

English 1C/2C: Identity and Society

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Class website: <http://msjohnsononline.weebly.com/>

Grades and messaging: <http://www.engrade.com/students>

Course Description

This freshman course is designed to introduce knowledge, skills, and rigor to prepare you for your high school and post-secondary coursework. Throughout the year, you will hone your writing skills, read texts from around the world on many topics, and study grammar, punctuation, and vocabulary.

Our primary focus is to develop demonstrable writing and thinking skills. These are essential elements of your ability to identify as a contributing member in a global society. We will read to understand layered meanings in a variety of texts. We will write in order to clarify our understanding of particular themes and to effectively communicate our ideas in a manner that respects and adheres to the conventions of academic dialogue.

Required Materials

- Pencils and pens
- Lined, loose-leaf paper
- A student planner or calendar print-out to record your homework for all of your classes – “If you fail to plan, you plan to fail.”
- Folder or binder with a section for this class only
- Book of your choice to read during daily silent reading
- The texts we are currently studying as a class

Yearlong Goals

- Write formally and informally for a variety of audiences
- Produce descriptive, expository, and persuasive writing samples
- Understand your own writing process and the importance of revision
- Write effective body paragraphs
- Demonstrate basic understanding of essay structure
- Use the conventions of standard written English
- Write effective summaries of nonfiction and fiction texts
- Identify audience, purpose, and strategies in texts
- Identify the types of evidence that writers use to support claims
- Develop a reading habit that extends beyond the classroom

First Semester – English 1C

During first semester we will focus on developing foundational skills essential to future success. We will focus on various topics related to the conventions of standard written english, and also on the conventions of academic writing. Towards the goal of developing your ability to write strong and cohesive essays during your sophomore year, we will focus on the building blocks of these essays: the body paragraphs. Students will have regular practice and instruction on developing effective body paragraphs in support of a central idea. We will read a variety of nonfiction texts as well as fiction, and we will focus on identifying and articulating the author’s purpose and the techniques used to achieve that purpose

Second Semester – English 2C

Your effort second semester will help you prepare for the rigors of higher level courses by building and expanding on skills learned in 1C. Second semester writing projects will incorporate research skills and the development of in-class presentations to an audience of peers.

Grades

Your skills and the quality of your work are paramount. Your grade is based on your achievement of the learning goals for the class, so it is possible to turn in all of your assignments and still have below an A. Sometimes, good students are inclined to ask, “Why do I have ___ grade in the class when I have turned in all of my work?” The answer is in how well the assignments were done. “You turned in all of your work, but what were your grades on each assignment?” Learn as best you can and show your progress; avoid perfunctory effort. As you grow, your grade will grow with you.

Notice that writing encompasses 60% of your overall grade. A school-wide progress report with your grades will come to your home every six to eight weeks.

% Overall in Class	Meaning	Letter Grade
90-100%	Outstanding achievement	A
80-89%	Above average achievement	B
70-79%	Average achievement	C
		*
69% and below	Low achievement	F

***Note: You do not have the option to earn a D. In order to pass this course, you must demonstrate fundamental competence in basic skills, as evidenced by earning scores of 70% and above.**

Late work is accepted for three days after the due date. See the chart below regarding late penalties. On the due date, come to class with your work completed and printed if typed on the

computer. It is due when I collect it and late any time afterwards, such as at the end of the period.

Days Late	Example: Due on Thursday	% Points Removed
1	Turned in Thursday after it was collected or turned in Friday	-10% from the grade it would have received
2	Turned in Monday	-25%
3	Turned in Tuesday	-50%
4	Turned in Wednesday	No Credit

Semester Assignments	Total Points	% of Grade
Small homework assignments (excluding work on projects and reading assigned novels at home)	220	15%
Scholarship and leadership (independent reading, class discussions, in-class projects: 10 pts/ week)	180	12%
Tests (4 tests at 50 points each) – no redo for higher grades	200	13%
Timed in-class writing (15 prompts, 3 at each of the following point values: 5, 15, 25, 35, and 45 points)	300	20%
Writing projects (6 projects for 100 points each)	600	40%
	1,500/semester	100%

Since the class moves at a fast pace, it is important to stay on top of your assignments. While extra credit options may occasionally be given, these may never be a substitute for core assignments. Nothing can substitute for the skills and knowledge which you will learn, practice, and demonstrate through the required assignments.

Overview of Grade Requirements

The above chart provides a helpful, nuts-and-bolts breakdown of the point system that I use for the grade. However, in order to encourage your success, I want to provide you with a more detailed breakdown of the behaviors that are generally exhibited by students in the various grade categories. I do this so that you can plan to do the things that you need to do in order to earn the grade you want to earn in this class.

Academic Success

9th Grade Course Grading Rubric

The following rubric describes what you must do to earn each grade. These grades are course grades, not six-week “progress report” grades. Thus you have approximately four months to meet these standards.

Students who earn an A:

- Always arrive on time, with the necessary supplies, and are ready to work.
- Maintain at least a B average on scores and assessments.
- Demonstrate development of leadership abilities.

- Complete work assigned/committed to in this class, including web work accessible any time from any Internet connected computer.
- Keep portfolio well organized with selected exemplars and Overview Narrative ready for periodic review.
- Work well independently and with others, and contribute to the workshop groups and class.
- Read at least 1100 pages in progressively more difficult books by semester's end. (60/ week)
- Improve reading speed, and increase stamina significantly, and grow in fluency, flexibility, originality and quality of writing
- Do at least one major project/exhibition with noteworthy originality and elaboration.
- Show creative adaptations and critical awareness in assignments and projects/ presentations.

Students who earn a B:

- Consistently arrive on time, with the necessary supplies, and are ready to work.
- Maintain at least a C average on scores and assessments.
- Demonstrate development of leadership abilities.
- Complete nearly all work assigned/committed to in this class to the best of your ability, including web work accessible any time from any Internet connected computer.
- Keep portfolio organized with selected exemplars and Overview Narrative ready for periodic review.
- Work with more independence and improved ability to collaborate and contribute to both workshop groups and the class.
- Read at least 800 pages in progressively more difficult books. (50/ week)
- Improve speed, and increase stamina measurably, and grow in fluency and quality of writing
- Do at least one major project/exhibition with adequate originality and elaboration.
- Show ability to translate ideas and concepts in assignments and projects/presentations.

Students who earn a C:

- Usually arrive on time, with the necessary supplies, and are ready to work.
- Maintain at least a 2.0 cumulative GPA on rubric scores and assessments.
- Demonstrate development of leadership abilities.
- Complete nearly all work assigned/committed to in this class, including web work accessible any time from any Internet connected computer, but the quality varies.
- Do at least one project/exhibition with fluency and elaboration.
- Portfolio spottily organized with selected exemplars and Overview Narrative not fully ready for periodic review.
- Work with limited independence; collaboration and contributions to the workshop groups and class are often unproductive.
- Read 600 pages in progressively more difficult books (40/week). Improve reading speed, and increase your stamina minimally, and grow in fluency of writing

- Show basic mastery of course tasks and content in assignments and projects/presentations.

Students who earn a D:

- Do not exist. Remember, D is not an option here.

Students who earn an F:

- Rarely arrive on time (or often absent); with the necessary supplies, and are ready to work.
- Have a cumulative scores of less than 70%
- Demonstrate inadequate development of leadership abilities.
- Complete few assignments in this class; minimal effort and low quality prevent success.
- Portfolio spottily or poorly organized, with missing drafts and sketchy Overview Narrative, not fully ready for periodic review.
- Complete few assignments in this class; make inadequate observable effort to work or improve.
- Rarely work independently; often distract others and undermine class discussions.
- Read less than 350 pages (less than 30/ week).
- Show no measurable or observable gains in the area of reading and writing; performance may even decline.
- Show minimal mastery of course content in assignments and projects/ presentations

Last-Minute Grade Repair

Please do not approach me just before progress report grades are due and ask me what you can do to fix your grade. The answer will always be the same: do better in the future. Grades should reflect students' performance over the course of the grading period and should not be inflated by last-minute remorseful effort. Attempting to patch up a grade just before it is mailed home is immature and unrealistic. Again, there is no extra credit available and assignments lose all credit two days after the due date, so there is no make-up. Instead of seeking a quick fix, students unhappy about their grades should consider the following factors which contribute to achievement over time:

- Study habits
- Tutoring opportunities
- Occasions for essay revision
- Seeking support from high-achieving peers
- Using the internet to research what you do not understand
- Eliminating writing habits that bring down your essay scores (e.g. run-ons)
- Being extra careful with assignments (e.g. re-reading assignment requirements; carefully proofreading essays, having others read them, and reading them aloud to spot mistakes)

Points Are Not the Point

A motivational speaker named Les Brown once said, "Shoot for the moon. Even if you miss it you will land among the stars." Too often, students concern themselves with questions such as "How many points is this worth?" or "Do I get credit?" In short, they want to know "What do I get?" for doing this educational activity or completing this step in the learning

process. These students lose sight of the value of education; they forget that their payment is knowledge that will stay with them for the rest of their lives. Shoot for the moon – focus on learning, not immediate rewards – and the rest will follow.

According to a recent report by The Education Trust, only 63% of students who enroll in a university will earn a degree. Ultimately, which high school student do you think will make it in college: the one who completes basic worksheets and receives an easy A, or the one who labors to improve skills and earns a challenging C? Points are not the point: knowledge is.

Online Support

The class website at <http://msjohnsononline.weebly.com/> contains helpful information for students. Also, my gradebook can be found at: <http://www.engage.com/students>. After receiving an access code from me and setting up your account, you will be able to see your current grade, assignments, and (coming soon) the class calendar from any computer with internet. You will also be able to message me and your classmates. This website is particularly helpful when you are absent because you can see what we did in class and download all of the handouts and assignments.

Tips for Success in English 1C/2C

1. Keep up with reading and writing assignments.
2. Complete all homework. No excuses. Do not come to class with stories of broken computers, empty printer ink, or vengeful siblings. Ultimately, I either have the work from you on the due date or I do not.
3. Ask for help if you become lost or fall behind. Failing is not an effective way of letting me know that you do not understand. In case you need extra instruction, I have tutorial.
4. Maintain excellent attendance and punctuality. The work in this class is sophisticated and complex; there are no simple assignments that you can just copy from a classmate to make-up. Plus, even if you make-up the work, you cannot make-up for the discussion and instruction you miss when you are absent. As you fall out of step with your classmates, you may fall so far behind that you give up.
5. Organize your work well and save everything. You will find some things useful in your future high school classes and college.
6. Use your student planner or calendar to keep your life organized, in and out of school.
7. Have a positive attitude. In school, as in life, an enthusiastic outlook will bring you closer to success.
8. Have you ever heard the saying “Fake it till you make it”? If you do not feel positive, sometimes just making yourself smile or laugh can put you in the right mindset. Also, if you do not have the habits of a successful student, just fake them for a while (e.g. make eye contact with teachers and nod or react quietly, create a study routine after school, etc.). Practicing will pay off, and those good habits will become natural over time.

Writing

Writing clearly and effectively is necessary to communicate with other people, but that is not all it does. It also helps you develop critical thought and mental organization. Writing is a

way to explore your ideas, examine your reasons, and achieve a voice. Author Joan Didion once said, “I don’t know what I think until I write it down.” Knowing the technical rules of writing, such as punctuation, and also how to develop high-quality content will help you effectively communicate your thoughts. Final drafts should be in MLA format (see class website for help with this). Therefore, you will need to access a computer, such as those in the library that are available to all students, to type your essays.

Absences and Tardies

When absent, it is always your responsibility to complete any missed assignments, and to seek additional conferencing with me, over any instruction that has been missed. Please be advised of the following policies regarding truanancies and tardies:

- A student with more than 9 truanancies may be dropped from the class
- A student with more than 9 tardies may be dropped from the class. In order to avoid tardies, please be in your seat, with all necessary materials on your desk, beginning the warm up activity at the time of the final bell. A student who is in the room, but who is not prepared, may be marked tardy. Have all materials out and be working on the first assignment when the final bell rings.

Class Policies

- 1. We respect each other as people.**
 - a. Appropriate words (not offensive or discriminatory)
 - b. Considerate body language (no loud sighs/yawns, eye-rolling)
- 2. We put our personal wants on hold to show consideration for others.**
 - a. Quietly comply when teacher corrects behavior (no backtalk or explanations) and speak to her after class about miscommunication or unfairness
 - b. Raise your hand and wait to be called to make a question/comment that is on-topic with the rest of the class. If the teacher wants call-outs she will give a cue (hand behind ear)
 - c. Wait until one-on-one with teacher to ask questions that are just for you
 - d. No food (to respect those not eating and for cleanliness); drinks and gum are okay
 - e. For a bathroom break, use  instead of vocally asking
- 3. We display behavior that benefits our academic achievement.**
 - a. Be inside the door before the tardy bell finishes ringing
 - b. Turn off electronics and keep them out of sight at all times
 - c. Do your own work. Plagiarism (copying from another student, author, or the internet) is a serious offense

My Responsibility as Your Teacher

By my signature below, I agree that I will be the best teacher that I can be for you. This means that

- I will teach you the content of the course in the most understandable and engaging way that I can
- I will make you aware of my requirements for learning and behavior
- I will hold you to high expectations
- I will protect the atmosphere of the classroom so that the maximum number of you can learn
- I will treat you with respect as a person

Signature

Date

Your Responsibility as My Student

By my signature below, I agree that I will be the best student that I can be for you. This means that

- I will do my best to learn the content of the course
- I will abide by your class policies
- I will protect other students' right to learn
- I will treat you and my classmates with respect
- I will make an effort to have a positive attitude

Signature

Date