

Department of English Policies for 2009-2010

The Hampton High School Department of English is committed to the promotion and instruction of literacy, both within our classes and the school community as a whole. As high school teachers of English, we assume that students no longer require substantial external rewards to motivate them for success; we expect that they see the reward in the work itself and find personal satisfaction in having done their best. Inasmuch as high school is the final stage in a young person's preparation for the "real world," we believe it is essential that students take responsibility for themselves and the following policies were developed with that in mind. It is our experience that there is seldom any reward in university, community college or the workplace for the job half-done or well-attempted. That is not to say that a solid work ethic is discounted; rather it is considered an expected necessity. The following policies are offered so that both students and parents in conjunction with teachers will not have to face the unexpected. When expectations are clearly stated and understood, the possibility of success is that much greater.

Policies

- 1. Homework:** All policies on homework are based on the belief that language skills are cumulative and cannot be mastered through cramming. They must be pursued diligently and persistently.
 - Students in academic level English classes (112, 122) will regularly have as much as one hour of homework nightly, sometimes more. Students in general level courses (113, 123) can expect between one half to one hour of homework nightly, and students in grades 9 and 10 will also average one half to one hour of work nightly. Homework in English is not just an assignment to be completed. On those nights where there is no specific assignment given, students should be reviewing and/or reading.
 - When students are absent, it is **their responsibility** to catch up on missed notes and homework. This applies in all cases but especially for those absent as a result of suspension. Following an absence, the student, upon arrival in the classroom, should inquire after any handouts that may have been distributed.
 - Homework will be checked periodically, at random. Students can expect to lose marks for incomplete homework assignments. We do not require perfection but we want to see an honest attempt.
 - It is suggested that each student find a classmate who can apprise the student of what has been missed on the day of an absence.
- 2. Assignments:** All policies on assignments are based on the belief that the pride taken in one's work is best demonstrated by an attention to due dates and to the physical presentation of assignments.
 - Assignments other than homework and in-class presentations are due by 3:30 PM on the due date. They should be given to the teacher personally, not left on the desk or given to a secretary in the office.
 - At all grade levels assignments passed in one day late will receive a 20% deduction; two days late, a further 10%. Assignments passed in more than two days late will be deemed unacceptable and receive a zero. (This policy is based on the understanding that ample time is always given for the completion of assignments. Particularly where major assignments are concerned, students should use their time wisely and avoid trying to start and finish the night before an assignment is due).
 - All assignments must be presented either typed or in your very best handwriting (in pen, not pencil). Assignments with strike-outs and strike-overs are unacceptable. Such assignments will be returned as will any that are deemed unpresentable because of the physical condition of the paper. Students will be expected to rewrite and submit the assignment with a deduction being made for lateness as a result.
 - Plagiarism is intellectual theft and cannot be tolerated. Students are taught at all grade levels (9-12) what constitutes plagiarism and how it can be avoided. Any plagiarized assignment passed in for evaluation will receive a zero.
 - Oral assignments or presentations are governed by the same expectations as written

assignments. Even if such an assignment is not to be done on the due date, it must be evident that it is ready on that day.

- Computer problems are not a legitimate excuse for an assignment being incomplete on its due date.
3. **Tests:** All policies on testing are based on the belief that students are involved in an ongoing learning process and are, therefore, always up to date. As a general principle students should be prepared for evaluation and assessment at any time. This is intended to encourage diligence and responsibility on a day to day basis and to further the goals already mentioned for homework.
 - When students are absent on the day of a major test, they are expected to write a make-up the day they return. At all grade levels, if students do not provide legitimate and verifiable excuses, they will receive a mark of zero.
 - If students are absent for two or more days consecutively, they should, immediately upon their return to school, see the teacher to arrange a time for a make-up test.
 4. **Extra help:** Hampton High School's English Department welcomes the opportunity to work one-on-one or in small groups with students who are looking for extra help. The one thing we ask is that students arrange for times rather than expect help without any notice. Teachers in the Department participate in a wide variety of extra-curricular activities and are very much in demand. Everyone's needs are better met by planning ahead.
 5. **Course requirements:** In every course offered there are certain requirements that students must meet in order to be successful. In addition to the curriculum-specific expectations in **all** courses, both students and parents need to be aware of the developmental nature of the writing component in English courses. Successful completion of the following tasks should be viewed as essential for the pursuit of post-secondary studies.
 - Grade 9: The completion of a number of short response compositions; they will also be introduced to the five paragraph essay and the MLA format
 - Grade 10: The completion of two major essays using the MLA format.
 - English 112: The completion of four essays using proper MLA essay format.
 - English 122: The completion of two research papers.(These are minimum requirements, and they do not represent the number of writing assignments expected of students at these grade levels. Grade 11 English is now a full-year course, and, in most classes, students will be expected to write four or more essays.)

All of the above policies are based upon our perception that diligence and personal responsibility are essential qualities for success not only in school but in life as well. We in the English Department want to work with students so that they might become better writers, readers, speakers and thinkers. In order for real progress to occur we must work cooperatively in accordance with certain clearly established principles. The time we have in high school is short. Let us use it wisely.