

Honors English Online

Fairfield Junior High

Contract

Fairfield Junior High School offers an Honors English curriculum to students who choose to be challenged beyond the standard class curriculum. Students who contract for Honors English high school graduation credit must commit to curriculum and behavioral standards. This is a self-initiated program: students are responsible to meet required deadlines and produce "honors quality" work. Honors English assignments do not replace the class work in the traditional English classes, but rather build upon it to focus on higher-order thinking skills. Because the Honors English class does not meet on a daily basis, it is extremely important that students take personal responsibility for the completion of all assignments and projects for the course.

General Requirements

Students who participate in *Honors English Online* must...

- ...be self-motivated.
- ...be willing and able to attend occasional seminar meetings.
- ...have access to an Internet-ready computer.
(Computers are available at the school before and after school hours.)
- ...have a working e-mail address that can send and receive attachments.
- ...participate regularly in the online discussion.
- ...make weekly entries in their web logs (blogs).
- ...commit to doing great deal of independent reading.

Grading

Honors English Online is not formally graded. The English grade that students receive will be in their traditional, daily English class. A condition of remaining in the Honors class, however, is that students maintain an A- or better in English during all terms. Citizenship grades must not drop below "Satisfactory." Honors English assignments that do not meet honors standards will be returned to the student for revision. Even though it is not formally graded, all work for *Honors English Online* must be honors caliber.

Reading

All ninth graders at Fairfield must earn Reading points in their traditional English classes each term. Honors students may choose to earn these points by carefully selecting the books they read as part of the Honors English curriculum. Each term in *Honors English Online*, there will be some kind of reading assignment. Sometimes a book will be assigned; other times the student will have to choose one (or two) from a list. By choosing books carefully, students may not only meet the Honors English requirement but also earn their Reading points for their traditional English classes. Of course, students are encouraged to read any books they choose, and most Honors students do so even without such a requirement, but one of the purposes of the Honors English curriculum is to get students to challenge themselves. Students who complete the Honors English requirements will read a wide variety of literature that may not be naturally fascinating or action-packed. Some of it may be considered "classic." Some will simply be reading that they might not normally undertake. One way or another, they will spend a lot of time reading. All reading will be tracked using an online program called Goodreads.

Writing

There will usually be one major writing assignment each term. Specific instructions for each assignment will be provided at the beginning of each term. There will also be less formal weekly writing assignments to be completed via the Internet (online discussions and blogs), and Honors students are required to enter one writing contest per term.

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

High school honors credit 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. Students who successfully complete *Honors English Online* will be recommended for 10th grade Honors English at the high school.

Participation: Seminars, Online Discussions, and Blogs

There may be occasional seminar meetings or class gatherings. Students participating in *Honors English Online* should plan to attend these sessions to discuss assignments, turn in work, and collect/exchange materials.

Students will enroll in an online discussion board where the class will discuss the readings and assignments the students are working on. This allows for an ongoing discussion even though the class meets only periodically, and it will help maintain a collegial atmosphere as the students help and learn from each other. Students must participate regularly by contributing their comments to the discussion. (Note: All discussions are monitored by a teacher.)

Finally, all students in *Honors English Online* will develop their own blog (web log), which is an Internet-based journal in which students may reflect on the readings from the course or on school matters in general. Students must write 500 words per week in their blogs. All students will have access to all course blogs, so there will be ample opportunity to respond to classmates' writing. Internet safety and privacy are very important, and specific instructions will be given as to how to maintain all such accounts.

Students:

By signing this contract, I affirm that I understand the requirements of *Honors English Online*, and I commit to work on them and complete them honestly.

(Student Signature)

(Date)

Please print student's name here.

Parents:

I am aware that my student is participating in *Honors English Online*, and I will encourage him/her to work to the best of his/her abilities. I understand the requirements outlined in this contract.

(Parent Signature)

(Date)

Please print parent's name here.