



September, 2016

Dear Parents, Guardians and Students,

Welcome to a new school year at Pittsburgh Obama! My name is Mr. Dumbroski, your child's Language & Literature teacher for the 8th grade. In our International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme (IB MYP), Language & Literature classes encompasses communication domains commonly referred to as Language Arts. I would like to share some important information to help make this a successful academic year for all.

Daily requirements and tools for success:

- Agenda book
- Writing utensil (a blue or black ink pen or a sharpened pencil)
- Completed homework or other long-term assignments
- Appropriate textbook, novel, folder or notebook (**Students will need to purchase a one inch or thicker binder with pockets for my class**)
- Any special supplies needed for a particular project, assignment or activity as indicated by the instructor.

Procedures and expectations:

- All school rules and rules specific to the particular classroom must be followed.
- Assignments must be completed in a timely manner.
- Students must be on time to class, thus 4 tardy marks will result in a referral, a phone call home will occur after the 3rd tardy.
- All students must complete the Pittsburgh Public Schools portfolio by completing individual writing assignments as the year progresses.
- Class time will include warm-up time, direct instruction, activities, practice or exploration and organizational/wrap-up time.

Language & Literature focuses on comprehension, analysis of text, vocabulary development, grammar, and conventions. Through our IB units the students will master the Common Core State Standards within the various Anchors:

- Reading
 - Literature
 - Informational Text
- Writing
- Speaking and Listening
- Language

(For a complete list of the standards that make up these anchors, please go to <http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy>)

The Pittsburgh Public Schools Core Curriculum for grade eight consists of eight units of varying lengths that have been adapted into IB units. Each unit, delineated by an essential question, focuses on three or four concepts and is connected to the Common Core Standards. Language & Literature is one of the eight curricular content areas, and students will engage with the area of study through the Learners Profile. The Pittsburgh Public Schools Core Curriculum and the Common Core are also consistent with IB MYP aims and objectives:

The aims of MYP language and literature are to encourage and enable students to:

- use language as a vehicle for thought, creativity, reflection, learning, self-expression, analysis and social interaction
- develop the skills involved in listening, speaking, reading, writing, viewing and presenting in a variety of contexts



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- develop critical, creative and personal approaches to studying and analyzing literary and non-literary texts
- engage with text from different historical periods and a variety of cultures
- explore and analyze aspects of personal, host and other cultures through literary and non-literary texts
- explore language through a variety of media and modes
- develop a lifelong interest in reading
- apply linguistic and literary concepts and skills in a variety of authentic contexts.

Objectives/Assessment Criteria:

- Objective A: Analyzing
 - Objective B: Organizing
 - Objective C: Producing Text
 - Objective D: Using language
- Homework will be assigned consistently, at least four times a week; homework may not always require written practice, or a written product, and will cover a range of assignments that reinforce skills taught in Language & Literature classes. Assignments and due dates will be written in the student's agenda book. Long term assignments, such as book reviews, performance objective projects and speeches, will be shared well in advance of the due date.
 - Students may expect to experience whole group instruction, small cooperative groups, partner or triad work or individualized assignments, differentiated instruction and a variety of class work assignments. Modifications will be made according to available data and for students with Individualized Education Plans.

Evaluation, assessments and the grading guidelines

- Assignments should be submitted on time. Because assignments are often individualized or differentiated, none should be missing. Alternative assignments will be available for absentees, but the organization of the mandatory Core Curriculum script does not allow for extra credit assignments. **Late homework will be accepted the following school day for 50% of the total. After that it is a zero. Late projects will be marked 10% for every day late. No late work will be accepted during the final week of any report period.**
- Rubrics devised from IB MYP requirements and District Standards will be used to evaluate assignments and texts according the four IB Language & Literature criteria: Analyzing, organizing, Producing Text and Using Language.
- The Pittsburgh Public Schools grading scale will be used. Students will receive grades in one of the following categories: Class Work (25%), Assessments (25%), Writing (20%), Participation (15%), and Homework (10%).
- Citizenship refers to work habits and class demeanor. Students will be evaluated daily according to the citizenship rubric and using the standard scale (O=outstanding, S=satisfactory and U=unsatisfactory).

I hope this information is helpful to you! I can always be reached at my school voicemail (412-529-8336) or via e-mail (mdumbroski1@pghboe.net).

Sincerely,

Mr. Dumbroski

Approved: Ms. Aisha Robinson, Director

