

## Course Description and Expectations

### 1. Course Description

Grade 9 English is a course designed to introduce students to the world of literary analysis and formal composition. In this course, we explore the essential question that serves as the foundation for the study of English at the high school level: *Why is literature important?* We will examine a variety of works from every major literary genre—the short story, the novel, drama, nonfiction, and poetry—with the goal of discovering how literature can help us better understand ourselves and the world around us. Our discussions will serve as the basis for a number of writing assignments, and students will receive extensive practice at developing their thoughts and insights into well-organized, coherent, and persuasive arguments.

### 2. Core Objectives - Students will be able to . . .

- demonstrate familiarity with the major genres of literature and their characteristics.
- recognize and apply fundamental literary terms and concepts.
- identify and discuss specific and recurring themes in a number of works.
- employ techniques to analyze a prompt, generate topics, organize ideas, and plan an essay.
- support an original and interesting thesis with a combination of summary, paraphrase, and quotation.
- properly apply rules of punctuation, particularly the comma, semicolon, colon, apostrophe, and quotation mark.
- identify participial phrases, appositive phrases, adverb clauses, and adjective clauses.
- initiate and participate in whole-class and small-group discussions.
- organize, prepare, and present at least one formal presentation using effective verbal and non-verbal presentation skills.

### 3. General Expectations

#### Attendance and Punctuality

Please arrive to class on time with everything you need to participate. If you must be late to class, bring a pass from your teacher excusing your tardiness. Regular attendance is vital to your success; refer to pages 28-29 of the student handbook for details on the enforced attendance policy.

If you miss class, it is your responsibility to meet with me to arrange for make-up work. Any work that was due on the day of the absence is not considered make-up work and must be turned in the day the student returns.

#### Cell Phones and Electronics

Please power down all cell phones and electronic devices and place them in a pocket, purse, or bag when in class.

#### Bathroom Breaks

Please make the effort to use the bathroom *between* classes. If you must use the bathroom during class, please wait for a suitable transition or independent activity.

#### Academic Honesty and Integrity

Cheating, copying, and plagiarism undermine the value of an assignment, erode trust, and carry severe consequences. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of the school's policy on cheating (page 76 in the student handbook), as it will be strictly enforced in this course. Any student found guilty of cheating will receive a zero for the assignment.

### **Class Cuts**

As per school policy, any student who cuts a class will receive a zero for any missed work, including quizzes and tests.

## **4. Evaluation**

Each term's grade will generally be determined according to the following assignment-type values:

|                              |     |
|------------------------------|-----|
| Participation:               | 10% |
| Homework and Classwork:      | 10% |
| Quizzes:                     | 30% |
| Essays, Tests, and Projects: | 50% |

Summer reading evaluation will be 10% of the first quarter's grade.

### **Participation**

Small day-to-day activities—such as vocabulary review, journal entries, group discussions, and guided reading questions—all count toward the participation category. Your participation grade will also reflect your attendance.

Contributing to class requires much more than speaking up and/or answering questions. Quality participation demonstrates respect for others, builds upon peers' comments, provides evidence and examples, and generally raises the level of inquiry and insight in the classroom.

### **Homework and Classwork**

Expect about 30 minutes of homework per night and weekend. You will generally have several days' notice on upcoming assignments so that you can responsibly manage your time. Though homework is not always collected daily, it will be collected most days, and it will be graded for both accuracy and completion.

Homework must be completed on time, and that means by the beginning of the class period on the day it is due. Since homework is designed to have you practice skills or prepare for the day's activities, **late homework won't be accepted for credit**.

Some classroom assignments—writing prompts, worksheets, and small projects—may also be collected for credit.

### **Quizzes**

Expect both announced and unannounced quizzes. "Pop" quizzes are typically based on nightly reading assignments, and are designed to reward students who keep up with the assigned reading. Announced quizzes will usually focus on vocabulary and grammar.

### **Essays, Tests, and Projects**

Major writing assignments will have detailed assessment criteria provided in advance of the assignment; they will generally be graded on a combination of content, style, and grammar.

Writing is a process, and we will frequently engage in drafting, editing, and revision. Your willingness to accept constructive criticism, explore new ideas, and rework your assignments will help you grow as a writer and develop a unique and strong voice. When a **draft** is assigned a due date, it is understood to mean 100% of the length of the final assignment. You will receive reduced credit for a partial draft.

Deadlines for **major papers and projects** are firm. Final copies are to be brought to class in hard copy (unless otherwise instructed) on the day and period due. You will not be permitted to print an assignment at the beginning of class. **There will be a 10% deduction for each day a paper is late**.

As deadlines for major assignments are given well in advance, **students are expected to turn the assignment in on the day it is due, even in the case of absence on the due date**. It is the

student's responsibility to email the assignment as a Word attachment by 2:15 pm. Assignments that are not received by 2:15 or do not open will be considered late.

## 5. Books

### Textbook:

*Prentice Hall Literature: Gold*, Prentice Hall, 1989.

### Vocabulary:

*Vocabulary Workshop*, Level D. Sadlier-Oxford, 2002.

### Novels:

*Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck

*Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens

### Poetry and Drama:

*Romeo and Juliet* by William Shakespeare

*The Odyssey* by Homer

## 6. Materials

- Since you will be provided with a great deal of supplemental handouts, readings, and activities, a **three-ring binder** is not only recommended, but **required** in this class. It should be divided into four clearly-marked sections: **Literature/Notes**, **Writing**, **Vocabulary**, and **Grammar**.
- Come prepared with reliable pens (blue or black) and pencils.
- If you are unable, for any reason, to obtain the required materials, please let me know.

## 7. Contact and Support

If you need extra help or just want a place to do homework before a sport or activity, I will be available in Room 111 from 2:15 -3:15 on Tuesdays and Thursdays and by appointment.

You may also email me at [oconnort@kingphilip.org](mailto:oconnort@kingphilip.org). Please allow 24 hours for a response.

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I have received and read the Course *Syllabus and Expectations for Grade 9 English*.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date