

Mrs. Dear's 7th Grade English Syllabus: 2025-2026

Course Information:

7th Grade English	Mrs. Dear	Room 326	mdear@denverchristian.org
-------------------	-----------	----------	---------------------------

Deep Hope:

My deep hope is for students to speak in a way that glorifies God and builds others up, to develop a robust vocabulary that allows them to precisely convey ideas free from ambiguity, and to develop critical thinking and analytical skills that allow them to be truth discerners.

Course Description:

In seventh grade English, we will build upon reading and writing skills learned in sixth grade. We will refine our abilities to employ correct conventions in writing, accurately use specific content and academic vocabulary, construct explanatory and analytical written responses, and utilize active reading strategies. We will learn to provide thoughtful “*boulder*” responses (as opposed to “*skipping rock*” responses), and engage in respectful dialogue with classmates. Additionally, students will learn to advocate for their learning and take ownership for all actions.

Seventh grade is like a relay race. In the beginning I will run next to you and hold the baton. I will coach you, encourage you, and challenge you. However, you must be the one to run the race. As the third quarter rolls around, you will hold the baton and run the race. It is up to you how you will approach the obstacles! Don't worry though, I will spot you and be nearby if you fall. By the fourth quarter, you will run solo and I will be cheering you on at the sidelines!

Supplies for class: These are needed *daily*

- Numerous pencils (sharpened and with an eraser of some kind)
- Lined paper (with plenty to replenish)
- Composition notebook from 6th grade (if you are new, I will have extras)
- DC provided computer with a labeled charger
- A book to read!

Books and novels that are provided:

- Numerous short stories and informational texts
- *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* by Mildred D. Taylor
- *Breadwinner* by Deborah Ellis

Canvas:

- Agendas updated *daily* with digital copies of most paper handouts, stories, articles, etc. in each day's agenda.
- I will also populate the "Student Resources" section with handouts that are relevant to the current unit.
- Please familiarize yourself with Canvas - we heavily encourage all parents/guardians to be an observer for their child in Canvas. [Sign up here to become an observer. You will need a code from your student to complete the signup.](#)
- Grades will be updated in a timely manner, though grace is always appreciated on written assignments.

Absences:

- Always check Canvas before emailing if absent from school. Please allow some grace if the agenda is not updated first thing in the morning; it will be updated by lunchtime at the latest.
- When missing school due to illness, students have the number of days absent plus one to make up all work and assessment (i.e.: absent sick for 2 days – the student has 3 days to turn in missed work).
- For prearranged absences, all missed assignments are due immediately upon return or, if possible, before the student leaves.

Homework:

- Homework is typically limited to unfinished in-class assignments, though there will be times where additional work outside of the classroom is required.
- ALL students are encouraged to read independently outside of class. This greatly enhances and promotes stronger literacy skills in both reading and writing. Future reading accountability may occur, though communication regarding expectations will be clear.

Grading Policy:

- **The late policy:**
 - 1st and 2nd quarters: all assignments must be turned in within **1 week** (maximum 50% deduction) or by the end of the unit (if less than 1 week).
 - Assignments turned in the same day, *but after* the scheduled class period, through the following day (1 full day late), will result in -10% of the overall grade.
 - Each subsequent day is an additional 10%, with a maximum deduction of 50%.
 - Assignments turned in after this deadline will result in a 0 (zero).
 - *3rd and 4th quarters: all assignments must be turned in on time. Late assignments will result in a 0 (zero).

- An assignment slip will need to be completed for late assignments to ensure accurate turn-in dates and reasons for late assignments (even if sick or absent, slips will need to be completed).
- Specific rubrics are provided for most assignments and will be uploaded in Canvas as well as paper copies in class.
- “Assessing Your Writing Rubric” is a great reference for all written assignments.
- Expectations and requirements for assignments will be clearly outlined for both students and parents to promote transparency

Grading Breakdown:

- **A:** you have gone above and beyond and made a thoughtful and conscious effort to push beyond the requirements (not necessarily in length, but in quality) – “*boulder*” answers
- **B:** a mixture between A and C; attempting “*boulder*” answers; more detailed explanations than a C have been met with high-quality responses
- **C:** a basic, surface-level demonstration of requirements – “*skipping-rock*” answers
- **D** – most requirements are not met, quality needs improvement
- **F** – requirements not met

Classroom Rules and Expectations:

- We will work as a team. As a team, it’s essential for all students to come prepared and ready to learn. We will focus greatly on being *joyful collaborators*, *gracious communicators*, *curious thinkers*, and *courageous designers*

General Course Outline:

- IdRaHaJe September 15-18, *no school on Friday September 19
- 1st quarter – active reading skills, short stories (elements of plot, tone and mood, characterization, theme, etc.), summary writing, and grammar and sentence types review
- 2nd quarter – narrative writing, informational text (structures and features), explanatory writing, and research
- 3rd quarter – Novel study of *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* by Mildred D. Taylor; nonfiction texts for support, characterization, inferences, etc.
- 4th quarter – Literary analysis essay over *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*; read *Breadwinner* by Deborah Ellis, final project

Communication:

- I provide occasional email updates about key content (major projects, essays, or novels), and with any content-related movies/documentaries I may show.

- For students, I encourage students to reach out first with any questions about assignments or grades – *after* checking Canvas for any clarification. Learning to self-advocate is a skill I greatly promote!
- If there is a behavior or other concern, I will be sure to communicate. You are, of course, welcome to reach out via email!
- I typically respond within 24 hours, unless it is over the weekend. If it is a non-urgent email sent Friday after school hours or over the weekend, I will reply on the following school day.