing, speaking, listening, and critical thinking skills through the study of literary and informational texts aligned to the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). Students will analyze increasingly complex fiction, drama, poetry, informational, and argumentative texts while strengthening vocabulary, grammar, comprehension, and composition skills. Through reading, writing, discussion, and collaborative learning experiences, students will evaluate the author's craft, synthesize ideas across texts, and communicate effectively for a variety of purposes and audiences. The course emphasizes analytical thinking, evidence-based responses, and preparation for high school readiness.

INSTRUCTIONAL LEARNING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:

- Analyze and evaluate literary and informational texts across multiple genres using text evidence to support understanding.
- Write effectively for a variety of purposes and audiences using the writing process and appropriate conventions.
- Strengthen vocabulary, grammar, speaking, and listening skills to communicate clearly and collaboratively.
- Apply critical thinking and inquiry skills to synthesize information, evaluate arguments, and draw conclusions.
- Develop independent reading, analytical, and communication skills that support college and career readiness.

INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS:

- **Textbook(s):** My Perspectives - Pearson
- **Online platforms or apps:** TCMPC, Newsela, Commonlit, Scholastic

OUTLINE OF UNITS OF STUDY AND MAJOR ASSIGNMENTS

<u>Weeks/Dates</u>	<u>Topic & Skills</u>	<u>Major Assignments/Projects</u>
First 9 Weeks	Unit 01: Fundamentals of Communication Unit 02A: Analyzing and Composing Literary/Narrative NF and Fiction	Unit 2 Assessment
Second 9 Weeks	Unit 02B: Analyzing and Composing Literary Texts: Poetry and Drama Unit 03: Analyzing and Composing Informational Texts	Unit 2B Assessment Unit 3 Assessment Interim
Third 9 Weeks	Unit 04: Rhetorically Analyzing and Composing Argumentative Texts Unit 05: Interpretation and Response Across Genres	Unit 4 Assessment Interim
Fourth 9 Weeks	Unit 05: Interpretation and Response Across Genres	Unit 5 Assessment

	(Continued) Unit 06: Research-Based Synthesis, Creation, and Innovation	Research Project STAAR Test
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**If there are major changes to major assignments/projects, students and families will be notified by email.*

CLASSROOM EXPECTATIONS:

No talking while the teacher is talking or while another student is responding.
Students are expected to work quietly and always use inside voices.
Stay in your seat unless you have permission to do otherwise.
Students are expected to be respectful, responsible, and motivated to do their best.
Keep hands, feet, and objects to yourself.

CHAMPS

CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR

Creating a learning environment that supports the needs of all students is essential for fostering academic success and personal growth. Redirections and general classroom management strategies will be used to address behaviors. When further action is needed, a student conference will be conducted along with a teacher consequence, which includes parent contact and Eduphoria documentation. If behavior persists, students will be referred to administration through Skyward, who will contact the parent and may arrange a parent-teacher conference.

PERSONAL COMMUNICATION DEVICES: House Bill 1481, passed by the 89th Texas Legislature, now requires public schools to prohibit students from using personal communication devices that can send or receive data on school property during the school day, including passing periods and during lunch. The purpose of the law is to promote more focused learning environments and reduce distractions in the classroom.

All personal devices must be powered off and kept out of sight (such as in a backpack) from the time the students enter the campus in the morning until they leave the campus at dismissal time. Personal communication devices, personally owned laptops or tablets may not be used unless the student has an approved exception on file (such as through an IEP, 504 plan, or medical directive). If a student does not have a backpack or a secure place to store their personal communication device, it is highly recommended that they leave the device at home. ***Devices are not permitted to be carried on their person, including in pockets or on clothing.*** For more information, visit RFISD.us.

Please note that devices brought to school will be subject to confiscation, and disciplinary action will follow.

RFISD GRADING EXPECTATIONS

The differentiation between minor and major grades is at the teacher's discretion. As a general rule, minor assignments encompass daily assignments, formative tasks or quizzes, while major assignments might include tests/quizzes, an accumulation of daily assignments or formative tasks like warm-ups, journal entries, or closures, larger writing assignments, projects, or other summative assignments.

Late Minor Assignments: Students may submit assignments up to 3 school days after the due date. Additional days may be allowed based on individual situations. 10 points will be deducted from the grade each day an assignment is late. Dual Credit: Students will follow the syllabus provided by the college/university instructor.

Re-do Minor Assignments—Students may redo assignments as long as they originally attempted them by the original deadline. The second attempt must be completed outside the standard class period, within 1



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school day of the posted grade, and at least 1 week before the end of the 9-week grading period. The maximum grade that can be earned on a retake is 70.

Retake Major Assignments—Students will have the option to retake/make corrections to major assignments when the grade is below 70 within 3 school days of the grade entry in Skyward. The retake must be completed outside of the standard class time, and the maximum grade that can be earned on a retake is 70.

Secondary Honors and Advanced Courses—If a student is failing at the end of the first 6-week grading period, the teacher and guardian must meet to discuss a plan for academic success. If a student is failing at the end of the first 9-week grading period or at the end of the semester, the MTSS team will meet to discuss a potential schedule change. Final approval will be determined by the campus principal. If a student withdraws from a dual credit course, their dual credit grade will transfer to a grade-level course (not Honors or AP).

Grading Categories and Percentage Breakdown

Minor Assignments (9) = 50%; Major Assignments (3) = 50%

Number of Grades: Students will receive at least 12 grades per reporting period (1 minor assignment per week and 1 major assignment per 3-week grading period). Teachers are required to post a grade within 5 school days of the due date.

UIL Eligibility: Students must meet UIL eligibility standards for all extracurricular events, regardless of the individual competition's guidelines.

Exemptions: Students who are exempt may elect to take a semester exam to increase their grade. Exempt students who voluntarily choose to test will not have their grades negatively impacted by the semester test.

Exemption Eligibility:

Grade	Attendance
90% or better	3 absences or less
85 - 89%	2 absences or less
80 - 84%	1 absence or less

Juniors and Seniors who meet eligibility criteria can be exempt from semester exams.

Additional requirements:

- Excluded absences: When calculating a student's semester absences, the following will be excluded from the count: professional medical notes (as outlined in the handbook), school-approved activities, and other excuses permitted by law, such as court appearances, religious holy days, and college and career visits. Attendance coding in Skyward that counts toward your absences includes U and E-PN.
- Students with attendance codes B, I, or K resulting in disciplinary placements of ISS, OSS, DAEP during the 26-27 school year cannot be exempt from semester exams.
- Any student who qualifies for an exam exemption may choose to take the exam. The teacher will use the option that best helps the student's semester grades in their calculations.
- The RFISD exemption policy for dual-credit courses applies only to the RFISD curriculum. College courses must meet semester exam/final exam requirements determined by the college curriculum.
- Student Responsibility:
- Students will be responsible for obtaining a teacher's and a parent's signature and turning in the form to Mrs. Smith.
- Students are exempt from the exam only, not from attending class during the exam.
- Exempt status without attendance will result in a grade of zero for the exam. Exam days are considered school days.

Please sign and return to *<enter teacher name>* by August 21, 2026. Your signature confirms your understanding of the information in the course syllabus for *<enter course name>*.

I have read and understand the syllabus for *<name class>*

Student Signature: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Parent/Guardian Email Address: _____