



**Read. Write. Repeat.  
Literacy Matters!**

The new State Standards for English Language Arts (<http://www.corestandards.org/>) are significantly more rigorous than the previous curriculum. Expectations for reading and writing are much more challenging: Students are expected to understand and analyze far more complicated text than in the past, reading-level (lexile) standards are greatly increased, and the elements of argumentation are now included in the writing standards. This should not pose a problem for Honors English students, who are supposed to have already tested above grade-level standards, but it does mean that they will be doing a substantial amount of reading *on their own time*. All English classes at Fairfield encourage and require students to read, but for this class, the reading assignments are more specific, and they come with an equally specific reading schedule. This will be the first time many students have had to consistently complete reading assignments on such a schedule, and those who ignore the reading will struggle with all other aspects of the class. While they may not always find the readings captivating, students still need to give them their thoughtful attention. Also, the new state writing standards call for more writing of a more sophisticated nature: formal argumentation and analysis. Honors classes will therefore require more thoughtful consideration of material, higher quality finished products, and a strong focus on class discussion. It is important that students participate, question, and share ideas both in writing and aloud. For those who do, this class will be a rich and rewarding academic experience. Students who are not ready, willing, or able to accept these academic challenges should seriously consider taking a traditional English class instead of Honors English.

**Attendance/Citizenship**

***Regular attendance is crucial for success in Honors English. Absence from class does not excuse missing assignments or extend deadlines. Be in class every day!***

- ✓ 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 requirements.

***\*Athletes, cheerleaders, and officers should NOT take this class during a period they will miss to attend sporting events and/or extracurricular activities. English is a core requirement for high school credit.***

**Class Supplies**

*These must be brought to class every day!*

- ☺ Writing Paper (with lines)
- ☺ Notebook/Folder/Handouts
- ☺ Blue or Black Pen
- ☺ Assigned Reading Book
- ☺ Homework (completed)
- ☺ Questions to Ask
- ☺ Ideas to Contribute

***The Massive Purple Text***

When/If textbooks are assigned, they should remain at home. We have a set at school for classroom use.

**Classroom Policy: Personal Responsibility**

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

***Respect, Cooperation, and Honesty***

*Students are expected to exhibit these qualities.*

**Cheating:** Any attempt to earn academic credit without engaging in the intended learning process is cheating. Examples include but are not limited to copying another's work, allowing another to copy your work, plagiarism (submitting writing, electronically or printed, that has been copied from any other source), and using book summaries like Cliff's Notes and Shmoop instead of reading the original texts of assigned books. Cheaters will receive a "U" in citizenship for the term and lose all credit for the assignment in question. *Do not cheat!*

**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 succeed in this class.

**Homework/Reading**

Students will sometimes have homework. The amount depends on what we are working on in class, how much the student finishes during class or Intervention time, and whether or not s/he has procrastinated on a long-term task. **Reading, however, is always an assignment!** Even if no homework is due, Honors English students always have a reading assignment to complete on their own time. *Literacy matters!*

## Grading

- √ Grades are calculated as a percentage of possible points.
- √ Points are assigned based on evidence of learning, *not* just completion. (quality of writing, participation, and test scores = evidence of learning)
- √ *A student's objective should be LEARNING, not grades – but I am required to assign grades; therefore, I will try to ensure that grades in this class reflect LEARNING. If a student does not turn in assignments, I have no evidence of learning and therefore cannot issue a passing grade.*

### **Grade Scale**

A = 95-100%	C = 74-76%
A- = 91-94%	C- = 70-73%
B+ = 88-90%	D+ = 67-69%
B = 84-87%	D = 64-66%
B- = 80-83%	D- = 60-63%
C+ = 77-79%	F = below 60%

## Resources

### **Book List**

Honors classes may study these books:

- Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury
- Anthem* by Ayn Rand
- Animal Farm* by George Orwell
- Profiles in Courage* by John F. Kennedy
- The Pigman* by Paul Zindel
- The Yearling* by Marjorie Rawlings
- To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee
- Romeo and Juliet* by Shakespeare
- Mythology* by Edith Hamilton
- The Odyssey* by Homer
- Across Five Aprils* by Irene Hunt
- The Man Who Was Poe* by Avi
- Spoon River Anthology* by E.L. Masters
- Stargirl* by Jerry Spinelli
- Nothing but the Truth* by Avi
- Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens
- A Tale of Two Cities* by Charles Dickens
- Collections by Ray Bradbury: *Dandelion*, *Wine*, *Martian Chronicles*, *The Illustrated Man*, *Something Wicked This Way Comes*, possibly others
- Walk Two Moons* by Sharon Creech

### **Online Resources**

Students may be required to maintain the following web-based accounts:

**StudySync:** <http://app.studysync.net>  
**Utah Write:** <https://www.utahwrite.com>  
**Forum:** [http://s2.excoboard.com/Falcon\\_Forum](http://s2.excoboard.com/Falcon_Forum)  
**Wiki:** <http://thompson-honors-2013.wikispaces.com/>

*Online environments are private and strictly monitored.*

### **Movie List**

These movies (or short clips) may be viewed in class:

- Meet the Olympians*
- 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 ½ 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 upon 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://wolfmanenglishteacher.com>**

Assignments, schedules, links, and projects students will complete for this class are available on the class website. Many assignments 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](mailto:mrthompson@dsdmail.net)**

Have a great year!  
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**Honors English Course Description**

## *Caveat Discipulus\**

Last spring when students registered for ninth grade classes, all students and parents who expressed interest in Honors English were to have signed a document indicating that they had read the course description, including the district document called “Junior High Honors Courses: Indicators for Student Success,” and carefully considered whether or not this placement was appropriate. Here is that course description as it appeared in the registration materials:

### **9<sup>th</sup> Grade Honors English**

*Parents: Before registering your student for honors courses, please see the district document entitled “Junior High Honors Courses: Indicators for Student Success” [opposite side of page] to determine if your student is a good candidate.*

Students who are not highly self-motivated and persistent should not take 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Honors English. This course covers more complex material at a much faster pace than a traditional English class. In order to participate in the class discussions, students must complete daily informational and literary reading assignments *on their own time*. There is no way to “make up” these reading assignments. In-class discussions and activities will proceed as scheduled, so students who are not willing or able to complete the assigned reading *on time* will not be successful. *Please consider reading expectations carefully before registering for this course.* Honors English will focus heavily on argumentative writing. Students will complete daily writing assignments in class as well as two formal term papers each quarter. Students will post their writing in a variety of online environments (StudySync, Utah Write, Discussion Forums), and peer review will play a significant role in the writing process. Grading is based on total percentage of points earned, but simply completing the assignments does not guarantee a good grade: Thoughtful, complete, on-time, honors-caliber work is required. Students who are more concerned about grades than about challenging themselves should not take this class. Excellent citizenship is expected, as there will be many class discussions that require respectful attention to classmates and teachers. Consistent attendance is a must, as missed class discussions cannot be made up. Besides the abundant above-grade-level reading and writing challenges, students in this course will learn the conventions of standard English grammar and usage, build vocabulary through systematic word study, and understand the nuances of figurative language via more advanced and faster-paced analysis and synthesis techniques. Greater emphasis will be placed on critical thinking, research as evidence to warrant written claims (argumentation), and synthesis of ideas. In order to increase oral communication skills, students will present work to the class individually and in small groups. Honors English is profoundly challenging even for the brightest students, but those who are academically engaged and willing to participate will find it extremely rewarding.

***\*Let the Student Beware: If, after re-reading this information, you have second thoughts about your decision to register for Honors English, I strongly recommend that you make the necessary adjustments to your schedule immediately. The curriculum and reading assignments for Honors English are almost completely different than for the traditional classes. Do not struggle through most of a semester before making the change because the grade you have earned to that point will follow you, and you will likely be lost upon your arrival in the new class. If you are going to switch classes, do it now. Also, if getting an A is more important to you than living up to the challenge of this class, you should not take Honors English because earning an A is extremely challenging.***

## Junior High Honors Courses Indicators for Student Success

Please thoughtfully consider the following criteria as you are making a decision about whether or not junior high honors level courses will provide the most appropriate learning environment. A student should:

1. Typically be performing at **85% or above** on the **Criterion Referenced Test (CRT)** in a specific subject area before considering enrolling in an honors level course in that subject area.
2. Typically be performing in the **80<sup>th</sup> percentile or above** on the **Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS)** in a specific subject area before considering enrolling in an honors level course in that subject area (currently, the ITBS is no longer administered, but past scores can be used as a guide).
3. Consistently earn an **"A" or "B" (or a "3" for 6<sup>th</sup> graders)** for the subject in which they desire to take an honors course.
4. Have a **high level of interest** and **strong desire to be challenged** in the subject in which they would like to take an honors course.
5. Consistently exhibit most of the following characteristics:

### Learning/Intellectual Characteristics:

- Enjoys tasks that are more challenging than average
- Has a ready grasp of underlying principles and can quickly make valid generalization about events, people, and things
- Tries to understand complicated material by separating it into its respective parts; reasons things out
- Analyzes problems and considers alternatives
- Enjoys complex concepts and processes

### Motivational/Affective Characteristics:

- Becomes absorbed and truly involved in certain topics or problems
- Needs little external motivation to follow through in work completion
- Often requires little direction from teachers
- Is highly self-motivated and persistent
- Has high expectations of self and others

When deciding whether or not to enroll a student in a particular subject area honors course, please consider the following subject specific characteristics:

### Math/Science:

- Is interested in numerical analysis
- Has a good memory for storing main features of problem and solutions
- Reasons effectively and efficiently
- Organizes data and experiments to discover patterns or relationships
- Is flexible in solving problems

### Social Studies/Language Arts:

- Has advanced vocabulary for age or grade level
- Reads a great deal; does not avoid difficult material
- Enjoys language/verbal or written communication; has advanced communication skills
- Organizes ideas and sequences in preparation for speaking and writing
- Likes study and research in areas of interest