

TL;DR: You can find the most up-to-date information (what we do each day in class) on my [agenda](#). I am excited and grateful to meet students where they are and help them grow. If interested, you can share some information about your child on [this survey](#). Even more information is available on my [website](#).

Hello!

I am excited to start this year. I always appreciate the brilliance of each unique student, as well as the stress of entering high school. I feel fortunate to get to know these young people's (and by extension, their caregivers,) experiences, passions, and skill sets as they enter room 108.

Over the past several years, the Freshman ELA Team has spent a great deal of time planning and revising the Freshman English curriculum. This course provides supported challenge with clear standards for students as they embark on their first year of high school. This is an excellent opportunity to hone fundamental literacy skills that are central to the high school experience and beyond.

Academically, the keys to success in this class are consistent effort and honest communication. Students will occasionally have homework (as needed, per class time), typically ongoing readings and related assignments. **Students are expected to complete work as it is assigned. Of course, should disruptions arise, extensions and modifications are allowed.** I will post instructional activities and homework assignments on our class' Schoology page and on my [agenda](#) (for the sake of less links, both are available on [this website](#)) to help students and guardians keep up to date. Freshmen use Schoology to access content, submit assignments, and to monitor current progress. **I encourage you to ask your student regularly about how class is going** and assignment completion, and to check PowerSchool for work completion.

Students are stepping into new expectations, part of which includes completing and submitting work in a timely fashion. You'll see names for different types of classwork; "Prep and Practice" (P&P) (e.g. in-class essay drafts, skill-building activities, completed with care and turned in on time) and "Body of Evidence" (BOE) assessments (e.g. essays, projects, etc.) that constitute an average grade. Learning is continual and perfection is a farce, so, students can Try Again on BOE, as long as all P&P has been completed. Students can meet with me anytime my door is open. Learning the content and practicing English skills is as essential as personal communication and responsibility. **I expect and welcome**

students practicing (*not* perfecting) self-awareness, appreciation, and expression. Respect of, and open-mindedness to, peers' contiguous doing-so is fundamental to a safe, exploratory learning environment.

We will follow the school policy concerning the bell-to-bell cell phone restriction as outlined in the state mandate. Phone use offenses will be treated with disciplinary action as per the established school policy. Students may not have earbuds or headphones on during class.

How to check grades: Scores will be based on [our standards](#). All body of evidence assignments, with standard(s) attached to and scored in each, make up the course average, total grade. Towards the end of each marking period, I will review all of the evidence and then use my professional judgment to determine the final score for each standard. On Schoology, the running score that you see for "Body of Evidence" when you look at grades is *not* the current course grade. However, this gives a ballpark average for each assignment, but does not calculate towards the final course grade.

Finally, the transition to high school is dysregulating *and* exciting. I strive to not overburden students nor you with overcommunication, but will always reach out via email with unit-by-unit updates on our coursework. **Please do not hesitate to reach out with curiosities or questions.** As one final plug, most consistent and detailed course information is available on my website ([click here again to access it](#)). If you prefer to stay on one document, standard school policy information re: AI Use, Habits of Work, Academic Honesty, and Scoring are on the latter pages.

Be happy and healthy!

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Freshman English Skill Categories, Standards and Weighting

The following are the assessed standard categories and standards used to determine student grades on Body of Evidence assignments. Please refer to the [MDIHS ELA Learning Progressions](#) document for further information.

Skill Category	Assessment Standards
Reading - 25%	STANDARD 4 - Read various texts closely to determine what each text explicitly says and to make logical inferences; cite specific textual evidence to support conclusions drawn from the texts. STANDARD 5 - Provide an accurate summary of various texts; determine the central idea(s) or theme(s) and analyze its development throughout each text.
Writing - 25%	STANDARD 2 - Develop, strengthen, and produce polished writing by using a collaborative process that includes the age-appropriate use of technology. STANDARD 3 - Routinely produce a variety of clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, format and style are appropriate to task, audience, and purpose while avoiding plagiarism.
Speaking and Listening - 25%	STANDARD 1 - Prepare for and participate in conversations across a range of topics, types, and forums, building on others' ideas and expressing their own.
Language - 25%	STANDARD 1. Demonstrate command of Standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking. STANDARD 2. Demonstrate command of standard English capitalization, punctuation and spelling when writing.

Assignments and Scoring

There are two categories of assignments in this course:

- **Prep and Practice** - These assignments allow students to receive teacher feedback without penalty. Scores on Prep and Practice assignments do not count toward the final grade of a standard. Instead, scores are intended to communicate progress and show readiness for success on a Body of Evidence assignment. These assignments will be recorded in Schoology using the following scale:
 - 0 = not attempted
 - .5 = incomplete
 - 1 = completed

- **Body of Evidence** - Students are required to demonstrate proficiency in course standards through their work. Body of Evidence assignments will count towards the final grade on the assessed standards. All of the evidence scored for each standard will be averaged together to calculate the standard's course average.

Final Grade Determination and In-course Grade Monitoring

The “Prep and Practice” and “Body of Evidence” entries recorded in the grade book reflect current student progress. Before the end of the marking period, students and parents can monitor student progress by going to the “Mastery” tab and viewing the student's score for each standard category as determined by their “Body of Evidence” assignments. This will provide an indication of academic progress during the term. For example,

PLEASE NOTE: Overall course grades will only be posted during the last week of each marking period.

Habits of Work

Success in this course is dependent on having strong habits of work. Every three weeks, I will evaluate your progress towards proficiency on two standards; Responsibility and Engagement. [You can view the schoolwide Habits of Work rubric by clicking here.](#)

Professional Judgment

Professional judgment is integral to grading practices. Throughout the course, students contribute to a Body of Evidence that is an average calculation of their scores on standards. Near the end of the course, teachers will review and evaluate each student's collected Prep and Practice and Body of Evidence work and document how students have performed on individual standards using the [AP Language and Composition Learning Progressions](#) and make adjustments to ensure that the student's average truly reflects their progress toward mastery.

Please visit the [“Multiple Opportunities and Professional Judgment”](#) section of the [MDIHS Program of Studies](#) and the [PowerSchool Learning](#) website for more information on this campus-wide policy.

Focus on Learning and the “Try Again” Process

If a student has been fully participating in the teaching and learning cycle -- in other words, if they have completed Prep and Practice assignments and submitted the Body of Evidence assignment on time¹ -- they will be given another opportunity to try again and improve their assessment score(s) at my discretion. This may be in the form of another attempt within the next assignment, or in the form of a redo/retake. What matters most is that students develop their skills. Students must schedule a Try Again conference with me during Flextime or before or after school before beginning revisions.

¹ Students must actively participate in the learning process in order to revise their assignments using the “Try Again” process. In other words, all Prep and Practice assignments must be completed before a student “Try Again” request will be approved.

To use the Try Again process to revise their work for reassessment, students must follow the policy outlined below:

- Turn in the Body of Evidence assessment **on time**. Late assignments are **not eligible** for reassessment.
- Within 102 days of receiving an initial grade, contact Ms. snyder about trying-again.
- Complete and submit revisions **within FIVE school days of receiving feedback**

PLEASE NOTE: Ms. Snyder will NOT accept any revisions made without a conversation/exchange about the work done, or after the FIVE day revision window has expired.

Late Work Policy

Any Body of Evidence assignment submitted one week after its original due date will not be accepted and will be entered in the grade book as a zero.

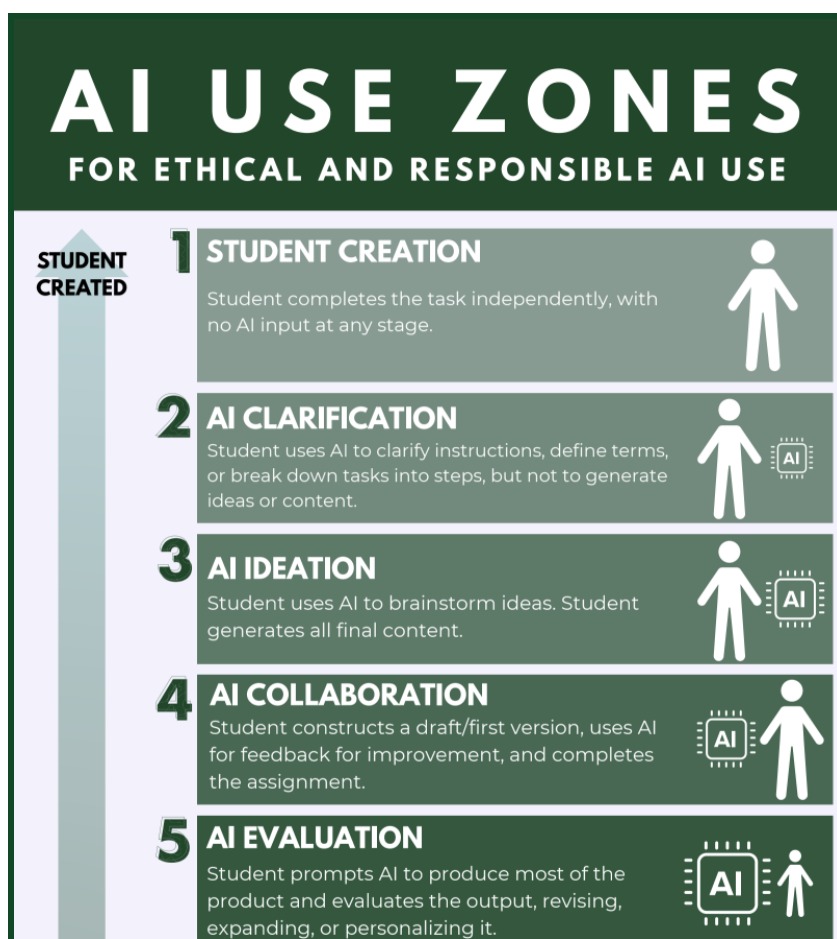
When and if a student anticipates that a Body of Evidence assignment will not be turned in on time, they will set up a meeting with the teacher to discuss a reasonable work completion expectation, which should be within two weeks of the original due date. It is the students' responsibility to communicate this information to all stakeholders (e.g. parents, case managers, ed techs, learning center teacher, etc.).

Use of Artificial Intelligence at MDIHS

Artificial Intelligence is an important and evolving tool that requires students and teachers to use it ethically. One component of learning to use this technology mindfully and intentionally is clearly identifying what will and will not be accepted for its use in assignments. Each assignment will identify on the assignment sheet the AI Use Zone allowed for that assignment. Any time a student completes work from AI Zone 2-6, students are expected to properly cite their AI source.

Freshman Team Philosophy Concerning the Use of AI

The Freshman team courses are intended to support students in building foundational skills of synthesizing and



critically examining information, using reasoning to defend their own ideas using evidence, and learning to persist through difficulty. When AI is used in lieu of the practice of these foundational skills in young students, a “frictionless” sort of experience results that undermines our most important learning goals. AI, when used well, can be a force-multiplier, and it certainly has a place in students’ education. However, that place will rarely, if ever, be in Freshman Social Studies, English or Biology courses. The chart below is intended to clearly delineate the uses of AI and help us consistently convey our expectations for any given assignment.

Understanding the Ethics of AI Use:

[Learning Impacts](#)

[Environmental Impacts](#)

Appropriate Use of AI in Freshman English

A student's use of a generative AI program to create “their” work is plagiarism in the most basic sense: “the practice of taking someone else's work or ideas and passing them off as one's own.”

Students are expected to use AI Use Zone Level 1 in Freshman English. All aspects of a student’s work--from start to finish--should be a product of their own effort and ideas. No student is allowed to use AI tools to produce any part of their assignments. This counts for ALL student submissions in Freshman English: Prep and Practice assignments (e.g. annotations, responses and feedback, in-class responses, etc.) and Body of Evidence assessments (e.g. claim-based paragraphs, essays, projects, etc.). This policy is non-negotiable.

The bottom line is if a student does not intend to read the assigned texts and compose their own work, then they should take another class.

MDIHS Academic Integrity Policy

Academic integrity forms the foundation of a respectful learning community. Built on honesty, trust, accountability, and respect, it requires students to present work truthfully, credit others' ideas, and take responsibility for their learning.

It is the parents' and the student’s responsibility to read the entire policy. Click [here](#) for a full copy of the MDIHS Academic Integrity Policy.

Consequences

	Individual Accountability	Community Responsibility
First Offense	The student will repeat the assignment in the presence of a faculty member, with the possibility of earning a score no higher than 3. Students will also lose the opportunity to Try Again on this assignment.	The Dean of Curriculum will identify appropriate interventions and supports to help prevent repeated offenses. After these steps are completed, the student will meet with the teacher to discuss what they have learned and their reflection.

Repeated Violations of the Academic Integrity Guidelines	The student will receive a zero on the assignment. When applicable, the following will occur: • Removal from honor societies, if applicable • Impact on acceptance into societies and the awarding of scholarships and other academic honors • If applicable, result in notification to colleges and employers • Any other consequence deemed appropriate by the principal or administrator designee based upon the nature and seriousness of the violation	The student will be referred to the Restorative Review Board. Participating in this work may result in the restoration of a grade on the assignment consistent with a first offense.
Egregious Offenses*	The student will lose credit and be withdrawn from the course with a WF. Removal from class may impact extracurricular eligibility. When applicable, the following will occur: • Removal from honor societies, if applicable • Impact on acceptance to societies and awarding of scholarships and other academic honors • If applicable, result in notification to colleges and employers • Any other consequence deemed appropriate by the principal or designee based upon the nature and seriousness of the violation	The student will be referred to the Restorative Review Board.

*Egregious violations inflict harm on other students within the community or compromise the integrity of the community of learners, such as the distribution or receipt of testing materials, answer keys, or passing off another student's work as their own.