

# Sixth Grade English Language Arts Class



**Mrs. Garza**

**Baines Middle School**

Welcome! I'm so glad you are my student! In this class, we have a safe community of learners who work collaboratively as well as individually to grow as readers and writers. Our goal is to be able to read and write effectively for all areas of life, including school, home, and just life in general. The skills learned in this class are important for success in all other classes as well as whatever future goals you are aiming for. I am excited to get to help you become the best you can be.

## **About your teacher**

This is my 35<sup>th</sup> year of teaching, with 14 of those years spent here at Baines Middle School. I am an original Longhorn! My daughter is a junior at Texas A&M and works as a manager at Raising Cane's. I am also the mom of a sweet dog named Cookie. I love to travel, read, and solve puzzles.

## **Technology in the Classroom**

**Microsoft Office 365**: All students have a school email address through Microsoft Office 365. The email address can be found on Skyward under the Student Info tab. The password for the email account is the same password that you use to log on to computers at school.

**Schoology**: Schoology is a website and an app that can be used for quizzes, online discussions, and other assignments. Please have your parent help you download the app on your device, and check that you can login. The login is your Office 365 email and password.

**TEAMS**: TEAMS is the app that will be used for live online learning meetings. You can access the meetings by clicking on the invite in your TEAMS calendar. Click on the words Join Microsoft Teams Meeting which will be located right above the FBISD logo in the invite.

## **Be Prepared**

The first step in getting good grades and learning is to be present. If you're absent, please check with me for what you missed. I use my teacher calendar on Schoology to keep you updated about quizzes, tests, and due dates. I will also post assignments, directions and rubrics there. You are expected to have paper and a writing utensil available every day during online learning.

## **Grades**

The District requirement is that teachers take six daily grades and three major grades.

Although Schoology has a gradebook, it is not the official gradebook. You should always check Skyward for your official grades.

There could be assignments that are not graded through Schoology, so the average that shows in Schoology could possibly be different than the grade in Skyward. Remember, Skyward is the official gradebook, so that will be the grade on your report card.

### **Workshop model**

BMS ELA follows the Workshop Model for Reading and Writing. This means I will teach a short mini-lesson on the topic of the day, give you time to work collaboratively and/or independently, and then we'll come back together to see how much we've grown and talk about where we are going from there. This will mean you will likely not have a lot of outside homework, as long as you use your class time wisely to focus and accomplish your work in class. This year we are focusing on a Big Question: What challenges do children across cultures face? I'm really excited about this as I think it's important that as learners, we are aware of the problems and issues we all face. I hope this expanding mindset helps build empathy and problem-solving skills in us all.

### **Contact Info**

**Kathryn Garza**

**Phone:** 281-634-6946

**Email:** [Kathryn.garza@fortbendisd.com](mailto:Kathryn.garza@fortbendisd.com)

**Website:**

<https://www.fortbendisd.com/Domains/5881>

**Conference Period:** 2nd period (10:15-11:15)

### **Reading Workshop**

We will do a lot of independent reading, so be sure to choose books you love! We will use those books to practice the reading skills we learn in class, and you'll conference with me about how you are using those skills. We will also read passages together as a class, and I will read several books aloud to the class. I'll give you advance notice about titles, in case you want to get your own copy to follow along. The first read aloud is *A Long Walk to Water* by Linda Sue Park.

### **Writing Workshop**

We will look at many models of good writing, learn how the writers achieved it through special writing skills, and aim for our own writing masterpieces! You will have independent conferences with me in order to discuss your writing and find ways to grow as a writer.

### **Extra help**

I am available Mondays and Thursdays from 2:30 – 3:00 p.m. during online learning. These times will change when we go back to face to face learning.

### **Independent Reading**

All students should always have a book of their own choice to read. I expect you to read a minimum of 140 minutes each week (20 minutes a day. After our live mini-lessons during online learning, I will often ask you to apply the learning to your independent reading book. Several daily grades will be connected to the independent reading, so be sure that you find good books that hold your interest.

I'm looking forward to a great year, and I'm excited to see you become the best sixth grader you can be!

Kathryn Garza

