



Transition to "The Common Core"

The Common Core State Standards Initiative, led by the National Governors Association, is an effort to establish a nationwide set of clear educational standards for language arts and mathematics. Utah has voluntarily adopted the Common Core to replace the old state core curriculum, and Davis County Schools have begun the transition to the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts, which are more focused and rigorous than the old state core, particularly in the area of reading. Students are expected to understand and analyze more complicated text than they have previously, and lexile (reading level) expectations are greatly increased. For this reason, now more than ever, it is vital that students practice reading independently on a daily basis. This needs to happen at home as well as at school, ideally with the support and encouragement of families. At Fairfield, we have always encouraged and required students to read independently, so this expectation is not new, but there are now greater potential consequences for not doing so. Also, the Common Core standards call for significantly more writing of a more sophisticated nature (formal argumentation and literary analysis) than the previous core curriculum. This means that Language Arts classes will become somewhat more challenging than they have been in the past, and English classes may require more thoughtful study, deeper understanding of material, and higher quality finished products. This school year, the end-of-level criterion-referenced tests mandated by the state will still be based on the old Utah State Core Curriculum, but the expectation of those who made this decision is that since the Common Core is far more rigorous, students should be ready for any such test. For more details about the Common Core, visit this website: <http://www.corestandards.org/>.

Attendance/Citizenship

- √ Students must be in their assigned seats at the tardy bell and must remain in class until the final bell.
- √ Excessive absence or tardiness will result in loss of citizenship credit. (See school attendance policy.)
- √ Failure to follow the classroom policy (described below) will also result in loss of citizenship credit.
- √ A student may make up lost citizenship credit *at my discretion* only if the student meets with me *at least one week before the end of the grading period* and completes the make-up assignments.

Supplies

These must be brought to class every day!

- ☺ Writing Paper (with lines)
- ☺ Notebook/Folder
- ☺ Blue or Black Pen
- ☺ Reading Book of Choice
- ☺ Homework (when assigned)

The Massive Purple Text

Textbooks, when checked out, are to remain at home for use on homework assignments. We have a set at school for classroom use.

Classroom Policy

Personal Responsibility

Students will be responsible for their own work, their own behavior, and their own interactions with others. This requires three things:

Respect

Cooperation

Honesty

Students are expected to exhibit these qualities while in English class.

Life's Great Equations

Freedom = Responsibility

Choice = Consequence

With Freedom comes Responsibility, and with Choice comes Consequence. Those who accept responsibility for their freedom and accept the consequences of their choices will do very well in this class.

Homework/Reading

Students will have homework in this class. Some weeks there may not be any; other weeks there may be a lot. The amount of homework depends on what we are working on in class, how much the student finishes during class time, and whether or not the student has procrastinated on a big project. **Independent Reading Practice is an ongoing assignment!** *Students should carry a reading book of choice all the time!* Reading Practice will be a significant score in final grades. Even if no homework has been assigned, students still have a certain amount of reading to complete on their own. Plan to read daily!

Grading

- √ Grades are calculated as a percentage of possible points.
- √ Assignments that weigh heavily into final grades include the following: Writing Notebooks, Reading Practice/Goodreads (20%), Core Writing Assignments, Term Projects, Wiki Assignments, and Tests.
- √ Class participation and homework are also important parts of the grade.

Grade Scale

A = 95-100%	C = 71-74%
A- = 91-94%	C- = 67-70%
B+ = 87-90%	D+ = 63-66%
B = 83-86%	D = 59-62%
B- = 79-82%	D- = 55-58%
C+ = 75-78%	F = below 55%

Resources

Book List

Ninth grade classes at Fairfield may study these works of literature:

The Pigman by Paul Zindel
To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee
Romeo and Juliet by Shakespeare
Mythology by Edith Hamilton
The Odyssey by Homer
Fahrenheit 451 by Ray Bradbury
Spoon River Anthology by E.L. Masters
Stargirl by Jerry Spinelli
Nothing but the Truth by Avi

Assigned and in-class readings do not count as Independent Reading Practice unless students are required to read significant amounts from these books on their own outside of class. Students should always carry a book of choice!

Movie List

These movies (or short clips) may be viewed in class in accordance with district policy:

Meet the Olympians
Clash of the Titans
Hercules
Shakespeare by Miramax
Shakespeare: District Video Clips
Shakespeare: Biography
To Kill a Mockingbird
Fahrenheit 451
The Odyssey
Romeo and Juliet
Taming of the Shrew
The Cask of Amontillado
Terror of the Soul: Poe Biography
Various Short Stories on Video

Late Work/Extra Credit

Assignments not turned in on the due date are late. Late credit is $\frac{1}{2}$ of the total points for the first week, and it drops after that amount of time, depending on the assignment. If the student was legitimately absent on the due date and the assignment is turned in within two days of the student's return, the lateness will be excused and full credit given, but *it is the student's responsibility to get and complete assignments missed due to absence*. Extra credit may be offered only to students who have completed all the regular class work. If a student's grade is suffering because s/he failed to turn in assignments, s/he must complete the missing work (for late credit) before requesting extra credit work.

Classroom Website: <http://ffjh.davis.k12.ut.us/thompson/>

Daily assignments, research links, helpful hints, and the major projects students will complete for this class are available on the Internet. Many assignments, including book reviews and wikis, will be Internet-based and will be submitted electronically.

This resource is the best way for students and parents to keep track of what is happening in class.

E-mail: mrthompson@dsdmail.net

Have a great year!

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