

Fifth Grade English Language Arts (ELA)

Course Description/Mission

*Adda Clevenger Upper School ELA:
Building foundational knowledge and exploring creative depths*

The primary goal of Adda Clevenger's upper school ELA program is to provide student-centered ELA instruction in reading, writing, language, and philosophical inquiry, while also fostering each child's creative potential. This is achieved by knowing every student in-depth. In fact, each year our primary texts and projects often change based on the needs and interests of that year's students. By discovering every child's learning style, strengths, weaknesses, and interests, and then providing them a variety of student-centered learning opportunities, as well as a safe space to explore their unique potential, students become academically competitive and creatively courageous.

In fifth grade ELA, students receive instruction over the course of four units: Magical Realism, Modern Realistic Fiction, Classics: Fantasy Fiction, and Dystopian Fiction. Each unit relates to our 5th grade yearly college and career readiness theme: **A Meaningful Life**. As students progress through each unit, they will ask the overarching philosophical questions, "What is meaning?" "Who decides what constitutes a meaningful life?" "What are things which I, personally, find meaningful?" "What if other people don't agree with what I find meaningful?" "How did the characters in our primary text define a meaningful life?" "Were those characters able to find meaning?" These questions regarding a meaningful life are explicitly investigated in order to facilitate the ACS mission to ensure students make the developmental, social, and intellectual progress necessary to become leaders at school and beyond.

Each student-centered unit begins with a primary reading focus and culminates with a writing performance task which mirrors the prior reading. Over the course of the year, students will receive standard-specific instruction in the following major domains: Reading: *Foundational Skills*, Reading: *Literature*, Reading: *Informational Texts*, Writing: *Informational*, Writing: *Narrative*, Writing: *Persuasive*, Language: *Conventions*, Language: *Vocabulary*. In addition to our in-class reading and writing, students will complete 600 pages of independent reading and construct two critical responses to literature to demonstrate their comprehension of the texts.

Text Examples (These Can and Often Do Change from Year to Year)

Primary ELA Texts:

The Girl Who Drank the Moon

Because of Mr. Terupt

Journey to the Center of the Earth

The Giver

READING and WRITING ACROSS the CURRICULUM

In addition to our ELA units, students also receive 4 Reading and Writing Across the Curriculum units, 2 in Science and 2 in Social Studies.

1st Semester:

Social Studies Text - *Sign of the Beaver*

Science Text - *George's Secret Universe*

2nd Semester:

Social Studies Text - *Chains*

Science Text - *The Earth Dragon Awakes: The SF Earthquake of 1906*