

"Everyone you meet is fighting a battle you know nothing about. Be kind always."

Mr. Heverly  
gheverly@slusd.us  
Cell 510-541-4130

## Syllabus for English 1 & 2

### I Purpose of course:

- A. To improve your reading and writing skills.
- B. To introduce you to books & reading

### II What we will do:

Read: mostly novels. I will try to allow you choices wherever possible but there is also advantage to having everyone read the same book occasionally.

### B. Silent read for ten minutes each day (at the beginning of class)

Silent reading may NOT be used to do homework or study for tests. It is for recreational reading.

### C. Write essays, letters, diaries, opinions, emails, poetry, et. al.

### II Grading

A. Most assignments are either 100% or Incomplete. Few assignments (except the Final Exam) are graded. You are expected to make corrections until you have an acceptable piece of work, and then you get the full credit.

a. Neatness is essential. Sloppy work will be rejected and returned to you.

C. Track your grades over Aeris. If you don't know your password, tell me.

D. How I test:

a. Most tests are not graded. To get 100% for a test you must neatly explain the correct answer in 75+ words for each wrong answer. Uncorrected tests are considered incomplete = 0%.

"We learn...10 percent of what we read, 20 percent of what we hear, 30 percent of what we see, 50 percent of what we see and hear, 70 percent of what we discuss with others, 80 percent of what we experience, and 95 percent of what we teach someone else."

E. Each week you get 30% of the week's points without doing anything. However if you interfere with the learning of another student you will lose these points or at least some of them.

### III Homework

A. There will be some, mostly reading.

### IV School rules (In all these things my first rule is USE COMMON SENSE)

All rules apply while you are in the room.

A. Wear your lanyard with the ID visible

B. If you want to go to the bathroom pick up the pass and wave it for me to see. If it's not the first or last ten minutes, and if you haven't been a pain, I'll approve your leaving. If you linger too long you may not be able to go next time.

C. You may not wear hoodies in class.

Why no hoods? Because you can't learn without paying attention. The best way to tune me out is to plug in earbuds, which hoods hide. No earbuds=no hoods.

D. You may eat in class. Clean up your own messes.

E. You may not leave the room for any reason in the first ten minutes or last ten minutes of class.

F. We will discuss the use of earphones. For now no earphones are allowed.

G. You are on time to class if you are in your seat when the bell stops ringing.

a. If you want to eat lunch in here I'm OK with that but we'll need to be careful to clean up after eating.

H. Some texting in class is acceptable to me; excessive texting is not.

### V Materials

A. All work will be done on the Chromebooks, but you may do your work on paper if you wish. I'll explain why I think it is in your interests to use the computers.

a. Pencils OK for drawings, crossword puzzles, word searches

"Studies with children as well as adults suggest that when we are carefully monitored as we work on a task, we tend to lose interest in it."

#### VI Tools I use

- A. Change your seat: We will change seats about every 5 weeks. But if you are disruptive I reserve the right to change your seat at any time.
- B. Phone home: I'm obligated to let your parents know what you are doing wrong or right.
- C. Lunch detention: ten minutes in this room. If you skip this you get 60 minutes school detention.
- D. Buddy room: if you cause problems I'll send you to another room for the rest of the period with something to do.
- E. After school detention: I'll request this from the principal in rare circumstances.
- F. Office referral: only for things that prevent me from teaching the class. Generally this means refusing to hand over earbuds or phones when told to do so.

VII Dismissal: You may not gather by the door awaiting the bell. Remain near your chair till I dismiss you.

#### VIII Silent Reading

- b. Books
- c. Magazines
- d. Newspapers
- e. Comic books
- f. Manga
- G. Audio books

Things people do to disrupt SSR: Say "God Bless you" ten times, loudly when someone sneezes; throwing paper; asking to go to the bathroom.

#### X Extra Credit:

- A Reading books
- C After school visits

"The worst teaching often leads to the best consequences and the best teaching to the worst."

## Maxims

- A. Leave a place better than you found it
- B. Don't take things that aren't yours
- C. Say "Sorry" when you hurt someone
- D. Be curious, about the world, about me, about your future, about everything.
- E. 90% of life is just *showing up*. Just about everyone who fails my class does so because they are either absent or tardy.
- F. Apologize sincerely when you realize you've done something wrong.

"I would never give an answer. And it used to drive {students} absolutely crazy. The kids were crying, but {I'd say} I don't plan to be with you next year or the year after, and I'm certainly not coming to live with you, so I'm not going to be there to provide you the answers, so get it on your own."

Respect = Sacrifice

Everyone talks about respect, students insist they have it, teachers demand it, no one defines exactly what it is.

**To me respect means putting the needs of others before your own needs/desires. Sacrificing.** It means giving up things you would like to have.

- Holding the door open for others.
- Letting others speak even when you have something you want to say.
- Being quiet when others are speaking.
- Cleaning up after yourself so that the next person inherits a clean space. Putting things back where you found them.
- Saying "Please" and "Thank you"

# Respect

Gabrielle Koetsier, (from Quora Digest)

I used to work at McDonalds. In fact, I worked there for four years.

I learned a lot about human nature there.

How do people treat the staff? Most customers see McDonalds employees as a means to an end - a food-making, order-taking robot, basically. That's the thing I hated the most about working there - even if we were short-staffed, even if we got a huge rush and were working our absolute fastest to serve all the customers, there was rarely any appreciation. It's pretty much a thankless job - you do your utmost and still receive complaints because the food took one minute too long.

You can really tell a lot about a person by how they treat the staff at McDonalds - if they think that person is "less" than them or lower in the social hierarchy, if they pity that person... And how they react when their order gets messed up or it takes a bit longer than expected.

Another telling trait is whether or not people clean up after themselves. It's not very hard to simply take your tray and empty it into the garbage. That's what a decent person would do. But some just leave their trash laying around, mayo smeared all over the table, Coke drips on the floor. Once, a teenage couple took the time to rip their burger wrappers into hundreds of tiny pieces so it would be even more difficult for the staff to clean up.

If you want proof that communism will never be successful, work at McDonalds for a few weeks. You'll soon find out how lazy and selfish people actually are. What the individual wants is what the individual gets - me is what matters most.

## The Importance of reading

Reading is a skill, one that can be practiced daily, one where you can improve at any age or level of experience.

Reading is a way to experience the world, the past, the future, the rest of the planet, the universe. No other way offers the same degree of insight, not TV, not film, not talk, not music. Reading is irreplaceable if you want to become a broad-minded, thinking individual.

Reading increases vocabulary better than any other method.

Reading teaches grammar better than any other method.

The best athletes, the smartest actors and actresses, the best plumbers and electricians, the ablest politicians, the happiest husbands and wives, all are readers and, if asked, will tell you that they gained advantages in life by reading.

Want to advance at your workplace without depending on the help of others? Read.

Want to travel the world when you have no money? Read.

Want to get to sleep at night? Reading eases the way to sleep when video games and TV keep you awake.

## Writing

**Above all what you write should be *interesting*.**

Nothing else matters as much, not grammar or spelling, or topic sentences, or conclusions, or anything else.

But you can improve your writing with a few simple steps:

1. Read what you have written back to yourself out loud.
2. Revise, revise, revise, revise, revise. Never settle for the first version of what you write.
3. Don't plagiarize. Never copy even one sentence from someone else without making sure your reader knows who originated the words. When in doubt tell the reader where you got the words.
4. Think always, *who is my audience? Who am I writing to?*

Common mistakes to avoid:

1. Lower case i (i went to the store) vs. (I went to the store)
2. u for you. (Do u want my sandwich?) vs. (Do you want my sandwich?)
3. Lower case names (san leandro) vs. (San Leandro)
4. There, their, they're.
5. Cause instead of because (I took it cause I needed it) vs. (I took it because I needed it.)

And:

1. Don't be wishy-washy. Most school essays require that you take a stand and defend it.
2. "In my opinion" generally is superfluous. We already know it's your opinion, no need to remind us.



## Grades

I hate them. Anyone who cares about grades is my foe. If I could do away with them I surely would.

<http://www.alfiekohn.org/article/case-grades/>

I love them. Sometimes it is the only way I can push you to do what I think is the right thing. It is often my only leverage with you, the only way to coerce you into doing things my way.

You will see that I strive to eliminate grades wherever possible.

Wherever possible I substitute INCOMPLETE for any grade below 100%.

## Wikipedia & the Internet

I graduated from West Babylon Senior High School in June of 1963. John F. Kennedy was President. There were no cell phones, no video games, no internet, no microwaves, no Pandora or Google or Apple., no ATM's.

### Teachers hated:

1. Television (rots your brain)
2. The Encyclopedia Britannica (a shortcut way to find out information about anything)
3. Time and Newsweek Magazines (short little stories about everything that was happening in the world)

### Today teachers hate:

1. Television (rots your brain)
2. Wikipedia (a shortcut way to find out information about anything)
3. Video games (another way to rot your brain)

It's not really different.

My view is that the internet is a fabulous *opportunity* to satisfy your curiosity about almost anything.

A word you don't understand? Look it up.

Where in the world is Bosnia? Look it up.

When did slavery end? Look it up.

What did we do in class yesterday? Look it up (on Google Classroom)

Yes, people mess with Wikipedia sometimes (though they strive to prevent this).

Yes, Wikipedia is biased.

But everything you read is biased. *Get over it. Don't trust anyone, except when you should trust them. Learn to read Wikipedia (and anything else) skeptically. Start with Wikipedia; but keep learning.*

"The Canons of art are the expression, in specialized form, of the requirements for depth of experience."

## How learning to write makes you a better person:

1. Quoting someone and telling their stories means you must listen to the other person, and not in a superficial way. You must really *listen* in order to quote someone.
2. Finding facts forces you to learn about things. We all bring our prejudices and ideas to school. Challenging those ideas makes you a more intelligent and interesting person.
3. Authority figures are people and institutions that we can learn from. Finding these people and listening to them can make you smarter.
4. Using dialogue forces you to accurately quote someone so that you really listen to what they have to say. Too often we are so eager to tell our own stories that we don't give others the space to explain themselves. To write dialogue you must give the person time to speak.
5. Describing things in detail forces you to really *see* the world around you, its smells, sounds, sights. It increases your enjoyment of life.
6. Paragraphs force you to think about what you are writing. Why does this sentence go with the other one? It's a good way to see if your writing is logical and can be understood by others.
7. Using a hook forces you to think about your audience. Who is going to read what you write? If you care about those readers then you care about writing things in an interesting way.