

Explorer Middle School
2008-2009
Ms. Latham's
8th Grade Study Skills Course Description

Welcome to the 2008-2009 school year! I am excited to be working with your child this year. I hold high expectations and goals for this year, but I will make these realistic and achievable. It is extremely important that your child feels successful and I will strive to stimulate and encourage all students to work to the best of their abilities so that they may reach their own level of excellence. It is very important that we work as a team and that your student has a clear understanding of what our expectations are for him/her. I have covered these expectations in class and I ask you to re-enforce them at home. Please take the time to review this plan with your child, sign the tear off section indicating that you have done so and have your child return it to class by **August 15th**. Please keep the information section for your own reference.

Course Outline

The 8th grade study skills class is set up as a support to help students with their work in other academic classes in which they may be struggling or simply need extra help. Students are free to use this time to work on homework from other classes and receive teacher help on any assignments they are having difficulty with at that time. If students do not have any homework, or have completed all tasks with time left in the period, then they are to have a SSR (Silent Sustained Reading) book to read. A SSR book should be kept in the backpack everyday. On days in which students do not have any work to complete, I will use that time to work on such topics as organization, study techniques, or note-taking strategies.

Grading Policy

I would like to take a moment to briefly explain the expectations of the study skills class. There are three ways that the students will be receiving points towards their grade throughout the year. The following explains those three ways:

1. Daily Participation Points-

Each day, students may receive a total of 5 points each if they are on task and following directions. This means that they are working independently, or with me, on homework or reading quietly. If they are not using their time wisely to complete homework or they are distracting other

students, they may either receive partial or no points for that day.

2. Notebook/Organization-

It is necessary for your student to always be prepared with the correct materials for any class. To help in the success of your student throughout the year, I will periodically be checking his/her organizational skills (notebook and assignment planner). Notebook checks will occur at least once a week after the first week of school. During these checks, I will be looking for the following:

Notebook Organization Expectations-

- I. 3 ring binder, or appropriate folders to organize papers by subjects
 - A. Dividers, or folders, labeled with each subject/class
 - B. Papers are in the correct section of the binder (there are no loose papers in the backpack)
 - C. Pouch, container, or designated area in backpack containing the following:
 1. At least 2 pencils
 2. At least 2 blue or black ink pens
 3. Red pen for correcting
 4. Highlighter
 - D. A good supply of lined notebook paper
- II. Assignment Planner
Each day it must be filled in with an assignment or have it stated that there was no homework given

3. Grade Printouts

Students will be required to bring in a grade print out for the following classes: English, Math, Science, and Social Studies. This will be done every other Friday starting September 5th. This assignment will be worth 5 points for each print out for a total of 20 points each time the print outs are due. Students may print them out at home, at school in the library, by asking the teachers for a copy, or to ask to print it out prior to the due date in my room. The print outs may be printed out and turned in at any time during the designated week. If the student is earning a 69% or less in a class, the print out will be sent home to be signed before the 5 points can be received.

Assignment Planners

Assignment planners are required and are to be brought everyday to school. The planner is a student's "life line" for assignments. You may also write notes to me in the planner (e.g.: student had difficulty with an assignment, something came up and student was unable to complete assignment, questions or concerns, etc.). It is the student's responsibility to use it to assist him/her in completing all given assignments. I ask that you monitor this document on a daily basis throughout the year.

Classroom Rules and Procedures

All school and district regulations are to be followed. (See Student Handbook)

All students are to use their assignment planner on a daily basis

No food or drinks in the classroom except clear water bottles containing water. No gum is allowed at school.

Arrive on time. Any student who is not in his/her seat when the bell rings is considered tardy. Please see the student handbook for more information regarding tardy policies.

Be courteous of self, fellow classmates, your classroom, and the teachers. Respect the rights of others. No one shall behave in such a manner as to interrupt the ability of another to learn or teach. This also applies to substitute teachers who may take over the class.

Use appropriate language at all times and never use put-downs. No bullying!!!

Respect property. Take care of your property, the property of others, and the property of the school.

Be organized and prepared for class. Have pens, pencils, paper, binders, and required books in class each day.

Complete all assignments and turn them in on time.

Keep your hands and feet to yourself. Do not toss or throw anything around in the room.

Absence Policy

Work missed due to excused absences may be turned in late; however, this does not apply to projects that were assigned before the absence. It is the student's responsibility to check the homework boards for the missing assignments and worksheets. Furthermore, it is the student's responsibility to get any other information he/she may need due to the absence.

Homework/Late Work Policy

It is essential that students turn in their work on time. However, I will accept late assignments, but the student will only receive partial credit (60% of original grade). Homework that is not turned in is replaced with a "Missing Homework Ticket." A student will fill out this ticket and turn it in instead of the assignment. On the ticket, the student

must explain why the assignment was not completed on time.

Suggested Materials

3 ring binder with dividers labeled for each subject
Supply of college rule lined paper (8.5" x 11")
At least 2 black or blue ink pens
At least 2 sharpened pencils
Carrying case or pouch for writing supplies
SSR book for reading
Box(es) of tissues to donate to the classroom

Once again, I am excited to have the opportunity to work with your child this year. Please do not hesitate to call me before or after school at (602) 449-4200 ext. 4239. For those who prefer email, you may reach me at slatham@pvschools.net

Sincerely,

Sarah Latham

**PLEASE READ THE ENTIRE STUDY SKILLS COURSE
DESCRIPTION AND RETURN THIS SECTION FOR CREDIT BY
AUGUST 15TH**

We have read and discussed your course description and policies with

_____.

(Student Name)

Student Signature

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date