

English 9 Course Syllabus
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Ninth grade English is a requirement for graduation for both high schools in the Arlington School District. This class meets the ninth grade English requirement, and is therefore a class that must be passed in order to graduate from high school.

Course Objectives

The English language is one of the more complex forms of communication in modern society. To master the language is as difficult a task as there is, and to grasp the basic functions of the language is only slightly less difficult. The aims of this course are two-fold. The first goal is to present the student with a means to grasp the language via comprehension of the written word; in other words, the aim of the course is to get you to understand what you read. The second goal of the class is to help the student to express what they have learned and what they think and feel about it through the written word. The class will use a number of techniques, styles, and texts (both fiction and non-fiction) to address these objectives. In turn, the student will be able to meet, and surpass, the state-standards of reading comprehension and writing.

Materials

The student **MUST** have the following materials by the third day of class and **MUST** bring them to class everyday:

- 1) At least two functioning pens (blue or black ink)
- 2) A spiral notebook of at least 150 pages to be used **ONLY** for this class
- 3) A three-ring binder (at least two inches) with at least 100 sheets of notebook paper

The following items are **NOT** required, but are suggested:

- a) Small, paperback dictionary
- b) Zippered pen pocket that can be placed in a three-ring binder
- c) Hole-puncher
- d) Folder for handouts
- e) Clear sheet protectors

Furthermore, there will be textbooks that the students need for class. A more detailed account of these texts will come in the following days.

Handouts and Texts

There will be a number of handouts distributed in class that will either pertain to individual texts, or are designed to help the student to comprehend those texts. Once these handouts are passed out, it becomes the responsibility of the student to internalize the information and retain the handout for use at a later time.

The texts for this class will be varied and will run the gauntlet from traditional novels and short stories, to newspapers, magazines, on-line texts, and even an occasional comic book or graphic novel. Additionally, a good number of texts for this class will be provided by the instructor from his own personal collection (in other words, I have purchased class sets of some texts to be used in the classroom). With that in mind I request that if a student misplaces any text from this class, they purchase a new copy of the same text to replace it. I do not accept payment in lieu of a replacement as I have already invested a good deal of time acquiring these books the first time. I feel that my time is better spent working with your children, rather than shopping for more texts.

Learning Teams

During the first week of the semester, the class will be divided up into learning teams. There will be many group assignments done throughout the semester, as well as games, projects, and general class dealings that will be done via the learning team. Often times, points will be awarded to the teams based on their in-class performance. These points will be displayed on a scoreboard in the classroom as well as a digital scoreboard at the class website. The team that finishes the semester with the highest point total in each class will see a 2% increase ON THE GRADE OF EVERY TEAM MEMBER. In other words, if you finish the semester with a grade of 88%, but your team wins, the grade gets pushed up to a 90%.

Homework and Assignments

Although we spend a great deal of time in class in non-specific discussion about the texts that we read, the general class environment will be rather structured. There will be specific homework, classwork, and reading assignments EVERY DAY including weekends. It is YOUR RESPONSIBILLITY to keep up with the assignments whether you are in class or not. Please follow these guidelines when addressing homework and classwork matters:

- The single-most important component of this class is a daily journal. Students will have a topic on which to write EVERY DAY in this journal, and they will have vocabulary words to define and place into sentences on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday also within this journal. Both the topics and the vocabulary words will be related to the text we are reading at the time. If a student does not finish this work in class, IT BECOMES HOMEWORK, AND MUST BE DONE BY THE NEXT DAY.

- At least once per week, there will be some form of reading comprehension exercise based on whatever text we are reading. The assignments will generally be due within the next two days, however specific due dates will be issued with every activity. These assignments will be worth ten points each.

- There will be multiple essays assigned in class. These will range from in-class writes with a limited time frame, to more elaborate formal essays that will be done over the course of days, and sometimes weeks. There will be one formal writing assignment for each unit that is covered, and there will be a minimum of four formal writing projects each semester.

- Every Friday, a vocabulary quiz will be administered based on the vocabulary words that were assigned throughout the week. The point values for the quiz will

vary, but will generally be worth ten to twenty points each. Both word knowledge and spelling will be tested.

-Homework is graded based on accuracy, degree of completion, and promptness. To ensure a good grade, make sure that you follow the guidelines of the assignment, complete the assignment and turn it in when it is called for. If the assignment is turned in at any time after it is called for (even seconds), it will be considered late and will be subject to a penalty. Time waits for no man (or woman) and Mr. Hurst is no different.

-Late work will only be accepted when accompanied by an excused absence or prior clearance from Mr. Hurst. When a student is absent, they are to ask OTHER STUDENTS OR CHECK THE WEBSITE for the assignments that they missed, and they must turn them in to Mr. Hurst within one full day of returning from the absence.

-All assignments done for this course will be considered for grading. This includes notes on guest speakers, lectures, films, test preparation material, and anything else that is done in class.

-There will be some assignments that are done in class and therefore cannot be made up.

-On major assignments (group projects, papers, presentations) the due date is just that, THE DUE DATE. This is the latest point that the assignment can be turned in and if a student is not present on that due date, they must seek other means to turn in the assignment on that due date.

-Lastly, there will be a major assignment each semester that will build on prior skills, and lay the groundwork for future learning. In order to get a passing grade in the class, you MUST complete all of the poetry activities in the first semester, and all of the *Romeo and Juliet* activities in the second semester. Regardless of prior performance in the class, if a student does not complete both of these assignments, they will not pass.

Attendance

Attendance is a large part of the grade in this English class. Many of the activities are done in class, and it is therefore necessary for students to be in attendance as much as is possible. With that in mind, all students begin the semester with a perfect attendance grade. Every unexcused absence or tardy from the first day on will result in deducted points from their final grade in the class.

A student who arrives to class more than ten minutes late will be considered absent from the entire class session and will need to clear that absence. A student who arrives to class between one and ten minutes late will be considered tardy and will be subject to the following actions:

-One tardy: A warning

-Two tardies: Points deducted from your team score and your grade

-Three tardies: Points deducted and 1 passing period (or lunch) forfeited

-Four tardies: Points deducted and 3 passing periods (or lunches) forfeited

-Five tardies: Administrative disciplinary action

Grading

The traditional grading scale will be in effect for this class. Every student will begin the semester with an “A” and it will be their responsibility to maintain that grade. If a student appears to be approaching a non-passing grade, a parent conference will be scheduled as soon as is possible.

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| A+ = 100 | B = 83-86 | C- = 70-72 |
| A = 93-99 | B- = 80-82 | D+ = 67-69 |
| A- = 90-92 | C+ = 77-79 | D = 60-66 |
| B+ = 87-89 | C = 73-76 | Fail = Below 60 |

Parent Communication

Please feel free to contact me at anytime regarding your child’s performance, materials for the class, or any other matter pertaining to the class. I am more than happy to spend some time with any parent that is taking an active role in their child’s education. I can be reached at the phone number and email at the top of this syllabus. The best way to reach me is via email at misterhurst@hotmail.com. If you would like to meet in person, I am typically available any day, before or after school, EXCEPT TUESDAYS. We have staff meetings every Tuesday.

Class Website

For more information on the class, please feel free to check the class website at www.misterhurst.com. There are sections that display course descriptions, student grades, assignments, important links, team standings, and EXTRA CREDIT!

Homework Updates

If you do not have access to a computer all of the time, but do have a cell phone, you can receive updates as to what homework is being assigned, and when it is due directly to your cell phone. You must create an account at www.twitter.com, and “follow” me with this name “HurstEnglish9”. I will update it multiple times each week.

Electronic Devices Policy

Unless I SPECIFICALLY state that there is an exception to the rule, ALL CELL PHONES AND PORTABLE MUSIC DEVICES MUST BE OFF AND OUT OF SIGHT IN CLASS!!!! If a student has a dire circumstance where a phone must be on, I need to be informed before class begins. Failure to comply with this rule will result in the following consequences:

- A warning will be issued and the student will be asked to put the device away.
- The device will be taken away and will be held until the end of the day.
- The device will be taken away and held until a parent can come in for a formal conference.
- The device will be taken away until the end of the semester.

All of the afore mentioned consequences will be accompanied by a write-up or an office referral.

Student Responsibilities

- Arrive to class on time, prepared to learn
- Complete assignments and tasks to the best of your ability
- Ask questions when you do not understand!
- Follow all directions the first time
- RESPECT ALL WHO ENTER OUR CLASS!!!!!!

Teacher Responsibilities

- Arrive to class on time, prepared to teach
- Provide assignments and tasks that reflect the ability of the class
- Clarify answers when students do not understand!
- Provide clear directions the first time
- RESPECT ALL WHO ENTER OUR CLASS!!!!!!

Student Name (Print)

Student Signature

Parent Name (Print)

Parent Signature

Parent Phone Number

Parent Email Address