

**Ms. Law-Yone's English Classes  
(Ninth grade At Level and Honors)  
Duke Ellington School of the Arts  
SY 2011-2012**

**Transition to "The Common Core"**

The Common Core State Standards Initiative, led by the Governors Association, is an effort to establish a nationwide set of clear educational standards for language arts and mathematics. DCPS has voluntarily adopted the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts, which are more focused and rigorous than the old state core, particularly in the area of reading. Students are expected to understand and analyze more complicated texts than they have previously, and reading level expectations are greatly increased. For this reason, now more than ever, it is vital that students read independently on a daily basis. This needs to happen at home as well as at school, ideally with the support and encouragement of families. At Ellington, we had always encouraged and required students to read independently, so this expectation is not new, but there are greater potential consequences for not doing so. Also, the Common Core standards call for significantly more writing of a more sophisticated nature (formal argumentation and literary analysis) than the previous core curriculum. This means that English classes will become more challenging than they have in the past, and all English classes will require more thoughtful study, deeper understanding of material, and higher quality finished products. This year, ninth graders will be the first to take the new Common Core aligned test and should be ready and able in a matter of weeks. For more details about the Common Core, visit the DCPS website.

**Attendance/Citizenship**

- **Students must be in class at the second bell and must remain in class until the instructor has excused them.**
- **Excessive absences or tardiness will result in the lowest grades. Be sure to bring a note from home if you have to be absent at any time.**
- **Failure to follow school rules regarding hats, clothing, gum, food on second floor, behavior, cell phones, I-pods, etc., will take precious time away from learning. (See Ellington handbook).**
- **REMINDER: Make sure you have a working printer with ink at home or another location (parent's work place, library) where your papers can be typed and printed on time. No printer excuses, please!**

<b>Supplies</b>	<b>Classroom Policy</b>
<p>These must be brought to class every day!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing Paper with lines (no jagged edges)</li> <li>• Three-ring Binder (for English only)</li> <li>• Blue or Black ink pens (no pencils)</li> <li>• Current Reading (only one copy is provided)</li> <li>• Homework (when assigned) or major assignment</li> <li>• All handouts for the Advisory</li> <li>• Small calendar/planner to write homework on</li> <li>• Plastic home-to-school folder</li> </ul>	<p><b>PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY</b>  Students will be responsible for their own work, their own behavior, and their own interactions with others.  This requires three things:  <b>Respect</b>  <b>Cooperation</b>  <b>Honesty</b>  All students are expected to exhibit these qualities while in English class and always take turns speaking in class.</p>

Life's Great Equations

**Freedom = Responsibility**

**Choice = Consequence**

**With Freedom comes Responsibility, and with Choice comes Consequences. Those who accept responsibility for their freedom and accept the consequences of their choices will do very well in this class.**

Homework/Assignments

Students will have homework in English class. Some weeks there may not be any; other weeks there may be quite a lot. The amount of homework depends on what we are working on and how much the student finishes during class time, and whether or not the student has procrastinated on a big assignment. Independent reading is an ongoing assignment! Even if no homework is assigned, students need to be reading on their own. Get in the habit of reading books that you are assigned in classes and some that you chose on your own, daily!

Grades

- Grades are calculated as a percentage of possible points
- See Ellington handout for Grade Scales
- ENGRADE is used and can be checked regularly (grades are not exact at all times but will be updated as soon as possible)

Late Work

Assignments not turned in on the due date (as the student walk in the door) are late. Please avoid e-mailing or faxing papers at the last minute. If the student was legitimately absent (with a letter from home), and the work is turned in within two days of the student's return, full credit will be given. However, it is the responsibility of the student to get and complete the missing work.

**UNIT THEMES FROM THE COMMON CORE**

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Questions</b>	<b>Reading/Writing</b>
<b>Tension and Literature</b>	What does it take to make a good story? How do authors “hook and hold” the reader?	<b>Read:</b> Selected Short Stories <b>Write:</b> Your own Short Story
<b>The Good the True and the Beautiful</b>	How does literature depict the good, the true and the beautiful? What is the role of the bad, the false, and the ugly in literature?	<b>Read:</b> <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> By William Shakespeare <b>Write:</b> Director’s Book Film a Scene from the play
<b>Fate or Free will?</b>	Are we all just “a poor player “fated to “strut and fret [our] hour upon the stage”? Or, do we have free will? Can our actions change our fate? Or, it fate fixed from the start?	<b>Read:</b> <i>Antigone</i> by Sophocles <b>Write:</b> Persuasive Speech on Fate vs. Free Will Performing a Monologue
<b>Honorable Actions and Honorable Words</b>	How do honorable and dishonorable words and actions create powerful literature? Which speaks louder, action or words?	<b>Read:</b> Selected Poetry <b>Write:</b> Research Paper on Career in the Arts
<b>Heroism Then and Now</b>	What is a hero? What do heroes from the past have in common with the heroes in the present? Are heroes born or made?	<b>Read:</b> <i>The Odyssey</i> by Homer <b>Write:</b> A Travel Brochure The Hero’s Journey
<b>Villains in Literature and in Life</b>	What is the role of the villain in literature? Are villains the same as heroes? How are they different?	<b>Read:</b> <i>Gilgamesh</i> and <i>Black Folktales</i> by Julius Lester <b>Write:</b> Epic/Folktale Project

The above readings are subject to change.

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*Let’s have a great year! Ms. Law-Yone*