



Barack Obama Academy of International Studies

515 N. Highland Avenue | Pittsburgh, PA 15206
Phone: 412-529-5980 | Fax: 412-622-5983

August 2016

Dear Senior, Parent/Guardian:

Welcome to the start of an exciting new year! It is only about nine months until graduation! I'd like to give you an overview of the IBDP English 4 curriculum, the grading criteria, rubric examples, and the homework guidelines. I would also like you to have my contact information, so that we are able to start the school year with clear expectations. I look forward to encouraging this year's senior class to develop into the model IBDP Learner: "Internationally minded people who recognize their common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet, and people who help to create a better and more peaceful world."

COURSE OUTLINE:

IBDP English 4 is a unique course designed to target key areas of Language A1 Literature. This course will develop the students' ability to achieve the required level of success on the oral and written assessments which will be administered during the junior and senior years. The student will develop necessary skills to become a global learner and also reflect on their own cultural practices, while at the same time analyzing and comparing writers' literary choices.

GRADING CRITERIA:

- Homework (Reading Assignments) - 10%
- Assessments (Essays, Vocabulary, Short answer Quizzes and Formal Oral Presentations) - 25%
- Writing (RRJ's, Formal Written Commentary and Response to Literature) - 20%
- Classwork (Group questions, Individual work) - 25%
- Participation (Discussion, Practice writing) - 20%

READER RESPONSE JOURNAL (RRJ) GUIDELINES:

- For each of the works read for class, students will be required to produce a minimum of 3 and a maximum of 7 Reader Response Journals on specific topics.
- These are to be viewed as essays-length—at least two typed pages for each.
- Students should use their own knowledge and understanding of the works, but are also able to research any information to fill in the gaps of their knowledge and understanding.
- **Any act of plagiarism will be seen as academic dishonesty and will result in a failing grade.**

HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT GUIDELINES:

- Completing homework is necessary for success in the class.
- A due date will be given for each homework assignment.

ESSAY GUIDELINES:

Students will be assessed in five areas of each of their essay assessments.

- **Knowledge and Understanding of Works:** How well does the student know the works? How detailed and/or appropriate are references to works? Students will use detailed and persuasive references to works.
- **Response to the Question:** How well has the candidate understood and responded to the specific demands of the question?—Students' ideas should be convincing and show independence of thought.
- **Appreciation of Writer's Choices:** To what extent are literary features shown in the works?—Student must demonstrate critical analysis of the effects of the literary features of the works in relation to the question.
- **Organization and Development:** How well organized is the essay? How effectively have the ideas been presented? Students must write a clearly focused and well-developed persuasive argument.
- **Formal use of Language:** How accurate, clear, and precise is the language used?

LATE WORK:

Late homework is accepted but will only be given ½ credit. Class work should never be turned in late. It is due on the day that it is assigned. Unless a student makes a prior arrangement with the teacher, any class work assignment that is submitted late will also be given ½ credit.





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MAKE-UP WORK:

If you miss an assignment due to an absence from school, you have the same number of days you were gone to make up the work. Generally, you must make up homework, tests, and notes, but it is not necessary to make up class work. **Students missing class due to school activities are expected to get all assignments for the day before leaving for the activity and to turn them in ON THE DUE DATE.** Students who begin to miss significant class time due to activities should meet with the teacher to see if additional arrangements need to be made.

EXTRA-CREDIT:

There will be no opportunities for extra credit. Students should make every effort to complete work and achieve the highest grade possible during the report period and not rely on extra credit to boost their grade. It is important that students begin to develop the study habits necessary to complete quality work the first time.

BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS:

I have high expectations regarding behavior that are not easily summed up in a list of rules. I trust that we will develop a classroom community that fosters mutual respect and courtesy. Below are a few of the expectations that I have:

- **Be present.** You cannot learn if you are not in class. If you miss class for valid reasons, do everything within your power to see me before you miss the class. If you are out due to illness or other health concerns, you are welcome to e-mail me for assignments that you missed.
- **Be prompt.** You must be **in your seat** at the ringing of the bell. It will not be acceptable to arrive at my classroom after the bell has rung.
- **Be prepared.** This presumes completed homework and necessary tools. It also means coming to class having thought about what we are doing and what you have read or written and how you plan to participate in the current learning or discussion.
- **Be polite.** We may not all come to class with the same working definition of “polite”, so you will need to accept my definition. There is, of course, no eating, drinking or chewing gum. No demeaning speech of any kind will be tolerated. You should feel free to articulate your thoughts but not at the expense of one of your classmates. No foul speech will be tolerated whether it is directed at someone or used as an expletive.

Contacting Mr. Denlinger:

My room’s phone number is (412) 529-7830. You are always welcome to leave a voice mail message for me. It may be more expeditious to e-mail me. My e-mail is tdenlinger1@pghboe.net. I do check my e-mail numerous times throughout the day and will be sure to respond to your concern as quickly as possible.

I hope that this information has been helpful. Again, I am looking forward to an exciting year and trust that we all (student, teacher, parent) will work together to create an environment that is conducive to personal learning and growth.

Cordially,

Mr. Ted Denlinger

Approved: Ms. Aisha Robinson, Director

Please sign to indicate that you have read the above letter.

Parent Signature

Student Signature

