

English 9

Mr. Harris – B359

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Why do we study English? If we speak the language, isn't that enough? If we were born here, doesn't that make us experts? The answer to the first question is not as straightforward as you may think. English is not simply an exploration into the language and literature that surrounds us. It is an examination into what makes us human – our faults, our triumphs, our strengths, our weaknesses.

Throughout this school year, we will be reading literature from multiple genres and time periods. Each piece will connect to the larger question of our place in the world, and what it means to be human. We will examine poems, short stories, novels and dramas as well as film and other media, all with these questions in mind. My hope is that throughout the year, you reflect on why you are here and begin to observe the world around you as you make your way to becoming an educated and informed citizen in our society.

Course Objectives

By the end of the year, students will be able to

- identify and interpret literary devices to explore author's purpose and theme
- apply concepts of grammar and punctuation into their writing to improve clarity
- understand difficult vocabulary and techniques to find meaning
- develop skills in all modes of writing – narrative, informative and argumentative
- evaluate, incorporate, and cite a variety of sources into their writing
- reflect on their own writing and understand how revision is a vital part of the writing process

Student Responsibilities

Now that you are in high school, you should be aware of the responsibilities that accompany being a student here at PVMHS. You should expect homework nightly, whether reading or writing. We will have a number of long-range assignments, so you will need to manage your time carefully. You are expected to be prepared for class each day which means having a pen or pencil, notebook or binder and homework ready to go. While I understand and sympathize that many of you are busy with sports, work and home life, I will not accept any excuses for being unprepared.

All essays will be submitted and graded via the Google Docs system. In addition, other documents throughout the year will be shared with you through Google. Therefore, you have to have access to the internet at all times. If you have an issue with this, please see me sooner rather than later.

Classroom Policies

Attendance: Absences mean that you will miss out on important material, and it will be very easy to find yourself falling behind. Regular classroom attendance is therefore expected. In the event that you are absent, I expect to find out what you have missed as soon as possible. The best ways to do this is to ask a fellow classmate or refer to my website. Please do not ask me at the beginning, middle or end of class. You should plan on checking with me after school to make sure you have not missed anything. To make up the day, make an appointment in the appointment book. Remember, within **10 school days**. You must remember; **NOT ME!**

If you are absent on the day of a test or quiz, you will make that assessment up during class when you arrive back to school.

Tardiness: Being late to class is simply unacceptable. Please be on time for every class. If you can't be, we can practice after school.

Conduct: Students are expected to follow all the rules listed in the student handbook. That means no cell phones, food, etc... in my classroom. Please don't try to be clever; I've seen it all.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is any attempt to pass off someone else's work as your own, whether it is a copied homework assignment or an essay that contains material copied off the internet or any alternative source. Any student involved in plagiarism will receive a ZERO on the assignment and a phone call will be made to that student's guardians explaining what has happened. Furthermore, all cases of plagiarism are referred to the Dean's office for possible additional consequences. Allowing your homework/quiz/test/paper/etc... to be copied makes you just as guilty as the person doing the copying! Finally, ignorance is not an acceptable excuse. If I find it, you did it. End of story.

If any of you have aspirations of entering NHS or AP classes or simply getting a college letter of recommendation, plagiarism can severely hurt your chances of these hopes.

Deadlines: For the most part, deadlines are firm. If there is any time you need an extension, please ask me ahead of time. The night before does not count as ahead of time. **Homework is not taken late.**

Grading

I grade on a points system. Therefore each homework, quiz, test, paper, etc. are given a designated point value. Typically, it looks like the following:

- Tests and longer papers will be between 50 and 100 points
- Quizzes and shorter papers will be between 10 and 40 points.
- Homework and in class work will be between 1 and 5 points. Homework is graded on completion (2 points complete; 1 point incomplete) unless otherwise told.

At the end of a quarter, I take all the points you earned and divide that by the total number of possible points given to calculate the final average.

For example, you may have earned 225 points out of a possible 300. $225/300 = .75 \times 100 = 75\%$

*Note: Midterms and finals are worth 20% of the 2nd and 4th quarter FINAL grade.

In order to keep the grade that you have earned, there are **2 prerequisites**. You must...

1. Read 1 recreational book per month that you have selected to read.
2. Write a monthly one-pager based on your recreational book.

If you are unable to meet these prerequisites, you will lose a letter grade.

Finally, all other school rules apply, and I reserve the right to amend any of these rules as I see fit throughout the school year.