

Grade 9 English

with Ms. Dominick

Three Components of the Course

1) Vocabulary and Etymology

You will expand your vocabulary, by breaking words into prefixes, suffixes, and roots. Instead of rote memorization, we will approach “philology” (the study of languages and in Greek “the love of words,” φίλος + λόγος) through an introductory understanding of the history of the English language and how words develop over time, looking at spelling, phonetics, and etymology (the history of a word’s origin), as well as some of the benefits and consequences of “global English.”



2) Grammar and Usage

You will master the puzzle of basic English grammar and usage rules by attending to sentence structure, punctuation, capitalization, and mechanics. We will focus on identifying language patterns, understanding grammar not *just* as a set of rules but also as a natural extension of human thought and communication.

3) Rhetoric and Composition

We will cover all stages of writing from planning and drafting through revising and editing. Building on the elements of sentence structure, you will have regular opportunities to work towards well-organized paragraphs and essays before discussing citation skills, plagiarism, and the ethics of writing. We will also dip into some foundational elements of rhetoric, or “the art of effective and persuasive speaking and writing, especially the use of figures of speech and other compositional techniques.” Throughout the school year, you will have the opportunity to craft at least one speech on a topic of your choosing.

Texts (Required):

Irvin, Odell, Vacca and Hobbs. *Elements of Language, Fifth Course*. Texas: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 2009.
---. *Elements of Language Workbook: Grammar, Usage, Mechanics, Fifth Course*. Texas: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 2009.

Texts (Recommended, Not Required):

Ayers, Donald M. *English Words from Latin and Greek Elements*. 2nd ed.

Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona Press, 1986.

Strunk Jr., William and E.B. White. *The Elements of Style*. 4th ed. Essex, UK: Pearson Education Limited, 2014.

Grading:

Homework (most days) 15%

Unit Tests (4-5 per semester) 15%

Vocabulary and Etymology Quizzes (weekly) 20%

Composition Assignments (2-3 per semester, varying length) 20%

Projects (1-2 per semester) 15%

Class Preparation (daily) 15%

Classroom Manners and Environment:

Every class period, we will have more work to do and material to explore than time, so we need to stay on task. Of course, it is crucial that you be on time for class every day, but more than that, you should pay attention to understanding your individual “class preparation style,” by giving yourself enough space and time (physically and mentally) before class begins to come as your day’s best self. I invite you to make this shared space accessible. Feel free to move around, put your feet up, take notes, stim, or use this space in any other way that feels right for you and doesn’t create an unreasonable distraction for another classmate or the teacher.

Some specifics:

Food - You may bring whatever snacks or drinks you need. Just be considerate of your classmates when it comes to cuisine of the smellier or noisier kind (Fish? Really?!).

Headphones/Earplugs - I understand the comfort of headphones/earplugs while working individually. They can be very helpful for concentration for some people (including myself!). For that reason, I permit students to use headphones/earplugs during *individual work time only*. I will do my best to signal when headphone/earplug use is appropriate.

Cellphones - I encourage the use of technology, including laptops and notebooks. However, unless there is a specific accessibility concern, phones should *not* appear during class time.

Bullying - There is zero tolerance of bullying in or outside of the classroom. As your teacher, I have a responsibility to address timely and seriously bullying in any form. The following is from the McLean Employee Handbook: *Bullying means written, verbal, behavioral, and physical conduct that adversely affects the ability of one or more students to participate in or benefit from the school's educational programs or activities by placing the student (or students) in reasonable fear of physical, emotional, or psychological harm. This includes conduct that is based on a student's actual or perceived race, color, national origin, sex, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, religion or any other distinguishing characteristics that may be protected by school policy or statements. This also includes conduct that targets a student because of a characteristic of a friend, family member, or other person or group with whom a student associates.*

Academic Honesty and Plagiarism – While we will talk about plagiarism and citation in detail over the school year, the Mclean School Handbook provides the following definition: *Offering as one's own work the ideas, words, papers or exams of another is plagiarism. The copying of another's work word for word, without appropriate citation is misrepresentation. Students are reminded that paraphrasing of another's work also must be accompanied with appropriate citation. Plagiarism and cheating will not be tolerated at McLean and will be treated in a serious fashion. Students who cheat are in violation of the honor code and will be sent to the honor committee to determine their consequences.*

In addition to the above statement, it is the policy of the McLean School English and History departments that students who plagiarize will receive a failing grade for the paper/assignment in question. The teacher has full discretion whether to allow the student to rewrite his or her work for a penalized grade.

Rubric for Composition Assignments:

Category	A	B	C	D
Coherence of main idea				
Structure				
Detail of thought/execution				
Language & Style • The quality and accuracy of the diction and grammar				
Mechanics & Editing				