

# Dr. Nohrden's English

## About the Teacher

This is my ninth year at Damonte Ranch High School. Before coming here, I taught high school and middle school in Las Vegas, Kuwait, and in a special Canadian program in China. I have a Nevada Professional Teaching License in Secondary English, and I am licensed to teach in California, Florida, and Nova Scotia. I earned my B.A. in English Honors from San Jose State University, my doctorate from the University of Akron, and my Master of Arts in Teaching (Secondary English) from Sierra Nevada College. I have also taken several post-graduate courses. Besides teaching, I write articles for publication on the politics and culture of China, the Middle East, and Russia. Many of these articles can be found on my web site at [www.nohrden.com](http://www.nohrden.com). I also published *The Crystal Monkey*, a historical novel that deals with China's Cultural Revolution and the servitude of women.

Email is the best way reach me at [pnohrden@washoeschools.net](mailto:pnohrden@washoeschools.net) or you can call the school at 775-851-5656. Please let me know of any problem or question as soon as it arises. I check my email frequently, so you are certain to get a quick response.

## English Classes

English is the most important high school subject, because it is mostly about reading and writing. It is the only subject that requires four years of study to graduate with a standard high school diploma. Students will succeed in their other classes only if they can read and write at grade level.

## Course Description

This one-year course will continue to develop skills in reading, writing, listening, speaking and research. It will continue to focus on language skills and vocabulary development while expanding composition skills to include a variety of writing modes and audiences. Students will read and comprehend increasingly difficult texts of both fiction and non-fiction with an emphasis on British literature for 12<sup>th</sup> graders and World literature for 10<sup>th</sup> graders. There will be a research component in the course. Communication and public speaking skills will be emphasized in this course.

## Course Goals

My course goals can be found in the syllabus handed out to each student their first week in class. In essence, my goal is to ensure that students become proficient in critical thinking, writing, reading, and research.

## Missing Assignments

The number one cause of failure is missing assignments. I will try to regularly send out emails to parents letting them know which assignments their students are missing. If you gave your email address when you registered your child, it is in the system and you will receive these notices. My gradebook is set up in such a way that no student will fail this class if all assignments are turned in. I will accept late work with a reduction of up to half the value because I believe there is value in doing the work I assign, despite how late it is done. However, timely submission of work will ensure a higher grade and better learning value. My main concern is your child passing my class and graduating high school. If you have

any anxiety regarding this, please speak with me and we will work out a plan to make sure this happens.

## Making Up Work:

Students who have missed (or will miss) a class can review lesson plans, handouts, and assignments on Microsoft Teams. If you have trouble accessing Teams, please send me an email and I will send you the appropriate link.

## Reading

The main thing students will be doing is to read and write, but there will also be activities requiring speaking. I will give them various grade-level appropriate reading assignments, most of which must be done at home. Reading is one of those things that students do poorly. Many of them do poorly because they find it boring. They find it boring because they are not efficient readers. Practice will make them more proficient, and the more proficient they become, the more they will enjoy reading and the less of a burden it will become. I can't stress this enough: when I assign reading to students, I expect them to do the reading. It can't be faked. The students will have assignments associated with these readings. Check Infinite Campus often, and you will be able to tell whether your student is keeping up.

## Writing

We will also be writing a lot. Often, writing assignments will be started in class but must be finished or rewritten at home. Small assignments, such as one paragraph, may be handwritten, but anything larger must be typed. Students that need them may use the computers in the library or career center to type and print their assignments. Students must follow certain formatting rules for written assignments, which are specified in the syllabus they received their first day of class (page 6). The goal is to make each student a good enough writer so that the rest of high school will be easier and to make them college and career ready.

## Grading

Gradebook activities are broken up into four parts, writing assessments, reading assessments, practicing standards, all totaling 80% of the grade, and a final exam which accounts for 20% of the trade.

## Materials Required

Textbook *Holt Elements of Literature, 4<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> Course*, and other works selected by the teacher. Textbooks may remain in class and reading assignments may be completed at home online.

Standard size notebook paper, sometimes called binder paper, (8½ x 11 or 8 x 10½). All assignments must be submitted on the same size paper. Typewritten papers must be submitted on white bond paper (8½ x 11 only).

Black or Blue Pens

Red, green, or purple pen for peer-evaluating

Three-ring binder (this need not be exclusive to English class and may be shared with other subjects if permitted by other teachers, so long as it is adequately divided into subject sections.

10<sup>th</sup> graders must also have a bound 100-page composition notebook.

Note: Students may not use spiral bound notebooks.

## Electronics

I strictly enforce the school's ban on electronics in the classroom. Please do not try to contact your child directly during class. If it is urgent, you can contact the office at 775-851-5656 and your child will be pulled from class to talk to you there.

## **Students Who are College and Career Ready in Reading, Writing, Speaking, Listening, and Language**

The descriptions that follow are not standards themselves but instead offer a portrait of students who meet the standards set out in this document. As students advance through the grades and master the standards in reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language, they are able to exhibit with increasing fullness and regularity these capacities of the literate individual.

### **They demonstrate independence.**

Students can, without significant scaffolding, comprehend and evaluate complex texts across a range of types and disciplines, and they can construct effective arguments and convey intricate or multifaceted information. Likewise, students are able independently to discern a speaker's key points, request clarification, and ask relevant questions. They build on others' ideas, articulate their own ideas, and confirm they have been understood. Without prompting, they demonstrate command of standard English and acquire and use a wide-ranging vocabulary. More broadly, they become self-directed learners, effectively seeking out and using resources to assist them, including teachers, peers, and print and digital reference materials.

### **They build strong content knowledge.**

Students establish a base of knowledge across a wide range of subject matter by engaging with works of quality and substance. They become proficient in new areas through research and study. They read purposefully and listen attentively to gain both general knowledge and discipline-specific expertise. They refine and share their knowledge through writing and speaking.

### **They respond to the varying demands of audience, task, purpose, and discipline.**

Students adapt their communication in relation to audience, task, purpose, and discipline. They set and adjust purpose for reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language use as warranted by the task. They appreciate nuances, such as how the composition of an audience should affect tone when speaking and how the connotations of words affect meaning. They also know that different disciplines call for different types of evidence (e.g., documentary evidence in history, experimental evidence in science).

### **They comprehend as well as critique.**

Students are engaged and open-minded—but discerning—readers and listeners. They work diligently to understand precisely what an author or speaker is saying, but they also question an author's or speaker's assumptions and premises and assess the veracity of claims and the soundness of reasoning.

### **They value evidence.**

Students cite specific evidence when offering an oral or written interpretation of a text. They use relevant evidence when supporting their own points in writing and speaking, making their reasoning clear to the reader or listener, and they constructively evaluate others' use of evidence.

### **They use technology and digital media strategically and capably.**

Students employ technology thoughtfully to enhance their reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language use. They tailor their searches online to acquire useful information efficiently, and they integrate what they learn using technology with what they learn offline. They are familiar with the strengths and limitations of various technological tools and mediums and can select and use those best suited to their communication goals.

### **They come to understand other perspectives and cultures.**

Students appreciate that the twenty-first-century classroom and workplace are settings in which people from often widely divergent cultures and who represent diverse experiences and perspectives must learn and work together. Students actively seek to understand other perspectives and cultures through reading and listening, and they are able to communicate effectively with people of varied backgrounds. They evaluate other points of view critically and constructively. Through reading great classic and contemporary works of literature representative of a variety of periods, cultures, and worldviews, students can vicariously inhabit worlds and have experiences much different than their own.