**FAQs for Ms. Preston's 7th Grade Class**

**How do we get in contact with Ms. Preston outside of class time?**

Phone: 509-253-4331

Email: mpreston@harringtonsd.org

Google Classroom Code: 2g53mel

**What is this course going to be about?**

First of all, welcome to Middle School! This year you will learn about different genres of literature. We will read different short stories, non-fiction, historic fiction, articles, biography, essays, mythology, poetry, fantasy literature, and dystopian literature. We will write our own stories, essays, and poetry. As we learn, we will use the following questions to guide us:

* Why is reading important?
* Why do people write?
* What makes a piece of writing good?
* Who am I as a learner?
* How to I approach and respond to \_\_\_\_\_\_ genre?

I love reading. I love writing, and I love teaching, and I hope that some part of this love for English will rub-off on you.

**What materials do we need?**

Sticky Notes

Binder

Loose-leaf Notebook Paper (100 sheets minimum)

2 Composition Books

Blue or black ink pens

**In order to keep up with the work, please have your supplies (or, most of them) by September 4, 2017!!!**

**What are we reading?**

Tentatively, we will read: *selected short stories, The Book Thief* or *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas, selected biographies, selected mythology, The Hobbit, The Giver, and selected poems.*

Please note, this list is subject to change. Please review the reading selection; and, if there are any questions or concerns about the texts that we will be reading in class, please let me know.

**How much time outside of class will I need to spend in order to pass this class?**

The average American student does 20 to 30 minutes of homework per day for each core class in order to be successful. English is a core class. I try not to assign homework every day, but you should plan on having between 15-45 minutes of homework or reading each night.

As a student, I did not like busy work; and, as a teacher, I do not like grading busy work. I do not assign work just to assign work. The homework that I assign is intended to help you succeed in class and enrich your education. Many things that we do in class will depend on your coming to class having done the homework assignment.

**How will I be graded?**

The grade you earn will reflect where you are in relation to the standards for your grade-level.

Interestingly enough, the time and effort you put into the assignment as well as how well you have followed the directions and how much growth/progress you are showing toward the learning goals tends to correlate to higher grades.

Grades will be weighted as follows.

60% of grade for **Making Good Decisions**. In other words, doing your work and providing me with evidence that you are progressing toward meeting the standards. What types of assignments fall into this category? All summative assessments such as: essays, research papers, presentations and other projects.

40% of grade will be for **Solving Problems**. How do I get this grade? By working on the tasks provided inside and outside of class. What does that mean? Do the classwork and participate in the learning community.

The 40% is broken down further:

20% for Classwork

15% for Homework

5% for College and Career Readiness Habits

**ALL assigned work is to be typed in Times New Roman 12 font and double spaced unless otherwise specified.**

\*Please remember if I cannot read it, I cannot grade it. Make sure the work you turn in is neat and legible.

**Do you take late work?**

No, I do not. Turning work in late is a bad habit, and I cannot, in good conscience, teach students that habit by allowing late work.

However, I understand that students learn at different paces. If more time is needed to complete an assignment, a student (or their parent) may petition for additional time prior to the due date.

If something unexpected happened that prevents a student from meeting the due date, there is a form in the classroom where they can use to communicate the situation and request an extension.

**How many passes out do we have?**

Using the bathroom or getting a drink of water needs to be taken care of during passing. Your learning is too important for me to allow unnecessary interruptions. However, I do understand that there are sometimes when it is an emergency. Consequently, you will have three passes per term/semester to leave the classroom in order to use the bathroom/get a drink. At the end of the semester, any unused passes will be converted into an extra credit assignment.

Please do not interrupt instruction to ask to use one of the passes.

**Can we bring food and drink into your class?**

Yes, you may provided the snack is not a distraction (for example something with a noisy wrapper or something that is messy), and you are responsible for cleaning up after yourself. If I ever have to clean up after a student who has been eating or drinking in class, the privilege will be revoked for all class periods.

All drinks must have a lid.

Snacks are ok, but it is inappropriate to bring your meals into class and eat them during class time.

Also, if snacking distracts from learning, the privilege will be suspended.

**Can we chew gum in your class?**

As long as it stays in your mouth. If I find it on the desks, walls or floors (in other words anywhere outside of your mouth or the garbage can) ALL of my classes lose gum privileges.

**Can we use personal electronics in class?**

I believe technology is a powerful tool we can use to enhance your education. Because of this belief, I allow students to use electronics in my class for ACADEMIC PURPOSES ONLY. However, my expectation is that you use the technology as a tool NOT a toy. If a student fails to make good choices and meet this expectation, I will help them by removing the temptation and confiscating the device.

When a device is confiscated:

The first time, it will be returned at the end of the class period.

The second time, it will be returned at the end of the day.

The third time and any other times after that, it will be held until a parent/guardian comes to collect it.

If you are ever in doubt about whether or not your technology usage is in keeping with my expectations, please ask. I might surprise you and tell you it’s ok.

**What happens if I miss class?**

If you have questions about what you missed, first, check with a classmate to review their notes. If you are still concerned that there might be gaps in your learning, please bring any questions to me.

Many of the assignments and handouts will be posted to Google Classroom, so it is always a good option to look there as well.

You are responsible for the assignments/homework that was missed. It is your responsibility to talk to me outside of class time to getting missing assignments and a recap of the lesson if you still have questions. I am available before school, during lunch, or after school.

Incompletes will be given if a student fails to make up work within an acceptable time frame (I follow the district’s policy where students have one day for every excused day that they were absent to make up the work they missed. Example: I was gone Monday and Tuesday of the week; I have until the end of Thursday to make up and turn in the work/assignments that I missed).

August 15, 2018

Dear Parents and Guardians:

We have an exciting year ahead of us, and I am looking forward to getting to know both you and your student. In 7th Grade, we focus on introducing students to some of the genres they will encounter in English classes for the remainder of their academic careers as well as developing an appreciation for reading and writing and familiarity with the content specific vocabulary for an ELA course. We will do this through genre studies, so each of our units will revolve around one specific genre of literature. Please feel free to join our Google Classroom; it will allow you to see what your student is doing in ELA class and what assignments/goals we are working towards.

Attached to this letter you will find my syllabus. We went over the FAQs/syllabus in class together, but please review the FAQs for my class with your student\*. When you’ve finished, please help me by answering the following questions:

Do you have questions/concerns about the requirements for this course?

If you need to get in touch with me, I check my email frequently throughout the day. What is the best way to reach you?

Is there anything I need to know in order to assist your student in reaching their full potential?

Please sign below to confirm that you have reviewed and discussed this course with your student:

Thank you!

Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Maria Preston

\*As a means to begin teaching students responsibility/accountability and to make sure you actually receive this information, students are earning a grade for returning the signed portion of this packet.