

English Guide Term 1

Mondays: Grammar Basics

This term we will focus on the basics of the parts of speech because our common core target is to be able to use verbals (verb forms used as other parts of speech in a sentence). In order to be able to do that effectively, you will first need to be able to identify the various parts of speech and their functions in sentences (much of this should be review). Then, we will work on verb forms (this may not happen yet this term, depends on our speed). We will have a quiz each Monday on the previous week's lesson. If you struggle with the practice, be sure to see me during passing for extra practice and study helps. At the end of the eight parts of speech, there will be a cumulative assessment.

Wednesdays: Vocabulary

This term's vocabulary will focus on six lists based on Latin and Greek roots to words. The lists are already posted on my website. There are 16 mandatory and 4 bonus words each week. You will begin a list on a Wednesday with a pre-quiz on spelling. Your assignment for Wednesday will be to write out the definitions (no, you may not just print it off of quizlet, although I encourage you to use the definitions found there). You will have to complete a vocabulary 4-square for Friday. Your quiz will be the following Wednesday, and you will start the process again with the next list. Your vocabulary quizzes will be on Socrative so you should have instant feedback on how you did; however, I will also try to have your quiz scores posted in PowerSchool by Friday. If you decide that you need to retake that quiz, you will have to go "old school" and write out your list 5 times each to work on spelling and be sure that your 4-square was done. Those two things must come to me on Monday in order to get a pass to retake the quiz in passing on Tuesday that next week. You may not wait until the end of the term and go back.

Fridays: Reading

Each Friday we will work on reading. For the first term we will concentrate on some basic note-taking and summarizing skills for our non-fiction reading (some weeks). These basic skills will be helpful to you in all of your classes and are key in the common core.

In addition, you will be working on reading novels this term on your own. I have a collection of novels for which I have prepared simple quizzes that ensure basic comprehension and a bit of analysis of character, setting and plot. Each quiz is worth 25 points and consists of 20 multiple-choice, matching and/or true & false questions plus a 5 point essay. Once you have checked out a book, you may take a quiz any Friday after that. You must complete three novels during the term (thus worth 75 points). There are no retakes on these quizzes; however, if you didn't do as well as you would like, you may read an additional novel to get up to a perfect 75 points (no bonus beyond the 75). Your last quiz must be done by Friday, Oct. 25, but you may only take one quiz per week so don't plan on doing them all at the end.

Public Speaking:

We will be working on public speaking all year. This term we will just brush the surface. You will have your quilts to present in class, but the speaking portion of that project will be relatively easy to do well on since I'll only be assessing whether you did it and were understandable (loud enough and enunciating).

In addition, each week you will have vocabulary 4-squares to do and various grammar or reading exercises that I would like to have shared. You will need to use the document camera to share yours at least once during the term (there will be a sign-up on the side board each week). Each "sharing" will be worth 5 points in your practice/preparation grade. Do NOT wait until the end of the term to sign up since we'll have lots of people to get in before the end of the term.

Major Units:

This term we will have a unit on Family Ties. I will be reading you The Quilt by Gary Paulsen, and we'll look at a few stories about family, "Mother and Daughter" and The Patchwork Quilt, and some poems about quilts. We will be focusing on how to answer questions completely and some of the basics of theme (and motivation). We will also create a quilt that shares our own life with the class (connecting it to our stories as well as our grammar).

Later in the term, we'll start our second unit on Courage and Expository Writing. We will begin drafting an essay for the America and Me Essay Contest. We'll look at some information on everyday heroes. We'll also begin the novel The Shadow Club by Neil Shusterman which will concentrate on character development, active-reading strategies and the courage theme.