

*I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand.*

Chinese Proverb

August 31, 2009

Dear Student & Family,

Welcome to 8th grade! We are looking forward to an exciting year of learning with you! This year we will study a diverse range of topics including Elizabethan drama, the empires of the past, and the dynamic changes of the earth. We will have the opportunity to explore through research, use variables to solve real life problems, read from primary sources and novels, and further develop our abilities to analyze information and think critically. To ensure each student's success, there are several guidelines to be kept in mind. They are as follows:

**Classroom expectations:**

- Respect teacher and other students.
- Take pride in their work.
- Arrive to class on time. If late, please have an appropriate pass.
- Participate positively in the classroom.
- Readily ask questions if confused or uncertain about something.
- Please take advantage of extra help sessions -- We are available and eager to assist.

**Homework assignments:**

- Will be assigned on a nightly basis. (Exclusive of project work and novels.)
- Is supportive of further understanding of material.
- Is expected to be completed on time.
- All homework must meet the following criteria:
  1. Contain the proper heading:  
name, period we meet  
date
  1. Be written neatly and in complete sentences unless otherwise instructed; it is vital that students practice writing fluently and clearly whenever possible.

Phil Wheeler, G  
Sept. 8, 2003

**Tests, quizzes, and projects:**

- Tests and quizzes will be given throughout a unit of study.
- Projects will be assigned throughout the year. (Time lines will accompany each project.) These projects are in-depth exercises, designed to give the students a deeper understanding of selected facets of the subject areas as well as put them directly in charge of their own learning. We also believe that projects are excellent exercises for fine tuning organizational skills and learning true time management. Please review instructions sheets and rubrics with your child.
- Please note that any long-term assignment (over one week in length) will have a final due date. The project may be turned in at any time up until the final day. If a student is absent on the due date, he or she is expected to make arrangements for the assignment to be handed in on time.
- Homework, essays, tests, quizzes, projects and class work all play a critical role in the mastering of the standards being assessed.

## Contact Information

Main Office (to reach any of us).....(508) 841-1207

Teacher:	Class:	Email:
Anne Tombeno	social studies	atombeno@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us
Jeremy Mularella	science	jmularella@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us
Kara Hadavi	math	khadavi@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us
Derek Pizzuto	language arts	dpizzuto@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us
Melissa McDonald	learning specialist	mmcdonald@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us

Team webpage: [www.8gold.org](http://www.8gold.org) Please use this resource to check for class updates, resources, team news, and school-wide news.

The above guidelines are meant to be useful and assist each student in realizing his/her full potential. We look forward to working with each student in accomplishing these goals. If you have any questions for us, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

Anne Tombeno

Jeremy Mularella

Kara Hadavi

Derek M. Pizzuto

Melissa McDonald

## Language Arts: Mr. Pizzuto, Room 309

This year, our theme in English is "How can a voice be heard?" Much of our lives - indeed, much of human history - focuses on a person or people's effort to be heard by those around them. We will examine literature from this perspective - critically reading and hearing works presented by many voices - including our own. We will also develop our own voices, through writing exercises that range from personal reflections to writing formal papers. This course is designed to help students improve as readers and writers and, just as importantly, as speakers and listeners. Our interesting readings and challenging writing assignments, coupled with opportunities for creative projects and presentations, will help all of our students develop as readers, writers, and critical thinkers. Here are a few details:

### **Internet Use: (note these sites can be reached via [www.8gold.org](http://www.8gold.org))**

In order to help all students achieve success, I have created an 8<sup>th</sup> grade Language Arts webpage which can be accessed through [8gold.org](http://8gold.org). This site contains links sections that focus on key facets of the class, including notes and handouts. Students and parents are welcome to explore this page at any time!

Please note that homework and class summaries are posted online on a weekly basis - again, see our team page. You may use this site to check on assignments look for information regarding when assignments have been handed back, and to contact me via email. Students are welcome to contact me and their peers via the discussion board for help with projects and assignments. I do not guarantee that I will always be able to respond on the same evening, but I will do my best. Also, PLEASE don't wait to email me until 10 pm on the night before a month-long project is due (unless it is an emergency)! I GUARANTEE I will not be amused...

### **Literature:**

It is important for students to develop strong reading habits. Towards this end, reading novels will be assigned throughout the year. So that our students may feel personally invested in these readings, there will be opportunities for students to choose books that fit their preferences.

### **Composition:**

During all writing, I will emphasize writing as process: students will be expected to brainstorm ideas, produce initial drafts, and submit their drafts for both peer and self-editing before producing a final draft. Students will develop a critical eye as a reader and as a writer, learning to give and accept positive criticism. The fruits of this effort will be available to you in the writing folders kept by each student. These folders chronicle each student's development as a writer over the course of the year. You are welcome to see your child's writing folder at any time, over night. During the year, students will produce a number of analytical essays and a longer research paper that combines social studies and language arts curricula. The cornerstone of our essays will be the Essay Map Format - a slideshow of this is available on my website and can be viewed from home.

Welcome to 8<sup>th</sup> grade English - I look forward to an exciting year!

Derek Pizzuto

## Social Studies: Ms. Tombeno, Room 312

This year will be an exciting one for the students in my classes. We will be learning key historical concepts in a highly engaging way.

Our class is using *History Alive!* a program that truly engages students in learning. You will be an active participant instead of a passive observer, experiencing history through innovative teaching practices that include dramatic role-playing, creative simulations, dynamic group projects, and writing from a historical perspective.

Curious about what we will be learning about this year? We will be covering the period between ancient and modern times, or the medieval world: life in medieval Europe and the Byzantine empire; the history of Muslim empires and the rise of Islam; cultures of West Africa; and Europe's Renaissance, Reformation, European Exploration, and the Scientific Revolution.

In this curriculum, as with any text covering this time period, students will learn about a number of sensitive and controversial topics, including the development of different world religions. The curriculum is designed to deal with these topics objectively, respectfully, and in accordance with standards set throughout the state.

Here are some tips for supporting your child's academic progress in this class.

- Discuss history and current events with your child, and listen to what your child has to say.
- Ask to see their Student Notebook on a regular basis, so you can see for yourself what your child is learning.
- Provide a quiet study place, free from distractions.
- Finally, extend learning beyond the walls of the classroom by taking your child to historical sites or museums. Point out that history is all around us, that it shapes the present and the future, and that every one of us can play an active and positive role in it.

I want to thank you in advance for your support. I am looking forward to an exciting, enjoyable, and enriching year working with you and your child.

-Anne Tombeno

## Integrated Algebra/Geometry: Ms. Hadavi, Room 310

### Course Overview

Students will be taking an integrated algebra / geometry course this year. Both algebraic and geometric concepts will be studied and students will work towards making connections between these two very important areas of mathematics.

Below, I am including some information about our math program, Connected Mathematics Project 2 (CMP2). The publishers offer some great online tools that are helpful for students and parents.

The CMP parent website is located at: <http://connectedmath.msu.edu/parents/>

To view the math textbooks online:

1. go to <http://www.pearsonsuccessnet.com>
2. the username is: oakcmp
3. the password is: grade8
4. click on login
5. click on "Student Edition" on the left side of the page
6. click on "Click Here" and the main menu will launch
7. choose Grade 8 at the top of the page
8. each unit of study may be accessed by clicking on the "Contents" tab at the left

The units we will be studying this year are:

- Thinking with Mathematical Models
- Looking for Pythagoras
- Growing, Growing, Growing
- Kaleidoscopes, Hubcaps & Mirrors
- Say It With Symbols

### Class Expectations

All students are expected to treat each other respectfully and to help make the learning environment a positive and comfortable place. Our goal is to help all students achieve the learning standards and to leave 8th grade with a deeper understanding and appreciation of mathematics.

### Grading

All students will work towards meeting the learning standards for each unit. In order to be successful, students must put forth their best effort on all homework assignments, use class time effectively, and seek out extra help when needed. During each unit, students will complete quizzes, as a tool for checking for understanding, and complete a summative assessment at the conclusion of each unit. Students will have the opportunity to retake all summative assessments, after attending extra help, in order to demonstrate proficiency on the assessed standards.

### Extra Help

Extra help will be offered after school on most days, except Tuesdays. Students should check in with the teacher, before the end of the day, to make an appointment.

I look forward to an interesting and exciting year in math class! -Kara Hadavi



## Science: Mr. Mularella, Room 311

### Class Overview:

I'm here to help you learn. If you are having difficulty at any time, please do not hesitate to come see me. I'm here most days before/after school as well as during lunch. You may also email me at either [jmularella@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us](mailto:jmularella@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us) or [mrmularella@gmail.com](mailto:mrmularella@gmail.com). If you would like a quick response or are sending me an attachment, please use the Gmail account.

Homework will be posted daily on the team's website. There will also be links to helpful websites and class documents. If you are ever absent or forgot what the homework assignment was, check the website! Remember though, it is **YOUR** responsibility to find out what you missed and what needs to be made up.

You will be doing many inquiry labs and hands-on activities to help learn and reinforce science concepts. All students will be expected to participate in a team science fair to be held one day after school. You will research, design and conduct an experiment that you are interested in. You may work by yourself, with a partner or in a group of three. This is a very fun and long-term project that will extend over all three trimesters. Students with exemplary projects will have the opportunity to represent our school in the Worcester Regional Science Fair.

### Science Curriculum:

#### Trimester 1 (Chemistry)

- Properties of Matter
- Elements, Compounds, and Mixtures

#### Trimester 2 (Physics)

- Motion
- Potential and Kinetic Energy
- Heat Transfer

#### Trimester 3 (Earth Science)

- Plate Tectonics
- Weathering, Erosion, and Deposition
- Geologic History

### Science Assessments:

Students will be taking frequent assessments in class. These are all mandatory and must be completed in a timely manner if a student is absent. Retakes on assessments will be available to students who put forth the effort and do the following:

1. All homework and class work is completed.
2. Completes additional review assignments.
3. Attends extra help sessions reviewing specific concepts.

I am looking forward to a great year with you all!

-Jeremy Mularella

**Academic Support: Ms. McDonald, Room 307**

I am looking forward to working with all of you this new year! While in academic support or learning skills, we will be working together on class curriculum as well as strategies to be most successful this year and years to come! Learning skills is a time to review material learned in other classes as well as a time to preview material that will be taught throughout the year. I will be working closely with the team in order to help each student succeed and strategies that help you do so!

It is my goal to demonstrate a partnership and mutual understanding of the importance of each child's educational progress. We can accomplish this through an ongoing dialogue and good communication between the school and home. Expectations in the learning skills classroom coincide with that of any other classroom, students are expected to come prepared both mentally and physically and demonstrate respect and a desire for learning. I look forward to a great year with each of you!

Please feel free to contact me at [mmcdonald@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us](mailto:mmcdonald@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us) if you have any questions or concerns!

-Ms. McDonald