**Welcome to English 2025-2026**

**Austin High School**



**Welcome to English IV at Austin High School!**

**English**

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Welcome to English IV! I am excited to have you in my class this year. The year will be packed with great literature, writing and other wonderful experiences. Standards are high, and expectations are clearly communicated, but it is your responsibility to know and understand those expectations. Below are guidelines to follow. As you read, keep in mind what should be our shared goals for this year: to become better readers, writers and critical thinkers and problem solvers to prepare you for future endeavors.

\_\_\_\_\_ I have **ZERO TOLERANCE** for:

* **CHEATING**—this will result in a **zero** for that test/quiz/assignment, a discipline write-up and a call home to your parents. All work should be done independently unless you are told directly that you may work together.
* **FOUL LANGUAGE**—this will result in a discipline write-up, being put out of the class, and parent contact.
* **BULLYING**--- will not be tolerated under any circumstance will result in a discipline referral.

**\_\_\_\_\_THINGS TO REMEMBER DAILY:**

* Respect yourself, your fellow classmates, school property and your teacher.
* The teacher dismisses you, when it is time for asynchronous learning.
* Be prompt to class each day**.**
* Come to class in proper attire. No pajamas, no bare chests
* Refrain from interrupting your classmates and your teacher.
* You must be visible at all times with your video on and mics muted if you are not speaking.
* You are responsible for all rules covered in your Student Handbook—be sure to read it!

We are going to have a fabulous, fun-filled, and focused year. This year we will focus on polishing your writing voice and writing tools to prepare you for your future endeavors. We will strive to teach you to constantly search for the subtext in what you read that you can relate to yourself and the world around you, and help you build a toolbox of skills to help you analyze how and why the author’s style. Additionally, we want to help you learn to apply those skills to your own writing by learning how to manipulate words for a specific purpose and occasion.

**ELA Guidelines & Expectations**

In order to equip you with skills for life, our goal is to create effective communicators who can adapt their communication style to the audience, who can prioritize the needs of others while accepting responsibility for themselves and become accountable for their own actions.

1. We will read, watch and discuss a variety of topics in our class this year because we are evaluating how a variety of people from different cultures, creeds, time-periods, backgrounds, and work-fields argue about the world around them through their own expressions. As a class, I want you to make your own inferences and opinions and share them. We will discuss, read & write about a variety of topics that may be controversial to you. In some cases, you may be exposed to ideas that are contrary to your own beliefs. The goal is to teach you how to communicate in a constructive dialogue using concrete details, various argumentative strategies, and facts, not to change your personal beliefs. In our efforts to help create constructive discourse, we may watch or read a piece of text that could contain potential questionable language, ideas, or material to you. However, I will teach you how to analyze rhetoric and create your own arguments while exposing you to a variety of ideas from different cultures, creeds, backgrounds, and time periods that will help you learn and understand a variety of perspectives. There will be more than one side to every issue/argument. You need to understand each side as well as the issue’s historical evolution to be able to evaluate how and why.

***It is your job to inform me of any issues, ideas or language that make you uncomfortable to help us create a safe and trusting classroom environment.***

* You need to be open to other people’s ideas.
* If you do not agree with the ideas, then your job is to listen to the other side’s argument and understand, explain and argue how they put that argument together.
* You can look for faults in the way arguments are constructed.
* Your job is not to put down the other side. Putting down others repeatedly will result in disciplinary action.
* Your job is to take these new ideas and form your own argument from what you know.
* If you feel strongly about your involvement in an activity with the topic we are addressing, please tell me ahead of time so we can discuss any concerns. If necessary, please let me know so we can have a conversation, and the possibility of an alternative assignment.
1. **Technology & Cell Phone Policy:**  We will follow the Texas state law regarding device use on campus (HB1 1481) and FBISD’s Student Code of Conduct. Simplified: Students cannot have their own personal devices on/out at any time during the school day while they are on campus. This includes: personal laptops, personal tablets, cell phones, pagers, headphones, earbuds, and smart watches – unless the use is authorized by the district by legal paperwork (504 and SpEd).
2. **Group Projects:** for all group work, you will sign an agreement to work with your group as well as perform a group work survey/review about the performance for each group member. After signing your group agreement, you may not switch groups. Concerns need to be expressed to the teacher before final groups are formed. I trust you to communicate with me about your group’s effort. Keep in mind, unfairly evaluating group members can inflate or deflate grades and affect class rank. It is in your best interest to be fair to each other. Professionalism while working in groups will create effective collaboration. Professionalism includes focusing on the assignment and not attacking other students’ character for any reason. For students who struggle to effectively collaborate, I will create an action plan on how best to serve that student’s needs.
3. Failure to work with your group will result in a lower grade for yourself and may affect other group members. Any problems with group work must be reported to the teacher immediately to help you come up with solutions to your problems. You may never kick someone out of your group. If a group member becomes ill, alterations to your assignment will be made to accommodate for all members of the group.
4. **Google Docs & Group Work:** if you are using a google sharable document on a group assignment, it is your responsibility to not share your password or change it after the assignment is over. Using someone’s password to steal their intellectual property and turn it in as their own equates to theft and cheating. If you share your password with a “friend” and they take your work, you are culpable in the act.
5. Come to class prepared every day. You may be quizzed or assessed over that material at the teacher’s discretion.

**Austin High School English Department Late Work, Plagiarism, & Cheating Policy**

**On Level Students (All Grade Levels)**: Students will receive 10 points off the first day, and ten points off days until the assignment becomes a 50. After 5 days, it is up to a teacher’s discretion how to proceed to work with the student to complete their assignment for up to a 50.

**AAC English 1 & 2 AP Lang & AP Lit:** Students will receive 15 points off the first day, and ten points off days 2, 3 and 4 and 5 points off the 5th day a student’s work is turned in late. After 5 days, it is up to a teacher’s discretion how to proceed to work with the student to complete their assignment for up to a 50.

**\*\*\*NOTE:** Turning in your work on time ensures you the opportunity to earn an A. However, choosing to turn in your work late earns you a maximum grade of a B.\*\*\*

1. **Extenuating Circumstances:** It is the responsibility of the student to communicate any extenuating circumstances that will impact the completion of their work or their ability to turn it in on time. This includes any absences, illnesses, activities, or technological difficulties that can interfere with completing or submitting assignments on time. As a part of the FBISD Profile of a Graduate, it is the student’s responsibility to advocate for themselves and communicate effectively with their teacher or any collaborative peers, so we can all best accommodate students to be successful. This could include assigning an individual assignment if a student is unable to effectively work with others.
2. **Revision assignments:** To best provide timely feedback in the classroom and teach the writing process, if a student does not come to class prepared on the days of peer revision and feedback assignments, the student is disrupting the classroom learning. Additionally, a student will not be able to document their work and could encourage the use of AI. The student will lose points on the writing assignment according to the late work policy (up to the teacher’s discretion) and may be required to do an alternative assignment by hand.
3. **Cheating and AI:** The use of AI in our classroom is strictly prohibited unless specifically authorized by the teacher. Teachers will use Turnitin.com and other resources to check for originality of student work. Any assignment with over a 20% similarity score (See Similarity Scores document in Schoology) is considered plagiarism whether it is the inability to write in their own voice and avoid assimilating work they find elsewhere or indicates that AI software was used to write the work. Students will be required to keep all their work in a Shared OneDrive folder with me for this class so that any issues that may be considered plagiarized or questionable can be thoroughly investigated to protect you, the student, with date and time stamps of work. Additionally, you will be required to save all work with a title so that we know what assignment is what.
4. **Banned Applications & Usage:** ChatGPT and Grammarly amongst other AI tools are not approved applications in FBISD or in the AHS English Dept. Always ask and your teacher for acceptable AI usage expectations such as Turnitin Draft Coach, spell check, and the allowed use of CoPilot in various activities. In short, always ask before you assume using outside programs will be acceptable. Additionally, in class cell-phone usage on any assignment will be subject to the cell-phone consequences as outlined by FBISD in addition to the cheating policy.
5. **Drafting & Writing Assignments**: In order to create a healthy classroom environment for both the student and teacher, handwritten first drafts and/or drafts in Eduphoria or College Board with a lockdown browser will be used to promote critical thinking skills. Additionally, students will be expected to use MS Word and save all of their work to their district OneDrive to document and time stamp their work electronically as directed by the teacher. It is expected that all students will create an organized system to save their work and name their electronic files. Exceptions to this will be directed by a specific teacher if another platform is needed to complete an assignment. Always follow your teachers directions and use district approved platforms and tools to turn in assignments.
* No PDFs will be accepted of work during the writing process.
* A zero will be entered in Skyward until the work is submitted correctly.
1. **Cheating/Plagiarism & AI Usage**: If the student is suspected of cheating or using unapproved AI tools to assist academic work, the student will receive a zero pending investigation. Colleges have a zero-tolerance cheating policy, and we are trying to prepare them to be successful in high school and beyond. For a first-time offense, the student will need to conference with their teacher, so they can understand what they are doing wrong and how to fix the problem. If the problem persists, disciplinary procedures will take place. **Note: all cheating offenses will be reported to all National Honor Societies which can affect your eligibility status.**
2. You are expected to follow the rules and laws of intellectual property and copyrighting and fair usage of information. Teachers created documents are not to be uploaded, shared or disseminated. According to the United States department of STATE office of International Property Enforcement, represents the genius of the world and violating fair usage and intellectual property rights is a federal offense. **Turnitin.com Standard for Similarity Scores AHS English Dept**

**OVERVIEW**

As part of the course, students will submit written assignments through the plagiarism tool and must avoid excessive amounts of text evidence and/or blatant cheating. Similarity Scores should always be 20% or below during the school year or at stated specifically by your teacher for a specific assignment and as stated clearly in the assignment directions and rubric.

**PENALTY**

If a student’s Similarity Score is above 20%, assignments will be penalized as follows unless specifically stated by the teacher in the assignment directions. For some specific assignments, similarity scores may be requested to be 10% or lower.

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| --- | --- |
| **Similarity Score** | **Penalty** |
| 21-25% | Conference with teacher - potential points |
| 26-30% | Conference with teacher - potential points |
| 31-35% | Conference with teacher - potential points |
| 36-39% | Conference with teacher – points taken off |
| >40% | Conference with teacher – results in a grade of 50, with opportunity to re-do for up to a 75 |

**Grades:**

Your grades will be determined by your major tests, journal, papers, homework, and class participation. My grading scale is as follows. A= 100-90 B= 89-80 C=79-70 F=69-0

**Absences:**

If you are absent, you have until the next day to turn it in unless I state otherwise. This policy is not for major grades, ONLY DAILY! Please email me for make-up work to make arrangements to turn assignments in. If you are absent for a class participation assignment, you will be given an alternate assignment to make up the grade which may require you to write a paper or do editing on your own.

**Tutorials/Make up Days: Tuesdays and Thursdays after school. Morning tutorials and tutorials on any other weekday will be by appointment only.**

**Supplies:**

Folder or binder for readings, notes, homework, etc.

Loose-leaf paper for Timed Writes.

Blue or black pens - not metallic or pastel colors – for all in-class essays and assignments

Colored pens and highlighters for annotations

Post its for peer grading and annotations.

Google Drive/One Drive or flash drive for research, assignments, and work that is on-going.

Access to Laptop/Printer for assessments, discussion, research, Schoology \*

**My Expectations of You**

* Respect your fellow classmates, yourself, and me.
* Put your name on each assignment. This is non-negotiable.
* Do not be afraid to ask for help.

**Retest Policy/Reassessment:**

Students have the opportunity to raise their grades to a 75 through reassessment opportunities if they made a failing grade on an exam. Retesting/reassessment must be arranged by the student within one week of the exam they are reassessing.

**Major Grade Papers and Turnitin.com:**

***Students must submit all papers to turnitin.com and teachers must check submitted papers for plagiarism.***

**Any major grade paper that is given a specific due date will be covered under this policy.**

* Every major grade paper must be turned in on the specified due date at the beginning of the period.
* All codes for Turnitin.com and directions will be included on the class Schoology.
* If students fail to upload their papers to Turnitin.com they receive a zero until the paper has been uploaded.

**Formal Essays:**

\*To be accepted, all major papers must be typed, double-spaced and **in MLA format unless asked to type in MLA.** Any assignments of two or more pages must be stapled. Unless specified by your teacher.
\* All papers turned in should have the proper MLA heading in the top left-hand corner of page 1 of your paper.

Your Name Example: Senior student

My Name: Mrs. Yaffie

English IV- period# English IV Period #

Day Month Year 25 August 2022 (notice date is inverted)

On any subsequent page you will have an MLA Header in the top right-hand margin with last name and page number. If you know more than one student has your last name, put your first initial before your last name.

(example) L. Name 2

**\*\*\*One last word about English IV:**

**One of my favorite literary quotes comes from the play *Shadowlands* by William Nicholson. One of the characters, after being caught stealing books from the university campus library, states, “We read to know we’re not alone.” This course is, of course, a resource in helping you prepare for your English course(s) in college, but moreover it is an intensive study of our strengths and foibles as humans. My ultimate goal is to provide avenues for us to read about and discuss the intricacies of humanity, hopefully helping us all to become better humans ourselves.**