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Welcome, parents, to the wonderful world of English 10!

We are already well underway in a great year of thinking, reading, writing and learning. I look forward to spending this year with your children and hope that it is an incredible year of growth for them.

Here are just a few thoughts about the year...

We will be reading (selections from the following list):

A Separate Peace

Our Town

The Catcher in the Rye

Local Girls

The Other Wes Moore

Ethan Frome

Black Boy

Lord of the Flies

Macbeth

A Raisin in the Sun

The Short Prose Reader

(bold indicates core text)

*Students will ALWAYS be reading an independent reading text that they have selected for themselves. They are required to do 2 hours of reading in this text per week (with 10 minutes per day of that accomplished at the beginning of class). Research shows that, in order to make adequate progress in reading skills and be prepared for the volume of reading that is expected of college freshmen, students need to be reading at least 20 texts per year. Our Rigorous Independent Reading program helps to get them there. And they enjoy it!

We will be writing:

- Reader responses to books, stories, plays, poems and non-fiction
- Analysis paragraphs and essays
- Creative pieces, including poems, blog-style pieces, and narratives

A few questions you may have...

How will my student be assessed?

Marking period grades will reflect the following:

- Major assessments (projects, essays, tests, Shared Inquiry Discussions)
- Informal responses and short writings
- Quizzes, classwork, homework
- Independent Reading
- Active Participation

A marking period grade will reflect the skills and standards we've worked on in the particular marking period.

Students will also take a midterm and final exam (essay exams), each of which counts for 10% of the final course grade.

What should I see my child doing at home for English?

Most nights, there will be assigned reading for homework so you should see your child with a book for English class. Encourage your child to approach reading for English class as he/she does other homework, rather than intending to leave it for last when he/she is in bed. Active readers will be more successful readers. End of day reading should be pleasure reading of their own choice. They will also always have an independent read going (see information above in "texts").

You should see them annotating when they read, using sticky-notes or their notebook.

Some writing is done in class so I can help them with their process and they can conference with each other, but there will also be some assignments that require drafting, rewriting and polishing at home. At times, you should see them drafting and revising their writing.

What can my student do to be successful?

Be on time and prepared for class and ACTIVELY engaged in what we're doing. Asking questions, contributing to discussions, and keeping up with the reading are all important to success. Students are encouraged to seek extra-help if they need it. If at any time they are confused about their progress or feeling unsure of how to proceed in their learning, they should speak with me.

How can I help my child be successful?

Encourage them to take their English class seriously as the means to improving their communication skills. No matter where they go in school, career and life, the skills we practice and hone will be important. Let them know how you use communication skills in your daily life and career.

All writers can benefit from a supportive but critical reader. **If they will let you read their writing, read it!** Ask them questions about it and give them honest feedback on the depth of their ideas and the clarity of their written communication. If it doesn't make sense to you, it's probably not going to make sense to me or another reader. Even just helping them proofread and edit can make a major difference in the quality of product.

Model reading in your home. Show them that you take time to read. You don't have to read the great novels of the world to be a role model. Newspapers, magazines, non-fiction, online reading... these are all examples of literacy that they need to see in their lives. You might even want to consider reading the novels we're reading in class as we read them. What great discussions you could have!

Ask them questions (they LOVE that!) about their opinions and ask them to explain their thinking. About anything. If a movie was good, why was it good? If a song is their favorite, why is it their favorite?

How can I contact you if I need to do so?

The most efficient way to reach me is via email. If we need to speak by phone, let me know the best number at which I can reach you between 7am – 3pm. I can also be reached by phone through the B house office at 452-4513.

If your child has a concern or a question, please encourage him/her to speak with me directly as a first step.

What about state assessment and the new Connecticut Core Standards?

As you may be aware, the state of CT has adopted the new Connecticut Core Standards, a set of standards which promise to promote increased college and career readiness. While much of our practice in the English department has been aligned to the spirit of these standards for years, shifts will take place to put more focus on non-fiction reading, research, and an even heavier emphasis on close text reading. State testing at the high school level has just recently changed again. Students used to take the CAPT in four areas as 10th graders; in 2014 and 2015, they took the SBAC in grade 11 but that has since been abandoned by the State Department of Education. Now, all CT students will take the SAT as 11th graders as their major standardized state assessment. Students will prepare for the testing in many ways. The verbal skills demanded on the state tests are embedded in the English curriculum and others. Being able to read closely and comprehend, analyze, and interpret literature and literary non-fiction and being able to explain and support ideas about literature and non-fiction are cornerstones of the grade 10 English curriculum. Additionally, the writing conventions and concepts taught in our writing curriculum are aligned with the SAT.

Please encourage your child to take all standardized testing seriously and strive to do his/her best every day and during testing.

Areas of note:

Please refer to the THS website to view the Reading, Writing, and Independent Thinking rubrics. Students will be assessed on these rubrics in several academic courses, including English.

Please refer to the THS website for the updated Attendance policy, Academic Honesty Policy and BYOD policy. All of these continue to evolve and dictate behavioral expectations for your child.

I look forward to a great year learning and growing with your child!