

Dear Family,

Welcome! We look forward to helping your student grow academically this school year and want to make sure you know what we are working on in class so that you can stay connected to your child's learning. With that in mind, here is a quick overview of what we will be studying.

SpringBoard English Language Arts, English II, **Unit 1: The Power of Argument.**

What is this unit about?

In this unit, students will consider how carefully selected words can have power. By studying argumentative texts, students develop the ability to identify how authors attempt to persuade their audiences—and how they can use those same techniques to strengthen their own writing. Through reading, classroom discussion, and writing, students will examine these essential questions:

- How should we interact with the world around us?
- To what extent are we responsible for our fellow humans?
- How do we use evidence to create a persuasive argument?

What will students do in this unit?

Every SpringBoard unit consists of activities that help students gradually build the skills they need to complete culminating assignments called Embedded Assessments. In the first part of this unit, students will read several argumentative texts, including an essay, a cartoon, a spoken word poem, and an op-ed, all on the topic of technology and how it affects our lives. Students practice identifying the different elements of an argument and how authors use these elements together to create powerfully persuasive texts. Then students will read texts about fundamental issues of justice and civil rights and consider how the power to persuade can be used to effect change on society. They will learn new vocabulary, engage in classroom discussion, and practice writing in preparation for Embedded Assessment 1: Creating an Argument.

In the second part of the unit, students will shift to presenting their positions orally. They will study a formal debate, noting how the participants follow the format of a debate and use presentation techniques to convince their audience. As they work toward Embedded Assessment 2: Participating in a Debate, they will build their ability to collaborate and work in teams, as well as strengthen their presentation skills.

SpringBoard English Language Arts, English II,

Unit 2: Persuasion in Literature.

What is this unit about?

In this unit, students will continue to explore the power of argument as they move into reading literature. Through reading, classroom discussion, and writing, students will examine these essential questions:

- What can a character's use of persuasion reveal to a reader?
- How can a work of literature reflect a cultural perspective?
- What is the value of making connections between characters from different texts, time periods, or cultures?

What will students do in this unit?

In the first part of this unit, students will move from the study of arguments in Unit 1 to looking carefully at the ways characters make arguments in works of literature. They will analyze the impact that the setting has on the novel. They will learn new vocabulary, engage in classroom discussion, and practice writing in preparation for Embedded Assessment 1: Writing a Literary Analysis Essay.

In the second part of the unit, students will read a collection of short stories and novel excerpts from around the world, each grounded in a specific time period and cultural setting. As they work toward Embedded Assessment 2: Writing a Short Story, they will choose a historical or cultural setting and conduct research into that setting, before portraying it in an original short story.

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Unit 3: Voice in Synthesis

What is this unit about?

In this unit, students will synthesize a wide range of views from a variety of sources and find their own voice among the crowd. Students will read Supreme Court cases, UN reports, op-eds, political cartoons, and research reports. Through reading, classroom discussion, and writing, students will examine these essential questions:

- What is the relationship between individual freedom and social responsibility?
- What does it mean to have a voice?
- How does one enter into an ongoing discussion about a subject?

What will students do in this unit?

In the first part of this unit, students will explore the process of synthesis. Students will read a variety of texts about vaccination, including Supreme Court decisions, informational and scientific texts about the history of vaccines, political cartoons, and op-eds that support and challenge the policy of compulsory vaccination. Students will understand each text not only individually, but also as it relates to the other texts in the set. Students will then move into a research project on an environmental topic of their own choice. They will learn new vocabulary, engage in classroom discussion, and practice writing in preparation for Embedded Assessment 1: Creating an Annotated Bibliography.

In the second part of the unit, students will compose position papers. As they work toward Embedded Assessment 2: Presenting a Solution to an Environmental Conflict, they will read excerpts from a UN report on plastic consumption that model the parts of a research paper.

SpringBoard English Language Arts, English II, **Unit 4: Praise, Mock, Mourn**

What is this unit about?

In this unit, students will consider how authors use language to create an effect on their readers. The unit focuses on three universal purposes that have inspired people to create art throughout history and across the world: to praise, to mock, and to mourn. Through reading, classroom discussion, and writing, students will examine these essential questions:

- Why are humans inclined to respond to people, objects, or events with praise, mockery, or mourning?

- How can authors use language to create an effect on their readers?
- How can a performer communicate a character’s perspective through oral and visual interpretation?

What will students do in this unit?

In the first part of this unit, students will read a collection of poems that, one by one, will introduce students to praise, mockery, and mourning. After analyzing other poets’ language choices, students will compose poetry of their own, which will challenge them to think about how to craft language that channels inspiration into a specific experience for readers. They will learn new vocabulary, engage in classroom discussion, and practice writing in preparation for Embedded Assessment 1: Writing an Analysis of a Piece of Creative Writing.

In the second part of the unit, students will read, analyze, and perform Sophocles’s *Antigone*, which also incorporates praise, mockery, and mourning. As they work toward Embedded Assessment 2: Performing a Scene from *Antigone*, they will learn about ancient Greece to understand the context in which the play was written, while also reflecting on the universal themes that have made the play resonate across so many cultures at different points in time.

How can you get involved?

Research has shown that family involvement can have an immense positive influence on students’ academic growth. Here are a few ways you can support your child and the work we’re doing together in class.

- Become familiar with the SpringBoard unit. Browse the readings, writing prompts, and Embedded Assessment assignments. To see which skills students are expected to demonstrate on the Embedded Assessments, take a look at the Scoring Guides.
- Ask open-ended questions: *What are you reading this week? What kinds of things did you discuss in English class today? What assignment are you working on? How prepared do you feel for the assessment or assignment coming up? What do you need to practice?*
- Encourage independent reading. Students will create an independent reading plan at the beginning of the unit. Check in with your child periodically to ask which texts they have chosen to read independently. You can help them find interesting texts through Zinc Reading Labs (available through SpringBoard Digital), which includes a multitude of articles with interactive close reading support, vocabulary development, and reading quizzes. You can also encourage your child to check out books from the school or local library.

We look forward to this learning journey.