English 1

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Course Goals:

- Develop higher order thinking skills in reading, writing, and thinking
- Encourage students' growth as writers, readers, and oral communicators
- Delve into literary analysis in order to recognize and evaluate writer's purpose, style, and intent
- Appreciate the human experience beyond one's own view of the world
- Prepare students for the rigors of the IB English curriculum

Course Beliefs

- Effective communication adds value to the understanding of one's community and the world.
- One's well-being and self-confidence is enhanced by the ability to competently express oneself.
- Basic English language arts skills are essential building blocks to becoming a better communicator (through both written and oral expression).

Areas of knowledge questions

- What roles does literature play in people's lives? Are these roles unique to literature? (Can literature change the way we interpret the world? Does involvement in literature help the development of personal value systems? Can literature express emotion? Does literature enlarge what is possible to think?)
- What is the proper function of literature: to capture a perception of reality, to teach or uplift the mind, to express emotion, to create beauty, to bind a community together or to praise a spiritual power? Are there functions omitted here?

Essential Questions

- Can two or more readers interpret a piece of literature differently, and all be right? Or is there one universal meaning based on the author's (perceived) purpose?
- Is there a level of writing deemed "good" or "excellent" by all? What makes it good? Is it grammar? The choice of vocabulary? Depth of interpretation? Or is it a combination of all three? Conversely, what might cause a piece of writing to be "bad"

Course Expectations:

- This course will focus on writing strategies, grammar, organizational, and editing skills. Students will be able to write clear five-paragraph essays which effectively state opinions and observations. Vocabulary work will be a focus, as students develop skills in both spelling and sentence construction, which will enhance each written piece. Most of the written work will respond to what we have read and includes persuasive essays, narratives, reviews, character analysis, scene writing, etc…

- Reading skills will develop through individual analysis, group work, class discussions, and writing assignments on several of the selected texts. Each student **MUST DO THE ASSIGNED READING** and take the time to pay attention to what they are reading. If there are any questions, we will discuss each assignment both in class and in groups. We will reflect on the readings, investigate new vocabulary, pose questions, and engage in debates. Improving reading comprehension will be a major focus in this class!

- Public speaking and voicing opinions will also be a major focus this year. This will be sharing thoughts in class discussion and oral reports both individually and in a group. For many people, this is terrifying. **I UNDERSTAND**. I am here to help and we all must help each other. No one will be excused from oral projects, but we can all give support in order to alleviate the stress. By the end of the year, you will all be vying for your spot in the limelight!

Teaching Materials
The Sound of Waves, Yukio Mishima
Romeo and Juliet, William Shakespeare
Farenheight 451, Ray Bradbury
Night, Elie Wiesel
Maus, Art Spiegelman
Of Mice and Men, John Steinbeck
Poetry Out Loud Anthology, National Endowment for the Arts
Vocabulary Workshop Level D

- In addition we will study various short stories, and possibly some additional text throughout the course of the year!

Materials Needed:

- A Three ring Binder and notebook or tabs with folders for reading handouts
- Writing utensils (pencil or blue/black pen)
- An agenda or form of assignment book (I will be checking this regularly)

Assessment:

Each student's grade will be calculated based on the following types of assignments. Percentages will depend upon how many assignments are given in each category for each semester.

- Homework
- Reading quizzes
- Vocabulary quizzes
- Tests/Quests
- Exploratory writing
- Critical essays
- Research papers
- Oral presentations
- Daily class participation

Each semester will count towards 20% of the student's final average for a total of 80%, while the mid-year exam and final exam will each count for 10% for a total of 100%.