

FRESHMAN ENGLISH – POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

I. Grades

Grades will be calculated as follows:

Average score on major grades (projects/papers) = 50%

Average score on minor grades (quizzes and homework journals) = 20%

Class participation = 30%

A. This class will be unlike any other class you have taken in the past. In the past, you have learned English in a vacuum. In other words, you sat in an English class for a period of time and then you moved onto another class. In this class, you will learn how the written word connects you to other subjects and the world around you.

B. Most of this class will be “seminar style.” This means that we are all students and we are all teachers. Therefore, class participation counts more heavily than it normally would in a normal English class. In my mind, **everyone in the class starts right in the middle with a 75** in participation. Your actions, or lack thereof, determine where the grade goes from there. The crucial thing to remember is that in our class we are looking for comments in class that are founded on the texts we’re reading or on empirical evidence; we are also looking for responses that build upon or at least refer to what your classmates have said. Participation is *not* about blurting out your feelings and then ignoring what goes on for the rest of the conversation.

B. For the first few units, homework will be done in a variety of formats and marked on a “Check Plus/Check/Check Minus” (equivalent to 100/85/70) basis, with “F” signifying that the assignment was not completed. **Homework may not be made up; unless there is an excused absence or significant issue.**

C. Aside from vocabulary and grammar, pop quizzes will only happen if reading is not getting done.

D. On certain papers, I will accept rewrites; rewrites may be handed in for up to a week after the paper is returned. Rewrites will only be accepted if you meet with me during extra help at some point. With rewrites, the new grade will be averaged with the original grade. The penalty for late work on most essays is five points per school day; in some cases, late papers will automatically receive a failing grade

II. Coursework

After some introductory material, we will parallel Social Studies in a chronological and thematic study of early history. Each unit will feature a variety of texts, including stories, poems, essays, “literary non-fiction” pieces, art, music and film. Some of our studies will include:

The Epic of Gilgamesh

Selections from both the Old and New Testaments

Rig Veda and *The Bhagavad Gita*

Writings of Lao Tzu and Confucius

Homer - *The Odyssey*

Herodotus - *Histories*

Miller - *The 300*

Euripides - *Medea*

Beowulf

Chaucer - *The Canterbury Tales*
Shakespeare - *Romeo & Juliet*
Cervantes - *Don Quixote*
Lee – *To Kill a Mockingbird* (outside reading)
A variety of philosophers

THE VERY IMPORTANT STUFF

Technology will be a large part of our class. Our goal is to be 100% paperless. In other words, I will not hand you any paper, and you will not hand me any paper. Instead, all of your work will be transmitted and stored electronically. I will mark your work and send it back.

Please do not let the technology be a distraction. Remember the school has issued you an iPad for use in your classes and for homework. If the iPad, or any other piece of technology, is distracting you from learning, it will be taken away.

You are expected to come to class prepared every day. This includes bringing your iPad with you to class. It should be charged and ready to use.

Since all of our work is electronic, the ability to “cut & paste” is remarkably easy. Let me give you the following warning: The honor code will be taken seriously in this class. Plagiarism will not be tolerated in any form. There will be no second chances. Please refer to the student handbook for the Roslyn High School policy on plagiarism.