Welcome to the Osprey Team

and Advanced English 8

Dr. Karen Luecke Room 311

Karen.Luecke@vbschools.com lueckeenglish.weebly.com

Course Introduction

In English class this year, we will explore the role of the hero in literature by reading classics like *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *A Tale of Two Cities,* and more. In each, we will examine the hero’s journey and its impact on order and chaos (our grade level theme). Our curriculum is tailored for gifted students while we examine patterns in a broad spectrum of *stories*, everything from the ancient epic *Beowulf*, to children’s books, and even contemporary music. Acting as literary critics, we will engage in authentic scholarship through writing and thinking tasks framed by each unit’s essential questions and enduring understandings.

You can expect to do some kind of writing just about every block as we explore various modes from expository to creative writing. Most of it will not be graded, but I still expect your best work. Not only are we preparing for the three English 8 SOLs (two Writing SOLs in March and the Reading SOL in May), but we are also building on the writing skills you have, with a strong emphasis on organization and persuasion. We will focus on the processes that English scholars practice within the discipline including the essential skills of literary analysis, reading, writing, and oral communication. You will also continue to maintain and update the digital portfolios you created on Weebly; separate instructions on this to follow.

Whereas earlier instruction in language arts emphasizes reading comprehension and the identification of ideas and evidence, our goal is to practice and then move beyond the basics. In preparation for high school, you will become discerning readers, skilled in literary analysis and criticism. You will expand your writing beyond simple expression, striving to use specific writing tools purposefully and with a focus on audience.

Language is an incredibly powerful force in our lives! Throughout the year, we will explore the complex and dynamic relationships between language, literature, and culture – how we use language to make meaning and to both cause *and* respond to events in the world around us. My goal is for you to leave 8th grade having captured some of that power for yourselves, ready to use it in your professional and personal endeavors for the rest of your lives.



Materials for Class

The following materials are needed for each English class in addition to your Chromebook:

* pencils and pens
* paper
* a composition notebook (to be left in class)
* your student planner
* your texts

A word about books: to me, books are treasures. As such, I expect you to treat all your books with great care and respect. We will use grammar and literature textbooks within the classroom. Novels will be issued and collected throughout the year and should be cared for appropriately.

 General Guidelines

**Successful learners have enthusiastic, curious, and open minds!** When you are in English class, please:

* **Do your best.** I expect you to try. I also expect you to struggle sometimes, and that’s okay. I am eager to work with you at any stage of your learning process and simply expect you to put forth your best effort in return. You will not be able to do “extra work” at the end of grading periods to compensate for an uneven start, but some assignments are eligible for revision or resubmission.
* **Be responsible for your own success.** This means showing up prepared and on time, submitting your work when it is due, and taking care of personal errands (bathroom/water breaks) between classes. I expect you to meet your deadlines. If you are absent, it is your responsibility to determine what you missed and to make up your missed work, including tests and quizzes by appointment. Homework and assignments are also posted in the Osprey English Google classroom.
* **Let others learn, too.** I expect you to follow the school conduct policies described in your planner, including rules for dress code. You may use devices in class only as part of instructional activities. If you’re not sure, ask! There are appropriate times for talking and moving about the classroom; otherwise, please stay seated, quiet, and on-task during times for work and instruction.
* **Demonstrate honor and integrity.** Students are expected to behave in a manner consistent with the Honor Code, at all times and for every assignment.

Assignments and Grading

**VBCPS Grading Scale**

A 93-100 4.0

A- 90-92 3.7

B+ 87-89 3.3

B 83-86 3.0

B- 80-82 2.7

C+ 77-79 2.3

C 73-76 2.0

C- 70-72 1.7

D+ 67-69 1.3

D 64-66 1.0

E Below 64 0.0

Grades for English class are calculated using a total points system. You will be told in advance how assignments will be weighted, and all major tasks will include a rubric with grading criteria. There will be balanced assessments, meaning your grade will be a combination of tests, quizzes, performance tasks and papers. Please see the ODS English Grading Policy on the team Weebly website for more information about late work and re-assessment.

I understand that grades are important to you. I strive to provide feedback that is descriptive, consistent, and timely. Please bring any concerns to my attention promptly and appropriately. I am happy to meet with students and parents to discuss strategies for growth and improvement.

The Commonwealth of Virginia has adopted Standards of Learning for this course.  Therefore, it is extremely important that you complete all assignments, tests, and projects, as all of these methods will be used to impart knowledge and skills necessary to successfully complete SOL testing. Not to mention that the learning we do in this class is valuable for its own sake! Additional information regarding the SOL test will be forthcoming.

Keep in Touch

**Clear and consistent communication between the teacher, student, and parents is essential for academic success!**

* **Email me at Karen.Luecke@vbschools.com.** Email is a great way to get in touch quickly, and I will generally respond within one school day.
* **Check our Google classroom often:** Information is posted and updated often, including the homework, class agendas, announcements, enrichment opportunities, student work, and more!
* **Subscribe to the Osprey Team My School Mail.** This is a great way to get a weekly digest of class happenings. Directions for subscribing can be found on the school website under the “Connect With Us” heading.
* **Call the main office** and leave a message for me: (757) 648-3240. I will respond as soon as I can.