



Welcome to Bennington High School. As this class is a required course for graduation, it is important that you pass both semesters to remain on schedule for graduation. Yet, I hope you challenge yourself to attain not only good grades but also skills essential for the rest of your life.

English 9 is centered on the study of reading and writing. We will begin the year with studying *The Odyssey* and even dive into creating our own poetry later in the year. We will add *To Kill A Mockingbird* by Harper Lee, a series of short stories, and study William Shakespeare's play *Romeo and Juliet* also this year. We will be examining both content and structural elements such as literary techniques, to improve our understanding of literature. Throughout the year, we will practice writing skills with focusing on writing in a variety of modes: journals, poetry, argumentative, and expository. We will compose several essays that include a clear thesis statement, effective support and documentation, organized thinking, and thoughtful conclusions. We will also begin a review of research essentials by focusing on taking notes in the research process. Added to reading and writing is the essential practice of the basic rules of grammar. Furthermore, we will study essential words (Greek/Latin Roots) throughout the two semesters to strengthen our vocabulary.

All BHS English students are **required** to submit writing assignments to the plagiarism prevention system "turn it in.com." We will set up your account in class. It is your responsibility to remember (or write down ☺) your password. For each formal writing assignment, you must submit your paper to www.turnitin.com. (The computer system checks your paper for plagiarism, including Chat GPT; I write comments on your electronic copy.) To submit your paper, you must be able to access the internet. If you do not have internet access at your home, it can even be submitted from your phone. This all must be completed **BEFORE** the due date of the paper. You will need to plan accordingly as classroom time will not be used for this purpose.

As per the Nebraska Language Arts State Standards, all students will strive to reach proficiency in the areas of reading, writing, speaking, and listening. "The standards, both individually and as an integrated whole, describe not only expectations for college, career, and civic readiness, but the 21st century literacies necessary for critical and innovative thinking and problem solving" (Blomstedt 5).

Grading: Grades are earned, not given. Our grade for this class will be computed by a total number of points accumulated in the following categories.

Daily Work (Homework): This will include a variety of assignments from worksheets to written response, basically anything assigned to you on a daily basis. You will be expected to turn in your homework on time. If you do not complete an assignment on the day it is due, you will be expected to stay after school THAT DAY or report before school the next morning. Failure to report to this meeting will result in a regular detention. Assignments handed in over five days late will not receive over 10%. If you miss school for any reason, the homework that was due the day you missed will be due when you return.

Moodle (Homework)– This year you will be using Moodle, an online platform, to complete vocabulary assignments. **You will need internet access as many of these will need to be completed outside of school.** If you do not have access, please see me to make other arrangements.

Tests and Quizzes: These items will be an opportunity for you to show your understanding of the literature or course content. I will announce in advance when to expect tests and when and how to prepare so that you can plan accordingly. Quizzes will primarily be used to test reading comprehension. You will be responsible for having the information needed in a form that helps you study.

Assessment Expectations:

- No notes will be used on an assessment unless English teacher explicitly allows it.
- If a student is caught cheating on an assessment, any retake opportunity or ability to earn that grade will follow the department retake policy guidelines.

Essays and Projects: Writing is an important skill to demonstrate your thinking. This will be valuable for me in judging your progress. All essay assignments will need to be type-written, double-spaced, and in 12 pt. font. It will be your responsibility to make sure these assignments are completed and ready to be turned in on www.turnitin.com OR printed for class when designated.

Essay/Presentation Expectations:

- Speeches and presentations will be delivered in class period.
 - Per Nebraska State presentation requirements, if presentation is not completed in class, student could receive no higher than 70%.
- To evaluate state standards for writing process, students must meet checkpoints to move forward.
 - If student is not following requirements or hitting appropriate writing process checkpoints, he/she will stay after school or come in before school to work individually with the English teacher.
- If a student turns in a plagiarized paper/presentation and is student's first offense, these are the consequences:
 - 1) Student will meet with English teacher individually.
 - 2) Parents and administration will be notified.
 - 3) Student will come in after school or before school to rewrite the paper with English teacher.
 - 4) Student will submit paper using www.turnitin.com and will receive no higher than an 80%.
- If a student turns in a plagiarized paper/presentation and is NOT the student's first offense, these are the consequences:
 - 1) Student will conference with administration and English teacher to decide appropriate consequences.
 - 2) Parent will be notified of plagiarism offense and what the next step is.

Participation and Class Discussion: You will be expected to contribute positively to the discussion daily. You will also be expected to bring all materials for class everyday, follow directions when given, and contribute to the class discussions daily. Any behavior that detracts from the learning environment will result in a deduction of this grade.

Independent Reading (Project): You will be expected to read material that is not part of the class as well as complete Accelerated Reader tests.

AR Expectations:

- 1) After date designated, students can no longer take multiple tests in one week; only 1 AR test can be taken within a week.
- 2) All books read should be 3 points in value or higher. No tests will be allowed to be taken on books fewer than 3 points.
- 3) Any extra AR points earned in a quarter will roll over into the next quarter towards goal. Rollover will end at first semester, and second semester will begin with 0 points acquired.
- 4) If completing an AR Optional Assessment (only if the AR test does not exist or has received teacher approval prior), the student will submit his/her response to www.turnitin.com by due date designated.
- 5) All tests taken have to be with own English 9 teacher.

A Note on Sensitive Material

Issues that might, from a specific cultural viewpoint, be considered sensitive, including references to ethnicities, nationalities, religions, races, dialects, gender or class, are often represented artistically in works of literature.

Still recognizing the universal value of literary art that probes difficult and harsh life experiences and so deepens understanding, a fair representation of issues and peoples may occasionally include sensitive material. The best response to a sensitive detail or idea in a literary work might well be a question about the larger meaning, purpose or overall effect of the detail or idea in context.

If you are concerned about the direction of any of our class discussions or assignments, please feel free to contact me.

Language Arts Grading Policy

Retake Opportunities:

- Students can retake vocabulary quizzes/tests for full credit within the quarter given. In order to be eligible for the retake, students need to complete a review activity per the discretion of the teacher.
- Students can revise a section of the rubric on an essay for full credit per the discretion of the teacher. The student will have one week to meet with the teacher individually after the essay has been graded and will develop a plan to revise the section discussed.

All other quizzes/tests/assignments are not allowed retakes throughout the high school language arts department.

Classroom Expectations:

Cell phones will NOT be **seen or heard** at any time in this classroom. We will not have time to answer calls, check voice mail, read text messages, or send text messages. Please keep your cell phones in your bags, purses, lockers, or homes.

Time management is an effective skill to learn. Each Monday we will update our planners/agendas for the coming week or preview any long-term assignment. This is a required activity. You must ALWAYS have your planner with you in class. If you are absent on Monday, please see another class member to get the assignments.

I believe in creating a positive climate. I expect you to help contribute to that atmosphere by being respectful to your classmates in word and action. This respect extends to your teacher, other staff members, and your school.

If you miss class for any reason (school related or personal business or illness), it is YOUR responsibility to make-up what you missed. If you are going on a school related trip (including sports), please speak to me at least ONE DAY before your absence. If you are gone for other reasons not pre-planned, please see me or another class member as soon as you return. I will not ask you for work due on a day you were absent. I will not remind you to make up a quiz. Please be responsible for your work by utilizing your planner and planning ahead.

We will follow the BHS Handbook rule on tardies. After a student's fifth tardy, he/she will receive a 40-minute detention in the designated area. You need to be in the room when the bell rings. (I hope you will find that you have **plenty** of time in the hallways to get to and from classes. This should not be a concern for you.)

The pace of this class will be busy. We have so much to learn and master during this school year. As you enter the classroom, I expect you to be ready (both physically and mentally) to learn. Be seated, get out your necessary items, and then you may visit if time remains. I have low tolerance for passes to your locker for needed supplies. Come prepared for class. Once every student is in the classroom, we will begin that day's lesson possibly before the bell. We will work the entire class period and "pack up" the books when the bell rings and not before the bell rings.

If possible, please try to use the restroom during the passing period or at lunch or study hall. If absolutely necessary, I will allow you a pass during class, but you will remain responsible for class that you miss while you are gone.

I am available for help or make-up work before school (7:45 a.m.) and after school (3:17) or during my plan period. I can come earlier or stay later with a day's notice. I encourage you to come visit me if you experience problems or just need some extra help. I'm looking forward to a great year.

Mrs. McGrew
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