Dawson Springs Jr. / Sr. High School Writing Plan

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**Document Description & Purpose:**

**Universal Writing Standards:**

**Writing Characteristics:**

In each language arts / English class, students will acquire the skills and knowledge to produce excellent writing across a variety of subject. “Writing excellence” can take many forms, but there are common characteristics present in all academic writing of high quality:

* **Audience:**Writers should be keenly aware of their audience, demonstrating control of both tone and content in order to meet the needs of that audience. Writers should understand that while the individual voice of the writer is certainly important, effective communication with a specific audience is vital.
* **Purpose:**Writers should write all academic essays / papers with a clearly defined purpose in mind. The focus of the purpose should be identified early in the document and reinforced throughout the text. Students must develop the ability to compose a clear, effective thesis statement and be able to elaborate upon that thesis within the body of the text.
* **Idea Development:**Writers should fully develop all essays through the use of a variety of rhetorical and empirical strategies. Sound writers use idea development to provide support, details, and insight into the subject matter of the text. Furthermore, advanced writers will use effective counterarguments to allay the potential doubts of the audience.
* **Word Choice:** Excellent writers are always striving for *exact* word choice. Writers should avoid ornate, flowery diction as well as diction that is vague or nebulous. Solid writers employ vivid, specific word choice with the goal of creating language that is both precise and efficient.
* **Organization:** Writer should organize their writing through the logical progression of ideas. Excellent writers will use logical transitions to improve the flow of their prose, seamlessly moving from one aspect of the text to another. Writers should not only employ paragraphs in logical order, they should also organize the individual sentences *within* their paragraphs in logical order.
* **Grammar:** Writers should exercise absolute control of all grammatical conventions. Excellent writers should strive to augment their writing with grammar that goes beyond correct and actually use grammar to enhance the meaning of their prose.
* **Sentence Structure**: Writers should employ a variety of sentence lengths and structures in order to enhance the flow of their prose. A sound writer will take time to develop their ability to connect phrases and clauses in a variety of ways to enhance sentence structure.

**Critical Thinking:** Critical thinking (disciplined thinking that is clear, rational, open-minded, and informed by evidence) is of the certainly importance to all humanities classes. In language arts courses, however, critical thinking skills are vital for any student attempting to achieve excellence in writing and literature. It is important to teach the critical thinking process to incoming to all students because critical thinking is an indispensable attribute in a successful adults. According to the Association of American Colleges and Universities, “Beginning in school, and continuing at successively higher levels across their college studies, students should prepare for twenty-first-century challenges by gaining: Intellectual and Practical Skills, including critical and creative thinking.” Thus, time is allotted on all course schedule for critical thinking exercises. Often, the exercises consist of short essays that challenge long held assumptions. Other times, they consist of rhetorical or analytical exercises. Whatever the task may be, it is important to note that critical thinking will be very much emphasized in all English courses.

**Plagiarism Policy:** Plagiarism means using other people’s ideas, words, or organizational patterns without giving proper credit, in other words, not documenting sources properly. Plagiarism may take several forms: quoting a source’s words without using quotation marks or identifying the source, paraphrasing a source’s ideas without identifying the source, summarizing a source’s ideas without identifying the source, and using statistics without identifying the source. Also, plagiarism means turning in a paper written by another student (or parts of a paper) or turning in a paper downloaded from the web (or parts of a paper or parts of several papers). Having someone correct the errors on a paper is also plagiarism. Plagiarism is a serious academic and ethical offense. It’s cheating. Thus the penalty for plagiarism must be severe. A student who plagiarizes the work of another will receive a failing grade for the plagiarized work. Students should properly document sources in their writing by using quotation marks for quoted material, in-text parenthetical references, and bibliography entries on a Works Cited page. If a student has any questions about what to document or how to document a source, he or she should ask the instructor. Do not plagiarize.

**7th Grade English and Language Arts**

**Course Description:**

Focuses on conventions of Standard English, knowledge of language, and vocabulary acquisition in order to write narrative, informative and argumentative texts. The class also focuses on key ideas and details, craft and structure, integration of knowledge of ideas, range of reading, and level of text complexity in both literature and informational texts.

**Course Resources:**

* *The Outsiders* by S.E Hinton
* *Michael Vey Prisoner of Cell 25* by Richard Paul Evans
* IXL Language Arts
* readtheory.org
* *Choices* magazine
* *The Dawson Springs Progress.*

**Course Objectives:**

By the end of 7th grade students will be able to:

* Read a variety of texts with better comprehension, by using various reading styles and strategies
* Read for learning the correct use of grammatical structures and to acquire academic vocabulary
* Produce error free writing with diversified academic vocabulary and in formal academic writing tone
* Write narrative, argumentative and informative texts to complete academic writing tasks in different formats
* Listen to lectures with comprehension and critical thinking
* Take notes during lecture
* Participate actively in class activities and discussion
* Can proofread their work or the work of their peer for common language errors

**8th Grade English and Language Arts**

**Course Description:**

Focuses on conventions of Standard English, knowledge of language, and vocabulary acquisition in order to write narrative, informative and argumentative texts. The class also focuses on key ideas and details, craft and structure, integration of knowledge of ideas, range of reading, and level of text complexity in both literature and informational texts.

**Course Resources:**

* *The Giver* by Lois Lowry
* *Gathering Blue* by Lois Lowry
* IXL Language Arts
* readtheory.org
* *Choices* magazine
* *The Dawson Springs Progress.*

**Course Objectives:**

By the end of 8th grade students will be able to:

* Read a variety of texts with better comprehension, by using various reading styles and strategies
* Read for learning the correct use of grammatical structures and to acquire academic vocabulary
* Produce error free writing with diversified academic vocabulary and in formal academic writing tone
* Write narrative, argumentative and informative texts to complete academic writing tasks in different formats
* Use counterclaims
* Listen to lectures with comprehension and critical thinking
* Take notes during lecture
* Participate actively in class activities and discussion

**English I**

**Course Description:**

Focuses on academic writing. Provides instruction in drafting, revising, and publishing various genre of student writing including but not limited to persuasive, narrative, editorial, informative and free writes for a variety of audiences. Includes the review of grammar, mechanics, and usage. Focuses on reading literature and nonfiction. Provides opportunities for public speaking, presenting, collaborating with peers, in depth conversations and critical thinking.

**Course Resources:**

* Pearson Prentice Hall. *Prentice Hall Literature.* Penguin ed. Boston: Upper Saddle River, NJ, 2007.

**Course Objectives:**

By the end of English I students will be able to:

* Read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas and poems at grade level complexity
* Read and comprehend nonfiction literature, conduct research, support an argument and present evidence at grade level complexity
* Write routinely over extended time frames for research, reflection, and revision and shorter time frames for a range of tasks, purposes and audiences
* Write for a variety of audiences/purposes in the following formats: argumentative, expository and narratives
* Produce clear and coherent writing
* Use grade level appropriate vocabulary to communicate ideas
* Engage in whole group and small group conversations of various topics to responsibly support or argue a topic

**English II**

**Course Description:**

Focuses on academic writing. Provides instruction in drafting, revising, and publishing various genre of student writing including but not limited to persuasive, narrative, editorial, informative and free writing for a variety of audiences. Includes the review of grammar, mechanics, and usage. Focuses on reading literature and nonfiction. Provides opportunities for public speaking, presenting, collaborating with peers, in depth conversations and critical thinking.

**Course Resources:**

* Pearson Prentice Hall. *Prentice Hall Literature.* Penguin ed. Boston: Upper Saddle River, NJ, 2007.

**Course Objectives:**

By the end of English II students will be able to:

* Read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas and poems at grade level complexity
* Read and comprehend nonfiction literature, conduct research, support an argument and present evidence at grade level complexity
* Write routinely over extended time frames for research, reflection, and revision and shorter time frames for a range of tasks, purposes and audiences
* Write for a variety of audiences/purposes in the following formats: argumentative, expository and narratives
* Produce clear and coherent writing
* Use grade level appropriate vocabulary to communicate ideas
* Engage in whole group and small group conversations of various topics to responsibly support or argue a topic

**English III / ENG 101 & 102**

**Course Description:** Focuses on academic writing. Provides instruction in drafting and revising essays that express ideas in Standard English, including reading critically, thinking logically, responding to texts, addressing specific audiences, researching and documenting sources. Includes review of grammar, mechanics and usage.

**Course Resources:**

* Axelrod, Rise B., and Charles R. Cooper. The St. Martin’s Guide to Writing. 9th ed.

Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2008.

* Hoffer, Eric. *The True Believer: Thoughts of the Nature of Mass Movements*. New

York: Harper and Row, 1951.

* Pearson Prentice Hall. *Prentice Hall Literature: The American Experience.* Penguin

ed. Boston: Upper Saddle River, NJ, 2007.

* Pearson Prentice Hall. *Prentice Hall Literature: The British Tradition.* Penguin ed.

Boston: Upper Saddle River, NJ, 2007.

* Solzhenitsyn, Aleksandr. *The Gulag Archipelago: An Experiment in Literary*

*Investigation*. New York: Harper and Row, 2007.

**Course Objectives:**

By the end of English III students will be able to:

* Develop an appropriate and articulate thesis in an essay using adequate support, sound reasoning, and valid evidence.
* Plan, draft, revise, edit, and proofread to produce well-written essays.
* Write in Standard English that is appropriate to purpose and audience.
* Respond in writing to college-level reading material to demonstrate comprehension of author’s purpose, main idea, and organization.
* Use library search tools to find print/non-print materials.
* Document sources appropriately in selected writing assignments
* Develop and appreciation for British and American literature
* Make connections between the philosophical, cultural, and literary movements throughout British and American history.

**English IV (Technical Writing)**

**Course Description:**

Focuses on the publication of excellent technical and career writing. This course is designed to develop skills that will enable students to produce clear and effective technical documents for work and education. The class will focus on universal principles of good writing, principles shared by scientific, technical, and academic writing alike. While the emphasis of the class will be on developing writing and critical thinking skills, oral communication, group dynamics, and reading skills will form an important component of the course, as well.

**Course Resources:**

**Course Objectives:**

By the end of English IV (Technical Writing) students will be able to:

* Resume?
* Letter of interest?
* Job application?
* Conflict resolution?
* Workplace communications?

**English IV (ENG 161 / AP Seminar)**

**Course Description:** ENG 161 provides an analytical rather than historical approach to literature, intended to deepen the student’s insight into the nature and purpose of literature and to develop literary taste and judgement. Methodology will involve extensive close and careful reading, some lecture, and much class discussion. This course is accepted as a Humanities Core Course for the Associate’s Degree. *Note: students must be strong readers and demonstrate proficiency in critical thinking, creative thinking, and creative writing*.

**Course Resources:**

* Pearson Prentice Hall. *Prentice Hall Literature: The American Experience.* Penguin

ed. Boston: Upper Saddle River, NJ, 2007.

* Pearson Prentice Hall. *Prentice Hall Literature: The British Tradition.* Penguin ed.

Boston: Upper Saddle River, NJ, 2007.

**Course Objectives:**

By the end of English IV (ENG 161 / AP Seminar), students will be able to:

* Utilize basic formal elements, techniques, concepts, and vocabulary of specific disciplines within the arts and humanities.
* Distinguish between various kind of evidence by identifying reliable sources and valid arguments.
* Demonstrate how social, cultural, and historical contexts influence creative expression in the arts and humanities.
* Evaluate the significance of human expression and experience in shaping larger social, cultural, and historical contexts.
* Evaluate enduring and contemporary issues of human experience.