

# Boston Collegiate Charter School

## *Eighth Grade Writing Course Description and Syllabus*

Mr. Nathan

(617) 265-1172 (x 327)

Best times to call: 7am – 7:30 am, 4-6 pm

[jnathan@bostoncollegiate.org](mailto:jnathan@bostoncollegiate.org)

### Introduction

Welcome to 8<sup>th</sup> grade! My name is Mr. Nathan, and I am thrilled to be your teacher this year in writing. In this class, you will continue to develop your writing skills in several different ways. You will learn about the structure of different types of essays; you will follow the same process of prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing in every unit we complete; and most of all, you will write—every day, and in many different ways. We will experiment with different genres of writing including creative and analytical essays, and we will engage in weekly activities to build our grammar and spelling skills. My goal is that you will emerge from 8<sup>th</sup> grade writing as confident writers and thinkers who can structure ideas and express them clearly and convincingly. We will also work together to prepare you for the MCAS exam in March, and you will leave 8<sup>th</sup> grade writing prepared for the challenges of writing in high school classes and beyond.

### Units:

#### 1<sup>st</sup> Semester

- Unit 0: Review of the Writing Process
- Unit 1: Descriptive Sketch
- Unit 2: Analytical Essay
- Unit 3: Memoir writing
- Unit 4: Research Reports

#### 2<sup>nd</sup> Semester

- Unit 5: Poetry Analysis
- Unit 6: Compare and Contrast Essays
- Unit 7: Persuasive Essays
- Unit 8: Revision Project/ Final Exam

### Grading Policy

- 20% Class work
  - This includes anything and everything we do in class, from discussions to worksheets to peer activities to daily engagement and focus in class. **Your class work grade is a reflection of your effort and focus in class.**
- 20% Homework
  - You will be given 20-30 minutes of homework every night to strengthen skills learned in class, and you must turn in homework to the folders in morning advisory unless you are specifically told to bring it to class. Assignments without names or turned in late or incorrectly will not be accepted; additionally, being confused on homework or having computer problems are not excuses for not doing homework. If you are confused, you may contact me or a classmate early in the afternoon for help; however, remember that copying homework (or “plagiarizing”) is cheating. Homework will usually be graded on a scale of check-plus (10 points), check (8 points), and check-minus (6 points), which could earn you a PQ and homework club. **Your homework grade is a reflection of your effort and commitment at home.**

- 30% Minor assessments
  - This includes spelling and grammar quizzes, interim assessments, and exit tickets.  
**Your minor assessment grade is a clear reflection of your level of mastery as a writer.**
- 30% Major assessments
  - This includes tests and major essays, of which we will write about 2 per quarter.  
**Your major assessment grade is a clear reflection of your level of mastery on our class projects.**
  - *Lastly, a Final Exam, taken in June, will account for 10% of the yearly grade.*

*Letter grades are calculated as follows:*

A: 90-100%

B: 80-89.9%

C: 70-79.9%

F: Below 70%

### **Class procedures:**

I expect every student to be focused, participating, and asking questions during every moment of class. You should enter class silently and depart class silently, and you must always follow my directions. I will always try to create a class environment where we can work productively, and activities will include independent and group work, depending on what will help us write most effectively and productively. Of course, we will discuss the specific procedures for writing class in detail at the beginning of the year

### **Materials that must be brought to class daily:**

I expect you to bring a three ring binder, dedicated to writing class, every day for the entire year. The binder will have 5 sections:

1. Year-long documents
2. Spelling and Grammar
3. Classwork
4. Returned work
5. Lined paper

### **You should purchase the following for class:**

- A one-inch three-ring binder
- Five binder dividers
- A packet of filler paper
- Pencils
- Blue or black pens
- A red pen for editing
- Several different colors of highlighters
- A small pair of scissors
- A small Ziploc baggie

Name:

Group:

Date:

## Course Description Mini Scavenger Hunt

*\*\*Answer all questions in complete sentences!\*\**

- 1) How will Mr. Nathan usually grade homework?

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- 2) Are you allowed to contact Mr. Nathan after school hours by phone or e-mail, or is it only ok for your parents to do so?

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- 3) What writing utensils will you need to bring to 8<sup>th</sup> grade writing class every day?

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- 4) If you arrive at home at 6:00 pm one school night in October and realize that you do not understand the writing homework due the next day, what do you do?

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- 5) Looking over the course description, what is one comment, question, or concern you have for Mr. Nathan about writing class this year?

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- 6) What is one thing you want Mr. Nathan to know about you as a writer or a student at the start of this year?

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Dear Parents and Guardians,

I am thrilled to have your child in my class this year in 8<sup>th</sup> grade writing. I am always available to answer any of your questions or concerns; please do not hesitate to contact me by e-mail or by phone. I look forward to a fun, rigorous year together!

Once you and your child have reviewed the course description, please sign and comment (if necessary) below. Your child should return this page to Mr. Nathan on Thursday for his or her first homework grade.

Sincerely,

Mr. Nathan  
[jnathan@bostoncollegiate.org](mailto:jnathan@bostoncollegiate.org)  
617-265-1172 (x327)

*I have thoroughly read the above material and understand the expectations set forth for Writer's Workshop 8.*

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Student name

Student Signature

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Parent name

Parent Signature

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Best way to be reached (phone number or e-mail address)

**Comments for Mr. Nathan:**