



Damascus High School Honors English 9A

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Support and Intervention Opportunities:

Extended time and additional support is offered to all students before school, during the second half of lunch (Mondays-Fridays), or after-school by appointment.

Course Description/Overview & Learning Objectives

First Quarter: The Power of the Story	Second Quarter: Exploring What Texts Leave Out
Core Text: <i>Tuesdays with Morrie</i> by Mitch Albom This unit explores how stories shape our worldview and deepen our understanding of others by sharing diverse perspectives, especially those often overlooked. Through reading and reflecting on different experiences, students will discover the power of storytelling to broaden identity, foster empathy, and inspire personal and social change.	Core Text: <i>Of Mice and Men</i> by John Steinbeck This unit examines how historical and social contexts influence literature, highlighting whose voices are included or excluded in the stories we tell. Students will develop research skills to explore multiple perspectives, critically analyze portrayals of marginalized groups, and reflect on the responsibilities of both readers and writers in engaging with history through fiction to better understand the present.
Common Writing Tasks: ● Fictional Narrative- inspired by a historical event ● Personal Narrative- reflecting on a person who has influenced or inspired them	Common Writing Tasks: ● Informational Research- of a marginalized group of individuals ● Analysis- of a the treatment of a marginalized group of individuals in a text

Grading Expectations

Grades for this class are found in Synergy (Student/ParentVue). Students' academic grades are based on individual academic achievement.

Grading Scale

A	90-100 Outstanding level of performance
B	80-89 High level of performance
C	70-79 Acceptable level of performance
D	60-69 Minimal level of performance
E	0-59 Unacceptable level of performance

Grading Categories

- **80% → All Tasks & Assessments:** This category is work evaluated for learning, and means products designed to evaluate the student's mastery of content such as unit assessments, papers, projects, quizzes or tests, and/or performance tasks. There shall be no fewer than nine "All Tasks" assignments, with feedback, each marking period, and 50% of these will align with course-like classes.
- **10% → Preparation & Practice:** Homework for practice or preparation may account for a maximum of 10 percent of the marking period grade. There shall be no fewer than five practice/preparation assignments each marking period.
- **10% → District Assessment:** This category includes scores from required county district assessments administered in select courses. The score from the district assessment counts as 10% of the quarter grade.

Grade Calculations- A new final grade calculation will be implemented for **all** students in grade 9-12. Beginning school year 2025-2026, the final course grade is determined by calculating the average of the numeric grades from each marking period. Teachers will no longer use grade calculation charts to determine the final letter grade.

- For semester-long courses: the final grade is the average of the two marking period grades, calculated by adding the numeric grades from both marking periods and dividing the sum by two.
- End-of-Course (EOC) exam courses: the grade weight of a Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) end-of-year assessment in Biology and NSL Gov't is 20% of the semester B grade.
- Every course should have at least 9 All Tasks assignments and 5 Practice / Prep assignments.

Reassessments

- In all courses, teachers will provide students with **at least two** reassessment opportunities in the All Tasks category per marking period.
- The following assessments **may not** be reassessed: **end-of-course assessments, marking period assessments, required district assessments, end of semester summative assessments, final research papers, projects, or essays; culminating projects or performances**

- When a teacher offers a reassessment, students may be reassessed, regardless of grade on the original task/assessment, if they meet the following requirements:
 - complete the original task or assessment
 - complete re-teaching/relearning activities, as determined by the teacher.
 - The reassessment grade will replace the original grade only if the subsequent grade is higher.
- Teacher PLCs should determine common reassessments, and those assignments should be indicated with an AT-R in the gradebook.

Due Date/Deadlines

- Assignments in the All-Tasks category have a deadline of **5** school days after the due date. Assignments in the Practice / Prep category may have a shorter deadline.
- Work that is not turned in by the due date will be entered into the gradebook as a "**Z**" and will be calculated as a 0% but can still be turned in before the deadline.
- To ensure timely grade reporting, late work will not be accepted during the final **5** school days leading up to the end of each marking period.
- Late work turned in after the due date but before the deadline **will be** assigned a 10% or one letter grade penalty.

Assigning a 50%

- Teachers shall not assign a grade lower than 50 percent **if the student's work shows evidence of progress toward attaining the relevant standards that are being assessed.** More information regarding 50% can be [found here](#).
- Students receiving 50 percent may seek, and teachers shall offer, support and/or intervention to improve the accuracy or quality of the student's assessment product.
- The teacher will assign a zero if –
 - i. the student does not seek support or does no work on the task/assessment after the teacher offers support and/or intervention, or
 - ii. the teacher determines the student did not attempt to meet the basic requirements of the task/assessment.
- Assignments in the Practice / Prep category are graded on completion of the assignment.

Returning Student Work

- Graded work will be returned with feedback to the student within **10** school days.

Expectations for Communication, Support, and Intervention

- Teachers are expected to communicate with parents if a student is struggling in class or is consistently not completing assignments.
- Teachers will encourage students to receive direct support during lunch opportunities.
- Teachers will document 2 communication attempts with caregivers for the major/significant assignments for which a zero will put the student at risk of failing the quarter or semester. Teachers will use Synergy, email, texts, phone calls, or other methods of communication as frequently as possible.
 - If the teacher cannot establish communication following 2 attempts, the teacher will inform their Resource Teacher, the student's school counselor, and assistant principal.

Unlawful/Unexcused Absences

- Students are responsible for making up all work missed when they are absent from class regardless of the legal status of their absence.
- Students should check Canvas for work missed during an absence, and check with their teacher with any questions.

Academic Honesty

Because we value the learning and growing of our students here at Damascus High school, academic honesty is extremely important. If a student is found to have demonstrated academic dishonesty, the following actions will be taken:

- 1st offense: Verbal warning, teacher contact home, documentation in SYNERGY (communication log), and reassessment with a 10% reduction when possible. If the student chooses not to reassess, the student will receive a zero for the assignment.
- 2nd offense: Verbal warning, teacher contact home, documentation in SYNERGY (communication log), and reassessment with a maximum score of 50% when possible. If the student chooses not to reassess, the student will receive a zero for the assignment.
- 3rd offense: Verbal warning, referral to administration, teacher contact home and documentation in SYNERGY (communication log). The student will receive a zero for the assignment.

Please note that instances of academic dishonesty will be recorded cumulatively, not per individual course.

MyMCPS Classroom and StudentVue

Course materials and all assignment submissions will either be in hardcopy or MyMCPS Classroom. All announcements, assignments, assessments, and projects will be posted in MyMCPS Classroom (Canvas). You can easily contact your teacher using the email addresses listed at the top of this syllabus. You can also contact your teacher via the inbox in MyMCPS classroom (Canvas).

Grades can be accessed through **StudentVue** found at <https://md-mcps-psv.edupoint.com/>. Grades will be posted within two weeks of the due date and teachers will update Synergy weekly. Students should check StudentVue to see their most recent grades.

Personal Mobile Device (PMD)

Refers to any non-MCPS-issued device that sends or receives data via voice, video, or text. Mobile phones, e-readers, tablets, personal computers, smart watches, or other devices equipped with microphones, headphones, speakers, and/or cameras are all considered PMDs.

Instructional Time & The School Day

We value our instructional time together and are committed to engaging students in student-centered learning experiences daily. Devices may be used during lunch and between classes but must be turned off and out of sight during instruction. Cell phones will not be brought with you to the restrooms during instructional time.

Away and Out of Sight

As a school, we are adopting a clear and consistent approach to support students from actively using their PMDs during the instructional period. A cell phone management process will be in place in each classroom, such as

- Students will deposit their PMDs in a classroom pocket phone holder (or other receptacle).
- Students will follow another approach that is in agreement with an individual staff member.

As a result, there is no need to interrupt instructional time to retrieve a device when a student leaves a classroom for a short period.

Interventions & Responses - Inappropriate Use of Personal Electronics (802)

Persistently using or displaying a personal mobile device in defiance of school rules, disseminating photos/videos of school misconduct, and continuing to use or display a personal mobile device after the student has been warned.

Based on the duration and repetition between each step, the **most reasonable** lowest step should be considered first. Please collaborate with AP, RT, RJ Coach, case manager, or counselor to determine this.

Step 1	Classroom and Teacher-led Response - Warning • Classroom level restorative strategy
Step 2	Classroom and Teacher-led Responses - Parent Contact • Individual conversation with student • Two-way communication with parent or caregiver • Teacher-level consequence
Step 3	Teacher Synergy Referral and Administrator-led Responses • Individual conversation with student • Two-way communication with parent or caregiver • Confiscate PMD for a specific duration • Create a support plan specific to student needs when necessary

More information about [\[MCPS\] Middle School's grading expectations](#) can be found [HERE](#) and click [HERE](#) to read Montgomery County Public School's Grading and Reporting Regulation, IKA-RA.