

River Islands High School
English I
2026-2027

Teacher: Ms. Ortiz
Email: maortiz@bantasd.org
Department: English | Room 405
Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 8:00-8:30 a.m., or by appointment
Please email me if you are planning to come to office hours.

Course Description:

- The Grade 9 Thematic Units take students through literature and informational texts to gain an understanding of the importance of feeling empathy for others, assuming the responsibility of leadership, of pursuing dreams, and of feeling the power of love. Students will improve their writing skills by engaging in low-stakes writing in class every day. Extended writing assignments for the year include a Literary Analysis essay, an Informative essay, an Argumentative Essay, and Narrative (story) writing.
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Required Supplies:

- Chromebook - CHARGED
 - Paper: **college ruled** (Loose or notebook)
 - **Pen, pencils, highlighter, 1-1.5 inch binder, post-it notes, pack of 8 divider tabs**
 - *Bring any handouts, short readings, reference materials, etc. to class
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Assignments and Assessments:

- Check **Google Classroom** DAILY!
- Classwork and homework will be assigned regularly for the purpose of preparing for assessments.
- The student will participate in a variety of assessments throughout the year. Formative assessments include question-answer sessions related to literature, writing, grammar, etc. Summative assessments include unit exams, formal writing assignments, projects, and midterms/final exams. All assessments are designed to diagnose a student's breadth of knowledge and the application of skills essential for success.
- All major assignments will be in **MLA format**. It is expected that each student reviews the scores they earn on each submission. **Essays** must be **typed** in **Size 12** and **Times New Roman** font. Common Core aligned rubrics will be used.
- **Deadlines** will be made clear to all students, posted on Google Classroom, and discussed in advance.
- **Late Work** will be accepted; however, for each day an assignment is late, a **10% penalty** will be applied. If the assignment is not turned in after **5 consecutive school days**, it will be marked as missing, and no credit will be given. Late work will receive an initial grade of 0 in the grade book until it has been submitted. The grade will change once the work has been received and graded.
- **Retesting:** If students wish to retake an assessment, I will consider their request on a case-by-case basis. Students must submit any missing assignments from the corresponding unit **before** they can request an assessment retake. Students will also be asked to submit proof of relearning prior to taking a retest by completing a form. The form is available in the classroom and will need to be requested from the

teacher. Students may only earn a 70% on a Reassessment. Parents will acknowledge that their students wish to retake an assessment by signing the provided form.

Grading Policy: Each assignment is graded, and assignments are weighted as follows:

100-90 = A 89-80 = B 79-70 = C 69-60 = D 59-0 = F

Category Weights:

- 50% - Assessments, Major Writing Assignments, and Standards-Based Projects
- 30% - Preparation (Homework, Classwork, Prep work for any writing assignments, etc.)
- 10% - Participation (Notebook checks (bi-weekly), Whole class or small group discussions, etc.)
- 10% - Midterm/Final

****Semester Grades:**

(Category Weights are subject to change. I will inform you of any changes.)

Academic Content:

- **Quarter 1**
 - Short Stories, Poetry, and Writing Assignments
 - Quizzes, Tests, and Projects on writing styles, vocabulary, skills, and texts covered.
- **Quarter 2**
 - *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck
 - Quizzes, Tests, and Projects on writing styles, vocabulary, skills, and texts covered.
- **Quarter 3**
 - *Animal Farm* by George Orwell
 - Quizzes, Tests, and Projects on writing styles, vocabulary, skills, and texts covered.
- **Quarter 4**
 - *Romeo and Juliet* by William Shakespeare
 - Quizzes, Tests, and Projects on writing styles, vocabulary, skills, and texts covered.

Class Expectations:

- **Student Conduct:** There is a ***zero-tolerance policy*** for bullying and put downs. All students must treat each other with respect and courtesy. Furthermore, students are expected to behave in a manner that is appropriate and in accordance with school policy. Students must show up to class on time and be prepared with the necessary materials, such as your Chromebook or completed assignments to be turned in.
- **Cheating/Plagiarism:** All instances of cheating and/or plagiarism will be taken very seriously. These instances include but are not limited to: cheating, plagiarism, sharing of assessment information with other students, parents/relatives doing homework for students, copying HW/Notes, etc.
 - Note: Any homework I give you is not meant to be busy work. It is meant to help you gain a deeper understanding of the content or writing style that we are working with as each individual's familiarity with the information is different.
- **Classroom Policy on the Use of AI Tools**
 - AI (Artificial Intelligence) tools like ChatGPT can be powerful thinking partners that help you grow as a reader, writer, and learner. When used appropriately, AI can support your critical thinking—not replace it. Remember: if you let AI do *all* the thinking for you, you're missing out on the chance to develop the problem-solving and creative thinking skills you'll need throughout your life.

- **Approved Uses of AI:** You are welcome to use AI tools for the following purposes:
 - Leveling reading passages for better comprehension
 - Looking up book recommendations or themed reading lists
 - Studying vocabulary, key concepts, and summaries
 - Generating graphic organizers or templates
 - Getting general instructions or how-to help
 - Asking for writing feedback (e.g., tone, clarity, suggestions)
 - Building historical or cultural context for literature or topics
- **Prohibited Uses of AI:** The following uses of AI are **not allowed**
 - Generating full paragraphs, essays, or assignments
 - Submitting AI-generated writing as your own
 - Using AI to proofread or "fix" your writing without your own revision
 - Copying and pasting content from AI without citation
- **Disclosure Requirement**
 - If you use AI for an approved purpose on any assignment, you **must cite it** as a source in the *Resources* or *Works Cited* section, just like you would for a website or book.
- **Consequences for Misuse**
 - **First Offense:**
 - Assignment receives a temporary **0**
 - Student must attend **office hours** and re-do the work with integrity
 - **Parent contact**
 - Final grade capped at **70%**
 - **Second Offense:**
 - All of the above
 - A **personal reflection** is required
 - **Parent meeting** required
 - Final grade capped at **50%** and student will earn a **N** for Citizenship grade for the quarter
 - **Third Offense:**
 - All of the above
 - **Meeting with parent, teacher, and principal**
 - No credit will be given for the assignment and student will earn a **U** for semester Citizenship grade
- **Google Docs Policy**
 - Students are expected to complete their work **only in the Google Doc assigned to them**. This allows us to monitor your progress and support your learning. Please do not copy your work from another document or work outside the assigned space.
- **Respect:** In my classroom, **respect** is defined as giving the appropriate consideration to another student's feelings and opinions in the classroom. Letting the individual that is speaking be able to get their opinions across without being interrupted and not being aggressive or antagonistic towards that individual's opinion. Responses should be created *constructively*.
- **Cell Phones/Technology:** Make sure you charge your Chromebook DAILY! Cell phones are required to be silent or off during the full class period. **When entering the classroom, students will place their cell phones in the "phone box" displayed in the classroom.** Headphones and music are not allowed to be worn/played in class.
 - Meta-Glasses are prohibited on campus (see Student Handbook for guidelines).

- **Gum/Food/Drinks:** **NO gum**, food, or drinks (except water) will be allowed in the classroom. Drinks are required to remain out of sight and put away in your backpack/purse/bag.
- **Students Remain Seated While in Class.** Do not line up at the door. This is a safety hazard.
- **Reading:** Students are expected to complete all readings that are assigned outside of class. While most of the reading will be done in class, there will occasionally be reading assigned for homework. Students who do not show up to class prepared will struggle to participate in class.
- **Extra Credit:** I do not do a lot of EC opportunities. Occasionally an assignment or activity will occur where you can earn extra credit. You will be made aware of when EC is being offered on an assignment.
- **Consequences:** Students that do not meet the class expectations may receive a series of increased CONSEQUENCES as follows:
 - **Verbal Warning**
 - **Email and/or call home to parent/guardian**
 - **Meeting with parent/guardian**
 - **Referral to administration, plus parent/guardian contact**

Confidentiality Notice:

I am required to notify the appropriate parties/individuals of any concerns that I have of a student's well-being. These concerns may arise as a result of something that I notice during class sessions, along with any concerning information that is displayed in a student's work.

Academic Support:

Every effort will be made to support students in need of accommodation. Students seeking extra support should contact me at maortiz@bantasd.org to set up an appointment during Tide Time, office hours, or at another designated time. *I do not meet during lunch.* That is my non-contractual personal time. For complex questions and concerns, you are expected to make an appointment. Please email me so we can schedule a time to meet that is convenient for both of us.

*This syllabus is subject to change. Students will be made aware of any changes to this document in a timely manner.
