



This course is meant to prepare students for high school and college language arts courses by improving their abilities in oral and written expression as well as critical reading of texts and media. Ultimately students should be developing skills applicable to life academically, socially, and emotionally. By the end of the course, students will have experience:

- Reading and discussing the themes and motifs in several major American literary texts, including fiction, poetry, drama, and nonfiction
- Writing analytic and argumentative essays, including research-based synthesis arguments
- Revising and editing their writing
- Developing their vocabularies and speaking and listening skills

The overarching goal of this course is to help students cultivate their ability to critically think, to analyze arguments, and to communicate effectively. In order to achieve this goal, we must create a welcoming environment where we can work together.

Our classroom is a professional community, and students should conduct themselves accordingly. In order for a community to be effective students must feel comfortable, therefore those who disrupt the community with their words or actions (rude, sarcastic, obscene, or disrespectful speech or behavior) will be removed from class.

We've got an entire year together, so we need to all get along. Let's all respect one another. This is what the success of our class is built on.

#### REQUIRED MATERIALS

- Writer's notebook (composition or spiral) for daily in-class writing and grammar practice. This should be ONLY for this class - you will occasionally turn it in!
- Three ring binder or folder for keeping handouts and class worksheets
- Writing utensils

## CLASSROOM EXPECTATIONS:

### BEGINNING OF CLASS:

At the start of each class, you will be expected to grab any materials or handouts from the appropriate box on the chalkboard, turn in any homework to the cubby at the front of the room, grab your writer's notebook, and be in your seat *before the bell rings*.

### CLASSWORK:

Any assignments can be turned into the trays located at the front of the room. All graded assignments will be returned as soon as possible; however, please allow for significant grading time for larger assignments such as essays.

### TARDIES/ABSENCES:

I expect everyone to be ready to start class when the bell rings. Tardiness will be recorded by the teacher, and according to the school policy after the fourth tardy, a parent will receive a call. On the fifth tardy, and every tardy after the fifth, the student will receive an office referral. Students who are absent are responsible for missing assignments. I am available for help during Wildcat Hour, and before and after school most days if you just let me know that you will be here. You have one day for every day you were absent to make up the assignment. After the tenth absence, you cannot make-up assignments without a doctor's note.

### TAKING A BREAK:

If and when you need to take a restroom break, feel free to leave the room at an **appropriate time**. There are two bathroom passes hanging on the pencil sharpener. Please wait until one of these is available, leave the room quietly and respectfully, and return in a timely manner. You do not need to ask permission unless otherwise noted.

### ELECTRONICS:

Be respectful and mindful in your use of them. There will be times where I will allow you to use your device for the assignment in class. However, according to the student handbook, cell phones are not to be used in the classroom without permission. Students who are repeatedly reminded to put their phone away during instruction will be referred to their administrator.

### ACADEMIC DISHONESTY:

Plagiarism, or the copying of others' words, phrases, or ideas, will not be tolerated and will result in a zero and an office referral for the offender. The sharing of your ideas, words, or answers will also result in a zero. A record of this will be made and kept.

### NOTE:

A student who wants an alternative reading assignment for a particular assigned book should explain to the teacher why he/she wants an alternative text, and the teacher will then work with the student to select an alternative text of comparable text complexity that addresses the objectives of the course and of the particular unit in which the text is the focus.

### GRADE BREAKDOWN:

Classwork: 15%

Professionalism: 5%

Quizzes: 15%

Projects/Tests: 55%

Semester Final/EOC (Second Semester Only): 10%

## PROFESSIONALISM GRADE:

A professionalism grade will be given at the end of each unit (approximately 4 per semester). This grade will reflect how well each student was able to come to class prepared, collaborate with peers, and manage their time throughout class.

The purpose of this grade is to avoid taking late points on assignments. I have a firm belief that a student's grade on any given assignment should reflect the work that they have done, not their ability to turn that work in on time; however, I understand that it is still important to keep students accountable and prepare them for the workplace. This grade will hopefully help to cultivate that professional behavior.

## REVISIONS & LATE WORK:

Students should complete all work (mostly in-class with some homework) by the assigned due dates. In order for grades to accurately reflect the work done, points will not be taken off for late assignments; however, a professionalism grade will be taken each semester. If a student continuously fails to complete work by the due date, this will be reflected in their professionalism grade, rather than their classwork or project grade.

**Late work will not be accepted after the end of that unit unless specific permission is granted by the instructor.**

## BLUE SPRINGS HIGH SCHOOL GRADING SCALE:

A+	=	98-100
A	=	94-97
A-	=	90-93
B+	=	87-89
B	=	83-86
B-	=	80-82
C+	=	77-79
C	=	73-76
C-	=	70-72
D+	=	67-69
D	=	63-66
D-	=	60-62
F	=	Below 60

## A NOTE TO PARENTS & GUARDIANS:

I am a teacher because I care about high school students, and I hope to partner with you in the education of your student. I want more than anything for them to become the successful young men and women you envision them to be. For this reason, I ask that students advocate for themselves as a means of taking responsibility for their education; however, I know that this is an acquired skill, so I will sometimes need to dialogue with you concerning your student's progress. I am best reached through email, and I will do my best to respond to any concerns or queries within 24 hours. If we need to conference over the phone or in person, e-mail me to set up an appointment.

Best,  
Jaimie Engelken

**Email:** [jengelken@bssd.net](mailto:jengelken@bssd.net)

**Website:** [msengelken.weebly.com](http://msengelken.weebly.com)

**Phone:** 816-874-3400 ext. 50065