



THE  
**KEW-FOREST SCHOOL**

**School Year: 2017 - 2018**

**Attendance**

**Excused Absences**

**4**

**School Tardies**

**27**

**Unexcused Absences**

**1**

**Academics**

		<b>Semester One Grade</b>
Advanced Placement English	Sipley	90
Computer Science Principles	Aronson	88
Statistics	Nicastro	93
Psychology	Diaz	78
Advanced Placement World History	Gordon	87
Human Rights in the Post World War II World	Varsos	92
Piano	Vercelli	100
Upper School Physical Education	Gordon-Somers	90
Senior Projects	Coratti	93

**Semester One Comment**

**Advanced Placement English**

Tristan Sipley

In Senior English students sharpen their skills in college-level reading, writing, and critical thinking through intensive study of Literature. The first semester began by questioning the definition of "Literature" as such. Students were given a brief history of the English Language during the Medieval Period and we transitioned into a unit on the epic Old English poem Beowulf. After closely reading a modern translation of the poem, as well as some secondary sources, students composed analytical essays. We then began a chronological study of British and American poetry, focused on how these poems reflect the styles and ideas of their times. Halfway through the unit students were given an exam to assess their understanding of the poems, time periods, and literary devices. We then took a "break" from poetry, and spent a month on the classic horror novel Frankenstein. Following our reading and discussion, students composed essays defending arguments on debatable topics related to the novel. We also compared the novel to the 1931 James Whale film adaptation. The first semester ended with a return to poetry, as we studied poems from the Victorian, Modernist, and Contemporary Eras, and students took a cumulative exam on these new poems along with review questions from earlier in the semester. In the second semester we will focus more on fiction and drama, and students who are preparing for the AP Exam will begin test-prep review.

Kayla has done proficient work in English class throughout the semester, and her energy, focus, and confidence seem to have increased in recent months. In the beginning of the year she would participate in discussion occasionally, and this improved steadily throughout the term, to the point where she is now a regular contributor, sharing excellent observations about the reading. Nightly homework was completed in a timely and thorough manner, aside from one or two missing assignments. Kayla's most recent essay, on the role of religion in Frankenstein, indicates satisfactory senior-year writing skills. She is able to integrate textual analysis into her writing in order to defend an interesting claim. There are some areas in which she can continue to improve to take her writing to a higher level. These include: smoother transitions, more thoroughly-developed counterarguments, more developed conclusions to address the "Bigger Picture", and improvement in diction and minor grammar issues (portions of the argument were obscured by awkward phrasing). Google Docs indicates that Kayla revised her essay thoroughly, although the revisions may have been rushed - most changes were made right before the essay was due - and so a slower and more meticulous editing process may help. Kayla's poetry exam contained excellent factual identification of authors, dates, and literary terms; however the explanation of the poems themselves could've been more specific and in-depth.

For a breakdown of scores and comments on individual assignments please see [engrade.com](http://engrade.com).



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## **Computer Science Principles**

David Aronson

### **Principles and Practice of Computer Science - Course Description**

The goal of this course is to teach students how a computer scientist thinks. Comp sci is a hybrid discipline encompassing science, mathematics, and engineering. The single most important skill for a computer scientist is problem solving.

*Problem solving means the ability to formulate problems, think creatively about solutions, and express a solution clearly and accurately. - How to Think Like a Computer Scientist*

We began the semester with a brief overview of the history of computer science, and then dove right into the practice of programing, using the Python language to practice problem solving skills. Over the semester we have covered in depth the following principles:

Variables, expressions, and statements

Functions

Conditionals (If, Else)

Fruitful functions

Unit tests

Iteration (loops)

Concurrently, we explored the practice of developing software through the application of the Agile Development Methodology. Students conceived a software project, then worked through a single agile cycle consisting of analysis and design, development, testing, feedback and revisions. The work for the project has involved both programming and writing to plan and describe what the program might do, does, and did. Central to our practice this semester was git, a popular version control tool, and Github, a cloud based collaboration tool utilizing git. Students collaborated on projects through Github, often programming in pairs during class.

In writing comments I often use technical terminology. If you have trouble understanding any of the language in your child's comments, I suggest you ask your child to explain it to you.

### **Individual Comments**

Kayla's performance in comp sci this semester has been satisfactory. Her homework has often been late, but done. She often will respond to issues, but usually after much time has passed. On a more positive note, the couple times she has seen me for extra help have been very productive. I encourage her to seek me out more proactively during study halls or even 5 minutes during lunch. Through her project, a take on the Steve the Dino Game, she demonstrated good use of functions and explored a user controlled turtle using key presses. She is attentive during class. However I'd like to see her call out or raise her hand more often, especially if she doesn't understand something. I look forward to working with Kayla through the year as we explore ever more advanced concepts and practices.

## **Statistics**

Jennifer Nicastro

This semester we began our study of statistics by reviewing the basics of data collection and how to categorize data. We looked at the different ways to graphically represent data, and also how to summarize numerical data using measures of central tendency and measures of dispersion. This review led into our study of data that is normally distributed, and can be represented by a normal distribution curve. Our third unit dealt with scatter plots and linear regressions, and culminated in a project that required the students to investigate the relationship between two variables of their choosing. This project also drew upon topics from the previous two units, and the students had to then create graphical representations of their collected data and present their findings to the class. We then ended the semester with our unit on probability, during which we looked at different applications of probability using simulations, and also discussed the famous Monty Hall "Let's Make a Deal" probability problem. In the second semester we will be studying discrete and continuous random variables, sampling distributions, confidence intervals, and hypothesis testing.

Kayla has been an absolute pleasure to have in class this semester. She is a very conscientious student and is an active participant in class. Kayla is a very outgoing student who is not afraid to ask questions and seek help when needed. During class Kayla is very attentive and is always actively engaged in the lesson. She presents herself as a very caring, hardworking, and mature young woman. Kayla consistently collaborates with her peers during class, and often takes time to explain things to her peers. She is always enthusiastic about the activities that we do, and I truly appreciate her positive attitude. Kayla has worked really hard this semester, and is always working towards improving her grades. She has come for extra help before assessments, and also puts a lot of time and effort into her homework and classwork. She is reliable in that she always completes her assignments on time, and they are always thorough. A major assessment this semester was the linear regression project in which the students picked two variables to investigate, collected data on, and then created graphical representations to determine if there was a correlation between the variables. Kayla was a very strong member of her group, and I was very impressed by her presentation. She is a very strong public speaker, and was able to articulate herself in a very clear and engaging manner. Overall, I am confident that Kayla's hard work and positive attitude will continue to bring her success in the second semester!



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### **Psychology**

Genelle Diaz

In Psychology this semester, we covered scientific methodology, biological psychology, sensation and perception, development, learning, memory, cognition, and language. Students have done hands-on learning by designing drugs to combat a zombie apocalypse and formulating a 10-question IQ test that they will administer to their peers. We have assessed the validity of scientific studies such as the Stanford prison experiment, and we have discussed ethical dilemmas relating to hallmark psychological studies and new frontiers in genetics. In the weeks to come we will cover consciousness; motivated behaviors; emotions, stress, and health; social psychology; personality; and abnormal psychology.

One of Kayla's biggest strengths in my class is her punctual submission of work. While it is clear that Kayla is a sharp student, it appears as though she has deprioritized Psychology this semester. She performs most poorly on quizzes and exams, which require planned and consistent study. Her midterm score of 61% was surprising to me given the availability of a study guide, study schedule, and practice midterm. Despite many offers of extra help, Kayla did not come to me for guidance before the test. Kayla also averaged a score of 68% on the last three vocabulary quizzes of the semester, which were designed to help some students bounce back from low midterm grades. If Kayla had earned 100% on the last quiz instead of a 25%, her grade would have been a B for the semester. Kayla was more than capable of doing this, as the format of the quiz required students to choose 10 of about 15 terms from the chapter to define. In the coming semester, Kayla can improve her grade by studying in advance for quizzes and tests.

### **Advanced Placement World History**

Gary Gordon

The Advanced Placement World History course provides students with a well-designed structure for gaining an appreciation of how human societies developed and interacted with each other over the past 10,000 years of human history. The course is divided into six chronological periods and organized around five central course themes: 1) interaction between humans and the environment; 2) development and interaction of cultures; 3) state building, expansion, and conflict; 4) creation, expansion, and interaction of economic systems; and 5) development and transformation of social structures. These themes help students to connect "historical content" occurring in particular times and places to trends and processes that have emerged over many centuries. We concluded the semester immersed in the study of the first age of global interactions from 1450-1750. During the semester, students read and interpreted a variety of texts and primary sources, developed historical thinking skills through various written assignments, collaborated in group projects, engaged in many class discussions, took quizzes, and wrote essays. During the second semester, we will continue our study of world history up to the present. Students will take the AP World History Exam in May and could potentially earn college credit depending upon their exam result and the AP policies of the college they attend.

Kayla is a thoughtful and insightful history student who consistently demonstrated a very good understanding of the complex course themes and historical developments that we addressed. Kayla was always fully engaged by the course material and contributed frequent questions and comments to class discussions. Kayla earned grades in the 80's on most of her chapter quizzes. On four assigned essays, Kayla earned grades ranging from 81 to 90. Kayla's biggest challenge was organizing her responses to complex, multi-layered essay questions that often encompassed two or more geographic regions and several course themes. In her essays, Kayla's strong historical analysis was sometimes obscured by a lack of organization. When planning and outlining her essay responses, Kayla should be certain that her introductory paragraph contains a clear thesis statement of one to three sentences in length that responds to ALL parts of the essay question. She then needs to support each part of her thesis in a separate body paragraph. As we progress into the modern era, the amount of covered course material continues to expand. For this reason, Kayla should also focus on the historical skill of contextualization. She should look for opportunities to place events into a broader context by seeking connections between different time periods or different course themes. Kayla deserves congratulations on her accomplishments in this very challenging course. Well done!

### **Human Rights in the Post World War II World**

Norma Rhea Varsos

In Human Rights in the Post World War II World, we have investigated the human rights records of many countries over the course of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. In addition, we explored the Human Rights treaties and committees of the United Nations and how they have been received globally. We have studied genocide in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, including some of the lesser known genocides such as the Armenian Genocide of 1915. We examined the issue of enforcement of human rights and have closely studied human rights trials in various parts of the world. The students investigated a specific country throughout the semester for its human rights records in many areas, such as freedom of speech, freedom of the press and the right to proper nutrition and water. The students presented their findings to the class. Hopefully, the course has given each student more insight into the human rights condition around the world.

Kayla has produced strong written responses in the area of formal essay assessments. Her presentations have been well researched and presented in a powerful manner. Her final research paper was good, but not as strong as her earlier works in terms of development, outside research, content and analysis. Kayla's assessments have been consistently excellent.

### **Piano**

Anders Vercelli

The Upper School Piano class is designed for students to either learn how to play the piano from scratch or to advance their piano playing at the level where they



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currently are. Students in this class learn how to read music in treble and bass clef, elements of musical notation, and music theory as it pertains to the music they are learning to play on piano.

Kayla focuses well in piano class and has made a good deal of progress over the course of the fall semester. She approaches piano class with a positive attitude and she does an excellent job of retaining the musical knowledge and repertoire that she has learned in class. Kayla did an excellent job performing with her piano class at the school assembly just before winter break.

#### **Upper School Physical Education**

Scott Gordon-Somers

The Kew Forest PE program teaches students how to exercise and why it is important to follow a regimen. Students are also introduced to the value of nutrition as it relates to exercise.

During the training sessions, students are assessed and graded based on their aptitude, attitude, attire and attendance.

At the beginning of the school year, students were introduced to the rules, routines and procedures of the PE class. Students began the semester by completing the Kew-Forest Fitness Test which measured their muscular strength/endurance, cardio-respiratory endurance, speed, agility and flexibility to acquire a baseline assessment of their fitness condition through a series of physical activities.

Students were tested on physical exercises such as curl ups, planks, push ups, vertical jump, long jump, 50 yard dash, shuttle run, sit and reach, pull ups, flexed arm hang, and the mile run.

Team spirit is promoted when students learn the basic fundamental rules and skills of various sports such as football, soccer, basketball, European handball and volleyball. Students practiced these skills and were also challenged in relay races and obstacle course competition. Kayla generally participated in physical activities often with prompting. Kayla needs to make an effort to remember her PE uniform and arrive to class on time. Kayla achieved average standards on the Kew-Forest Fitness Test.

#### **Senior Projects**

Jennifer Coratti

Throughout the fall semester, students involved in the Senior Project course focused on choosing a topic and developing a strong research plan. The first step in this process was to write a proposal in which each student needed to lay out their plan of attack, as well as the significance and goals behind their research. The proposal also mimicked the type of structure that would need to be followed at the college level. After completing this rigorous process, students were asked to complete a draft of their research paper. Again, to reinforce skills that would be needed at the next level, a special focus was placed on the use of footnotes, paraphrasing, and what constitutes plagiarism. And, finally, students were asked to give a "pitch" and present their topic in such a way that would persuade someone to invest or change policy etc.

Kayla chose to tackle a very difficult yet important subject for her senior project: drug addiction and treatment. In order to go beyond studies and articles, Kayla has chosen to attempt interviews with recovering addicts and hospital workers at a treatment facility near her home. Despite facing a few setbacks and some nervousness when requesting interviews, Kayla's determination to learn about and then enlighten others on the seriousness of this disease and the terrible stigmas associated with it has been unwavering. Witnessing her passion for the topic firsthand while she was presenting her pitch was truly inspiring. Going forward, I fully anticipate that Kayla will continue to excel as long as she is diligent about meeting established deadlines. Overall, I have enjoyed getting to know Kayla this semester.

If you have questions or concerns about your child's report, first check your child's Engrade and then email the teacher.