

Foundations: English 9H Course Syllabus and Guidelines

Mr. Tyler/2008-2009

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The Course: English 9H begins the high school English sequence and quickly moves away from the junior high curriculum. We will be concentrating on literature, grammar, vocabulary, and writing. **This course is a Pre-AP designated program.** This means that preparation in this class veers towards the AP Language and AP Literature courses you will be eligible for in your junior and senior year. Whether or not an assignment is graded, you should devote the necessary preparation to complete it as if it were a graded assignment. **Do not throw these pages away! They are extremely important! KEEP A COPY IN YOUR COMPUTER AND ONE IN YOUR BINDER. GIVE ONE TO YOUR PARENTS!**

REQUIRED MATERIALS

English 9 Binder: Each student is required to have (at least) a one-inch binder.

E-Mail: All students should have e-mailed me the first week of school. Please include parent(s) e-mail address and phone information. **PARENTS, e-mail is the fastest means to reach me!!! Please use it first if at all possible.**

Digital Notebook: Students may choose to keep a digital notebook, but will be required to do keep some hard copy pages in their one-inch binder. They also will have to have a jump drive and are responsible for keeping it up-to-date. Tragedies such as losing data is your risk...not mine.

Writing Instruments: All written work must be in **blue, black or purple pen**. All daily work must be in pencil. Have a red pen and a highlighter available for editing and annotations. I will not accept any written work using ink in any color other than blue, purple or black. Students are responsible for bringing their own pens and pencils. A 25 cent fee **or** a five point assignment deduction will be charged to purchase a pen or a pencil for class.

MAKING UP WORK WHEN YOU ARE ABSENT

If you are absent for any reason (sickness, appointment, Conditional Absence, out of school suspension), I expect you to stay caught up. That means that you will have to find out what we missed when you were out. You may do this in several ways: call a classmate (make sure the person is in your class and is reliable, stop by to see me the day after your absence, or check my [web site](#)). If, for example, you are out of class on Monday and you return to school Tuesday, see me Tuesday even though you won't be in my class that day to find out what you missed. If you are going to be out more than one day, request your assignments through the office. If you are going on a field trip or a conditional absence, you must see me before you leave to find out what you have to make up. In some cases you may have to do this work before you leave to receive full credit for it. You should always return to my class caught up to the point where you would be if you had not missed school. *If you do not follow this procedure, your work will be counted late when you return from an absence.* This policy supersedes any makeup policy that is in the student handbook.

Literature Textbook: *Elements of Literature*--Holt, Rinehart, and Winston. (rarely used)

HOMEWORK (see online comments at dothgrin9h.blogspot.com)

The amount of homework you have in this class varies by the assignments provides. If possible, I will give you class time to begin a homework assignment. **Use this time wisely; don't blow it off.** There are two reasons for giving you class time to get a head start on homework: First, it will give you a chance to get help from me if you run into trouble; and second, it will lessen your after-school workload. If your class uses this time to socialize, I will stop giving in-class time to start homework.

All homework must be turned in on full-size lined notebook paper **with no jagged left edge**. I suggest you purchase perforated paper so you can tear off the jagged edge that results when you tear paper out of the notebook it came in. **I will not accept any work that has a jagged left edge.** I have scissors in class; please trim your assignment before I collect it rather than waiting until I call for homework to be turned in.

Remember that the English Department plagiarism policy applies to homework too. Do not give your completed homework to a friend to copy because you will be in danger of failing the entire 9-week grading period if you do.

COURSE OVERVIEW: (to include but not limited to):

Readings: *A Separate Peace*, *The Hobbit*, *Animal Farm*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *The Odyssey*, *Romeo and Juliet*, "The Birds", "Scarlet Ibis", "Harrison Bergeron", "Poison", "The Necklace", and "The Gift of the Magi".

Grammar/Writing/Vocabulary: Students will also engage in essays varying from one paragraph in length to five paragraphs during the course of the year, including cause and effect, persuasive, and descriptive writing. Students will also actively work on increasing grammar and vocabulary skills, including root words.

QUIZZES AND TESTS

You will take quizzes and tests on a regular basis in this class. If you are absent the day of a quiz or test, **you must see me to make up the quiz and set up a make-up test during: 5th hour, after school, or if necessary, during class.**

GRADES

The grades you receive this year in your classes are among the first grades that will be sent to the colleges you apply to in four years. I use a point system, which research shows is the fairest way to grade. Using that system, small quizzes will be worth less than tests. **FINAL EXAMS ARE WORTH 20 PERCENT OF SEMESTER GRADE!**

See the point section on the next page.

A+	97-100	C+	77-79
A	93-96	C	74-76
A-	90-92	C-	70-73
B+	87-89	D+	67-69
B	83-86	D	63-66
B-	80-82	D-	60-62
		F	Below 60

ENGLISH 9H BINDER

You should have your binder with you every time you come to class, complete with loose leaf paper (and plenty of it). In addition, put all handouts that I give you in the section behind the divider marked "Class Handouts." I will hole punch or provide a hole punch for anything that you need to place in your binder.

Don't throw anything away unless I tell you it can be thrown away. I will collect these notebooks every 4 1/2 weeks (twice each grading period) and check to see that you are organizing your work. You will lose points if you don't have your notebook when I collect them. You will also lose points if items are out of order and/or if your notebook is so messy that I have a hard time finding things. Each notebook check is worth 25 to 50 points.

Among the point deductions I will take are the following:

- 2 points off for each missing or incomplete DOL included in that check,
- Up to 5 points off for poorly organized materials (handouts, DOLs, notes, etc.),
- Up to 10 points off for missing class notes,
- 1 point each for missing handouts,
- 5 points off for general notebook neatness. **This includes "graffiti" of any kind inside or outside your notebook,**
- 2 points off for unrepaired notebook after I tell you to repair it (next check). I will double this each time the damage isn't repaired.

CONDUCT

1. Be courteous to one another - This means do not slam books down on your desk, don't be rude to your classmates, and in general, don't be obnoxious. Prove adults are wrong about the teenage stereotype.
2. Be in your seat when the bell rings to start class.
3. Do not talk while I am talking or while other students are attempting to discuss an assignment.
4. **DO NOT** line up at the door at the end of class. Remain in your seat until the bell rings to end class.
5. Pay attention while I'm teaching. That means no: sleeping, note-writing, working on assignments for other classes, magazine reading, or talking to your neighbor.
6. Please do not ask to go to the bathroom during class except in emergency cases which are rare. You must have your planner if you do get this opportunity.
7. Don't get up to throw paper away, sharpen pencils, etc. during class without asking.
8. Do not come to school "just because". Come to school to get an education that will enrich you and others.

MY INTERNET WEB SITE

Since 1997 I have maintained a pretty comprehensive web site on the Internet called [Doth Grin](#). It has now expanded to a blog site. For this class, the site is [dothgrin.blogspot.com](#). You can also access Snapgrades from my web site to check your academic progress. It includes many of the handouts I'll be giving you in class as well as lots of helpful information and Internet links for web sites related to what we will be doing in class. Since I first put the site on the Internet, it has been visited by nearly literally tens of thousands of people from around the world. You should bookmark this web site on your computer at home and visit it often.

Because you can access this information from any Internet-connected computer (at home, school, etc.), there will be no excuse for not knowing what you missed and need to make up.

GUIDELINES FOR FORMAL PAPERS

Occasionally I will have you write formal papers for class. This will require you to use accepted writing process steps: prewriting, drafting, editing/revising, producing a final draft. Below are guidelines you must follow when completing one of these assignments. Failure to follow these requirements will result in a loss of points.

1. All rough drafts must be handwritten in your handwriting. I will often have you mark every 50th word.
2. All final drafts must be typewritten and double spaced. Don't put extra spaces between paragraphs.
3. All final drafts must be in 12 point type using one of the following fonts: Arial, Times, Times New Roman, Helvetica, or New Century Schoolbook. These are standard fonts on all computer word processors.
4. Margins on all four sides of the paper must be 1 inch. Make sure that you **measure** the margins to ensure that they comply with this requirement.

GUIDELINES FOR LITERARY ASSIGNMENTS

There will usually be a comprehensive handout for literary pieces we study in my class. These are multi-faceted and attempt to draw together various aspects of English (vocabulary, grammar, writing, analysis, etc) together. **It is critical to do all of the handout in order to have a chance to pass a quiz, test or written assessment.**

Failure to follow these requirements will result in a loss of points

1. For vocabulary, you need the definition **and** an original sentence with the words.
2. Some literary questions will require a **minimum** of three sentences: A topic sentence, evidence from the text (complete w/MLA citation), and commentary explaining the quote/evidence/detail from the text.
3. Five points will be taken off an assignment if in-class time is poorly used. After three violations, this will move to ten points off and comments concerning this behavior will be sent via Snapgrades or a phone call. If necessary, a referral will be written to quell the inappropriate behavior.
4. All assignments must be written in pen or typed. If typed, double-space unless you are using a Word version of the assignment which was downloaded from my web site.
5. You will occasionally receive an essay question. You will receive a rubric concerning my grading parameters later.

CELL PHONES/IPODS

If I see a cell phone or iPod or similar piece of e-tech in my class, I will confiscate it. I will turn it in to the office, and after the second offense (in all classes, not just mine), your parents will have to come in to retrieve the phone. If you have a phone out at any time during a test, you will receive an "F" for that test. If a phone goes off in my class, whether or not it is out, I will confiscate it.

Please leave your cell phones **off and out of sight** while you are in my classroom.

POINTS

Essays: 20-50 points; Major Essays 100 points

Class work: 10-20 points for short assignments; up to 100 points for lengthy assignments

Tests: 50-100 points; Quizzes: 10-50 points.

Daily Grade: students will receive either 10 or "no" points on a daily basis, depending on effort and class participation. Silent work periods count as instruction time, so students can lose points here.

Oral Presentations: 10-50 points.

Notebooks/journals: 25-50-75-100 points.

Special Projects: At least 200 points

Class participation: Up to 10% of grade

FINAL EXAM: 20 PERCENT OF SEMESTER GRADE!!

Extra Credit: TBA

Mechanics Grade

It is important for students in English to begin to realize the importance of strong, dynamic writing skills. This includes using proper mechanics. Failure to observe these rules will seriously undermine the mechanics part of your grade for a formal essay. These rules are designed to eliminate the most serious errors students make in writing. Remember the goal is to become the best writer you can be.

Remember that the person who controls the language controls their destiny.

- ❑ No pencil for final drafts; use ink, blue, black or dark purple only. Use white or gray, recycled paper. If you type, double space and use standard margins and fonts. Nothing fancy.
- ❑ Place the heading of your paper in the upper right hand corner of top margin. Use the standard class heading. Put the title for the essay at the top of the first page. Do not put your own title in quotes, do not underline it.
- ❑ Unless you are telling a personal story or giving a personal experience as an example, do not use personal pronouns (I, we, our) in formal writing. The reader assumes the ideas are yours unless you indicate otherwise with a cited direct quote.
- ❑ Write complete, correct sentences. Do not write fragments or run-on sentences. Do not begin sentences with coordinating conjunctions: and, but, or, so.
- ❑ Punctuate titles of works (poems, stories, novels, plays) correctly. Short works = quotes. Long works = underlining.
- ❑ Never write The End at the end of your paper.
- ❑ Do not use slang or colloquial expressions except in quotes. i.e. uh, bummer, cool.
- ❑ Do not use any of the following words in your essays: you, your, you're, so, really, a lot.
- ❑ In fact, avoid contractions completely.
- ❑ Do not use e-mail or text slang in your writing.
- ❑ Never use introductory well, yes, no.
- ❑ Do not use symbols (&, #) or abbreviation unless they are customarily used. Write out words such as and or with. Do not use etc. in essay.
- ❑ Write out the numbers from one to ninety nine. After 100, use numerals. With percentages, ratios, or polled statistics, use numerals
- ❑ Do not underline words or put words in quotes merely for emphasis. i.e. The game was “great!” Find a better word: tremendous, incredible, fantastic.
- ❑ Do not ask questions; always make statements. “Do you know what respect is? Well, I’ll tell you.” This opening statement will cause great harm to your mechanics grade.
- ❑ Do not use dashes in place of correct punctuation. Separate ideas with commas, semicolons and colons.
- ❑ Do not correct errors with messy insertions, cross outs or great pools of white out. If you must cross something out, draw one line through it.

- Do not plagiarize. Make sure the work is your own and **cite all references used**. Distinguish between quoting material and paraphrasing. Plagiarism is cheating and will result in an automatic zero for the assignment.

Correction and Commendation Guide

(Go to www.dothgrin.net to download essay writing guide for more detail)

The numbers below and the accompanying remarks will replace some of my comments. Use the guide in two ways: first, to note corrections necessary to improve writing generally and this paper particularly, secondly, note the successes you have had in the writing of the paper and continue to practice these stylistic patterns.

Introduction of Essay

1. Introduction needs to develop the concept you wish to discuss more completely. Give more emphasis to the background of your topic and why it is more important.
2. Introduction is strong and illuminating; a good start reflecting organization and interest
3. Thesis is weak; this critical statement lacks sequenced and related ideas needed to build a clear argument; name characters and concepts you wish to discuss in the essay.
4. Thesis works well making an intelligent and interesting argument.

Body Paragraphs

5. Assert a clear idea at the beginning of the paragraph as part of the topic sentence. Make it a sharp and precise statement of the issue you will prove. Do not assert an element of plot, or a fact, as an idea for the topic sentence.
6. Strong topic sentence; good control of paragraph
7. More examples here will help prove this point. Examples are too few to convince the reader of the validity of the argument.
8. Examples make a good case for your assertion; nice choice and analysis
9. Explain how this example makes your point; discuss the example and draw more from it.
10. Examples are well explained, providing good analysis and support.
11. Close a paragraph with an idea that concludes what your topic sentence and examples have proven; do not simply mimic the assertion nor end with your last point. Draw a large idea that is the logical extension of the points made in the body.
12. Good conclusion to the paragraph.

Essay Conclusion

13. Concluding paragraph is weak. Draw a larger idea at the essay's close that grows out of the assertions and examples you have given. Leave reader with a better opinion of the logic and correctness of your essay.
14. Nice closure; you successfully draw together assertions and examples.
15. Enrich the thematic statement; usually the theme follows the several sentences wrapping up the essay, then move to making an observation about the human condition, ambition and motivation.
16. Strong thematic observation

Spelling/Grammar/Syntax/Reference

17. Spelling error; use spell check on the computer, a dictionary, or a peer editor.
18. Good word choice
19. Grammar error; learn the rule now.
20. Effective sentence structure
21. Refer to the author and title at the start of essay
22. References to title and author nicely made and subordinated to principal idea
23. Correct the form and placement of heading
24. Revise for sense and logic – idea lost in current phrasing and syntax
25. Sentence fragment – learn to recognize this basic writing error; have a peer editor read paper before submitting; this mistake is a costly error
26. Avoid passive voice; restructure sentence so that there is a “doer” of the action
27. Weak word choice
28. Use present tense in literature discussion and analysis
29. Indefinite reference: this, that, these are used incorrectly when they carry the weight of a large idea. Restate the idea, clarify the connection between indefinite pronoun and the noun it replaces.
30. Avoid absolute words like: all, every, each, any, everyone. These words suggest naïve thinking and weak logic
31. Provide a transition between ideas
32. Sloppy handwriting and/or margin errors
33. THE GRIN!