



My name is Mary Alice Bender. I was born in Columbia, South Carolina, but I grew up in Andover, Kansas. I graduated with honors from Wichita State University in Wichita, Kansas. My bachelor's degree is in Secondary English Education, a subject I love and enjoy teaching. Two years ago my husband and I decided to move to Utah, and I have been loving the state ever since! This will be my third year teaching 7th and 8th grade Language Arts at Freedom Academy, and I'm very excited to have both new and returning students in my class.

My husband will graduate this year with a degree in Outdoor Recreation Management at UVU, so we spend much of our time outdoors. On the weekends, my husband and I love to go rock climbing, hiking, mountain biking, backpacking, and camping. I also love to read and do so voraciously. I'm always on the lookout for a great young adult novel to add to my classroom library. My goal is to get every student to find at least one genre to love and read with fervor.

I believe reading and writing are the keys to success, as they open doors to worlds of opportunities. Throughout the school year, I will help the students develop these skills so that they continue on to high school and life as successful individuals. I will also help the students understand the importance of education and reading because, "Knowledge is power. Information is liberating. Education is the premise of progress, in every society, in every family," Kofi Annan.

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