

INTRODUCTION TO LITERATURE, COMPOSITION AND SPEECH

GOAL: Acquire a foundation for effective adult-level communication:

1. Show competence in basic adult communication skills (read, write, think, listen, speak, cooperate, media skills)
2. Seek true and valid thinking from many perspectives to deal more effectively with personal and societal situations.
3. Seek understanding and respect as a basis of effective communication that benefits self and society.

COURSE CONTENT:

Communication Strategies and Skills: Thinking, Reading, Writing, Listening, Speaking, Cooperating, Media skills

Literature: Nonfiction, Biography and Autobiography, Short Story, Novel, Poetry, Drama

Speeches: Informative, Persuasive

Writing: A variety of creative, visual, and essay genres that mix modes based on purpose and audience needs

GRADUATION REQUIREMENT: Eight semester English credits are needed to graduate (one for each of 8 semesters). *The course is designed so students cannot fail if they attend class and complete each task as best they can.* There are opportunities to improve major assignments before they are graded. However, peers and teachers are not mind-readers . . . ask until you understand what to do. Failing grades in this class reflect a problem with personal development or situations, not academic ability. If something is preventing you from doing acceptable work at school, get help on how to change the situation. Tell us when you are having difficulties: your teachers want to help you reach your personal or academic goals! (NOTE: This class assumes students have a sixth grade or higher reading ability based on reading tests in grade 8. Students who are qualified to take Developmental Reading and who chose not to take the course should plan extra homework time to re-read text or read ahead outside class and make regular use of an effective learning partner and learning strategies.)

SEMESTER GRADES are based on three types of tasks: effort tasks while learning in class require only following directions and completing the task (about 40%), application tasks are evaluated according to state standards (40%-50%), and tests (10%-20%). Each quarter has 1000 points, added for the semester grade. Grading scale: 60-62%=D-, 63-67=D, 68-69=D+, 70-72=C-, 73-77=C, 78-79=C+, 80-82=B-, 83-87=B, 88-89=B+, 90-92=A-, 93-97=A, 98-100=A+.

LATE WORK IS NOT ACCEPTED for full credit unless an extension was approved AHEAD of a due date or extenuating circumstances exist. Learning tasks lose 50%; application tasks between 10% to 50%. Talk to teachers WHEN you have problems--not after! You must show proficiencies to pass the course, so it is to your advantage to turn work in on time.

NO "LAST CHANCE EXTRA CREDIT." Grades are based on a *semester* of work turned in on time, not a one-time effort just before report time. There are ten extra credit points to help boost each borderline quarter grade. Otherwise, grade improvements depend on getting help while doing tasks, asking a teacher to review work ahead of the deadline, and choosing to accept learning challenges and assignment responsibilities.

DISCIPLINE: One word covers our classroom rules: respect. Have enough self-respect to attend class and try the tasks; respect others; respect property. With the right to learn comes the responsibility to contribute to a learning atmosphere for others. The consequence of unacceptable behavior will be one verbal warning and an explanation of the desired behavior. If the offending behavior persists, the student leaves the class. Before returning to class the student will 1) meet with the teacher to write down the action and discuss alternative actions to avoid the behavior, 2) inform parents/guardians of the removal and get their signature, then 3) return the signed contract to ISS. Failure to adhere to the contract can result in removal from class for the semester. Summer school or doubling up on English credits in a following year will be required to graduate with their class.

ATTENDANCE: Being in class each day is fundamental to learning. Arrange appointments AFTER school whenever possible. Typically, just three absences in a quarter usually lowers a grade for most freshmen because the work is not made up on time or confusion sets in because most units build step by step. Get a pass to attend another one of my classes if you have a study hall and will be here at that time. For prearranged absences, ask the teacher what to do. In case of sickness, call a friend to pick up your materials and write down the assignments so you can work on them at home when possible. Call the teacher if you have questions. A student's "job" is to be at school, complete tasks to his/her ability, and learn how to work with others toward common goals. Tardy students and absentees hinder both individual and class performance. It is important to be on time and be here.

MATERIALS: One-inch binder, 3 dividers, one pack of paper, one pack of #2 pencils, pens, one paper folder. Purchase a thumb drive for saving work from the computer lab. Bring your binder, a pen and sharpened pencil to class each day.

