

## *Honors English Designation*

### Fairfield Junior High

Fairfield Junior High School offers an Honors English designation (i.e., “honors credit”) to students who choose to be challenged beyond the traditional class curriculum. Students who contract for the honors designation must commit to curricular and behavioral standards. This is a self-initiated program: students are responsible to meet required deadlines, produce honors-caliber writing, attend weekly seminars, and read far more complex literature than traditional students. The honors designation is available to anyone in any English class in the school. Because the honors designees do not meet on a daily basis, however, it is extremely important that students take personal responsibility for the completion of all assignments and stay in contact with their instructors.

#### General Requirements

Students who desire the Honors English designation must...

- ...be self-motivated.
- ...be willing/able to attend weekly seminars during Intervention period.
- ...read and comprehend (classical) literature of greater length and a much higher level of complexity than students in the traditional classes.
- ...write an honors-caliber formal essay (literary analysis) each term.
- ...have access to an Internet-ready computer.  
(Computers are available before/after school hours and during Intervention period.)
- ...have a working e-mail address that can send and receive attachments.
- ...participate regularly in the online discussions and StudySync Blasts.

#### Credit/Grading Expectations

The honors designation is not a formally graded, separate class. The English grade that students receive will be in their traditional English class. The “honors” designation will be added to transcripts once the student has completed the honors strand and provided evidence of higher-order thinking and learning. (In other words, mere completion of the assignments does not guarantee the honors designation. Honors students are expected to submit honors-caliber work.) Students must maintain a *B* or better in English during all terms and have satisfactory (or better) citizenship.

#### Reading

All students at Fairfield are required to read books in their traditional English classes each term. Students who desire the honors designation will be assigned books of greater complexity and length, and they will be expected to think about and discuss the books at a deeper level than mere summary of plot. Students who complete the honors designation will read a wide variety of classical literature that may not be naturally fascinating for a modern reader. It is reading that the average student will not choose to undertake. **These honors books and the discussions that develop around them in the weekly seminars will require students to spend a significant amount of time reading on their own, outside of class. Students who will not or cannot complete this outside reading should not request the honors designation.**

#### Formal Writing: Literary Analysis

Each term there will be one formal honors essay that relates to the assigned reading for that term. These essays will usually take the place of the book reports, summaries, etc., which students complete in the traditional classroom for “reading points,” but they also will require more thought and effort to complete. For this reason, it is extremely important that honors designees do not ignore the honors reading and writing assignments. To do so would profoundly hurt the student’s grade in English class. Specific instructions for each essay will be provided at the weekly seminar meetings.

## Informal Writing: StudySync Blasts

StudySync is an online program for honors students. A “Blast” is a short written response to an informational article about a current event. Posted to a carefully monitored online bulletin board for StudySync students, these responses help students practice informational reading, communication, argumentation, and discussion. Honors designees are required to complete a certain number of Blasts each term, and the current events involved may become part of the weekly seminar conversations. There is a \$10 Honors English lab fee to cover the cost of StudySync. This fee must be paid in the office before students can begin using StudySync. Attach the receipt (proof of payment) to this signed contract.

### Assignments

An assignment contract (not this document) will be provided at the beginning of each term. Students must sign and return the contract upon completion of the assignments.

### Honors “Credit” on Transcripts

The honors designation will be assigned to students who complete all four terms of honors requirements. Honors designations will not appear on report cards until the end of the fourth term. Transcripts thereafter will indicate that honors designees completed Honors English. The letter grades will be those that were earned in the traditional class.

### Participation: Seminars

Attendance is required at weekly seminar meetings. These meetings will be held during Intervention period on a particular, yet-to-be-determined day each week. A reading schedule will be provided, and students will be expected to arrive at the weekly seminars with the reading complete, prepared to ask questions and discuss the text. Since these weekly seminars are a requirement, it is important that students maintain passing grades in *all* their classes; otherwise, there could be conflicts if, due to poor grades, students are assigned to go elsewhere during Intervention. There is no way to make up the conversation and discussion of a weekly seminar meeting.

Complete and return this signed contract to your Honors coordinator:

7<sup>th</sup> Graders: Mrs. Hughes

8<sup>th</sup> Graders: Mrs. Deppe

9<sup>th</sup> Graders: Mr. Thompson

### Students:

I affirm that I understand the requirements of the Honors English designation, and I commit to work on it diligently and honestly.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Student Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Please print student's name here.

***Staple the receipt for the \$10 Honors English lab fee here. →***

[receipt]

### Parents:

I am aware that my student is attempting to earn the Honors English designation, and I will support him/her in this effort. I understand the requirements outlined above.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Parent Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Please print parent's name here.