

English 1 Lab Syllabus

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Overview

English 1 Lab is meant to supplement your English 1 studies. I approach this course in a literal sense: a laboratory is a place to experiment, practice your methodology, and learn from both your accomplishments and mistakes in a safe environment. For the duration of the year you will cultivate habits and grow in confidence regarding the things that lead to success when dealing with the English Language Arts. We will also work closely with your English 1 teachers to help you in a concrete way toward success in that class. By the end of this course, you should leave with the capability to meet the rigor of the English 2 curriculum (if not English 2 Honors) with ease.

What You Need

You will need the following materials to prepare for every class:

- Your Planning Book (Provided by teacher, constructed in the first week of class)
- Your dedicated English 1 binder or portfolio
- The work you are doing in English 1: both long and short-term
- A reliable writing instrument
- Loose-leaf paper
- A book (hard-copy, bound) for in-class pleasure reading

You should also prepare a means for typing and printing composition assignments and papers outside of class.

Grading and Assessment

Planning Book: 30%

You will create and keep a planning book over the duration of this course. This will be a calendar that tracks important dates and events, a daily log of assignments, tasks, and homework, and a project planner. We will make this in the first week of school, and you will track your work in it. I will check your planning book at the beginning of every class.

Compositions: 30%

Each quarter you will complete three formal compositions. These assignments are meant to help you become accustomed to writing in a formal manner and to practice the skills you are learning in and out of English class. Typically, compositions will be completed entirely in class and will not add to your homework load. Expect a typical length of 300 words. You will never receive a failing grade for your writing quality -- you only fail if you do not follow directions.

Preparedness and Participation: 30%

The participation grade describes engagement with the course and the course activities. Every class you begin with a 8/10 grade named "Participation" for being present and attentive. You earn a 10/10 by making an active contribution to the academic environment, either to the class as a whole or in your smaller groups. Every class also has a "Prepared" grade for being ready to work when class begins. This grade is either a 0/10 or a 10/10; as you are either prepared or you are not. Lastly, you will earn a "Classwork" grade every class for in-class exercises.

Personal Reading

This course values the habit of reading extended texts. We all read manifold texts throughout the day, but there is something important about the experience of becoming immersed in a good book. Therefore, I periodically dedicate class time to reading for pleasure. I have a selection of interesting works if you would like to borrow one from time to time. Please see me to check one out.

Journal Writing

It's self-evident that the more you write, the easier writing becomes and the more you grow. Research strongly suggests that the physical act of writing increases your focus and cultivates more sophisticated thinking. For this reason I dedicate time every class to write freely in a personal journal. I will assess them for length: you should aim to write roughly one full page per writing session (150-200 words).

Class Activities

I design class activities to create meaningful educational experiences and to help you get better working with English. Following directions and trying your best are also important aspects of belonging to a learning community. When you don't work hard - even if you are quiet and not "disruptive" -- it nevertheless affects both your learning experience and those around you. Do your best every class.

Reflective Writing

Often at the end of class you will receive a short writing prompt to reinforce or extend the lines of inquiry of the day's lesson. Honest, informal, short but intelligent writing is valued here.

Midterms and Final Exams

In lieu of Midterm and Final Exams, you will perform a reflective exercise that makes use of the portfolio-binders you have created throughout the year in your English 1 classes. Keeping a well-supplied and organized portfolio is essential in order to earn high marks on these two assessments. Midterms and Finals each count for 10% of your course grade, and they do not count on any specific marking period.

Policies and Procedures

Logistics

I will communicate assignments to you in class, write them on the board, and give time at the end of class for entering this information into a planner. Students are expected to track their assignments. I collect all assignments as hard copies. I post assignments and classroom announcements on Twitter, and I maintain a GitHub repository for copies of anything I hand out to you.

Electronics and Phones

Phones, tablets, earbuds, or eBooks are not permitted in class. I will confiscate these items if they are used during class and return them to you after the period ends. Listening to music is not allowed during composition, although I will play music while you write sometimes in order to cultivate the habit of being able to write both during silence (as in standardized tests) and during distracting noise (as often occurs when we compose outside the classroom). There may be times when you type in class and at those times only are you allowed to use your own laptop.

Attendance

Excused absences result in excused class participation for the day. Any major deadlines are moved to the next class. You are counted absent if you do not show up to class or are absent without permission. If you are absent for an in-class assignment, you must make it up for homework. If you are absent for a quiz, you must take it the day you return. Unexcused absences will not be afforded these opportunities: the work will count as a zero, and the deadlines remain. Unexcused absences from my class when you are present in school attendance will result in a write up and call home. Excessive tardies and absences will also result in a call home, as they affect participation grades and honors status. I am nevertheless a reasonable person: please do not hesitate to communicate with me if there are any special circumstances that affect your ability to attend or participate in this course.