**Binder Core: 12/9/2013**

**Synergy is your Friend**

The biggest recommendation I made to families during conferences regarded Synergy usage. I put in about seven hours of work Sunday mornings and I stay at school late on Tuesday nights—until they kick me out at 10:15. I do try to keep Synergy updated throughout the week, but by Wednesday morning the online gradebook is fairly comprehensive.

I recommend checking Synergy once a week on Wednesdays. If anything seems amiss or if you have questions there are a lot of sources to help you. If you click on the assignment’s name it brings up a narrative explaining the assignment. Look at the comments I made regarding the student’s score on the assignment. You can access my website for handouts and other hints. If you click on the task in the Google calendar embedded in the main page of my website it brings up an additional narrative. There are a plethora of resources at your fingertips. Please use them.

If your answer is not forthcoming, then copy and paste the information into an email and send a **specific** question my way (pbinder@pps.net). Please be specific. “Why am I (my son/daughter) getting a D?” is not a specific question. You will need to do a little work and investigation. What scores are low? What has not been turned in? When have you been absent?

I provide a lot of information so that students and parents can help determine and promote solutions, rather than just flail about blindly in the sea of education. I do provide life preservers, but please help by doggy-paddling and keeping your head(s) above water.

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**Reading**

**Reading Logs/Project #5**

The “logs” for the second quarter will be projects for those who have not been successful with the reading logs. Those who have **successfully submitted** reading logs may, if they so desire, continue to read, summarize and submit a log of their reading. The rest, however, do not have that choice.

Reading Project #5 can be either a book review or an advertising campaign for a current novel the students have read or are reading. In this edition I will outline the review.

Let’s get one thing clear right off the bat: a book review is not a book report. A book review is a real form of writing real writers use to write real things about real books that really matter to them…really.

A book report is a made up form of writing, used only in school, that some teachers ask kids to write in order to prove that they have read a particular book. A book report most often involves reciting information from a text and answering someone else’s questions about it. A book review most often involves creating new and original information about a text and answering one’s own questions about it.

Book reviews can contain just about any type of information related to the text, to the reader, or to the world of books and readers in general. Here are some typical things book reviews include:

* **An interesting lead.** Reviewers will often start out their reviews with some kind of catchy phrase that glosses something interesting from the book.
* **A brief plot summary.** Reviewers don’t retell the story. They just give you a quick summary of the plot, rarely more than a paragraph or two.
* **The reviewer’s favorite part.** Assuming the book was enjoyable to the reviewer, it’s always fun to talk about one’s favorite part and what makes it special.
* **The reviewer’s interpretation of the main idea.**This is the one most important thing the writer wants the reader to know. Most reviewers will address this directly because it is often the key to understanding what the book is really all about.
* **An evaluation.**In most book reviews, reviewers will come right out and say whether they think the books is good or not, or what parts were better than others.
* **A recommendation.** Since one of the purposes of writing book reviews is to get other readers to read certain books, book reviewers often end their reviews with a recommendation.

The guidelines and a “how to” document has already been posted to the READING page of the Binder Core website. It is fairly comprehensive and even has an example review. I will delineate and practice the new assignment with the students this week, as well as provide handouts. The review is due shortly after students return from Winter Break on Tuesday, January 7.

**Short Stories**

***Mortal Coils*** is a collection of five short fictional pieces written by Aldous Huxley in 1922. The title uses a phrase from Hamlet, Act 3, Scene 1:

... To die, to sleep,

To sleep, perchance to dream; aye, there's the rub,

For in that sleep of death, what dreams may come,

When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,

Must give us pause ...

The stories all concern themselves with some sort of trouble, normally of an amorous nature, and often ending with disappointment. *The Gioconda Smile* is a mixture of social satire and murder story, which Huxley later adapted into a 1947 film called *A Woman's Vengeance*.

*The Gioconda Smile* is one of the stranger short stories in the book. From the beginning, however, its title strikes one as being both intriguing and unique. The story begins with an overview of Mr. Hutton’s predicament. He is torn by the fact that his wife is terminally ill, but he is drawn toward another woman. He feels like he must stay by his wife until the end, but feels attached to her by chains. When his wife does die, he marries his mistress. Over time, it becomes known that Mr. Hutton’s first wife was poisoned and did not die of natural causes. Did Mr. Hutton poison his wife, or was it his new *amie—who* was the nurse caring for the late Mrs. Hutton?

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**Writing**

**Vocabulary #7**

Vocabulary #7 is our last list and quiz before Winter Break. Students will have time to work on the assignment on Monday and Tuesday (12/9-10), and the assignment is due at the beginning of class on Friday (12/13). The quiz will be next Thursday (12/19).

The regular vocabulary students need only submit the sentences assignment; but I reserve the right to have them submit their list to check for completion and understanding as well as bolster their grade. The W3 on lists #1-20 need to submit the list, sentences, and analogies. The W3 on lists #21+ need to submit the list and ideas.

As a reminder, regular vocabulary and W3 students on lists #1-20 have the same quiz format as previous quizzes. The regular vocabulary students have to fill in blanks. The W3 students on lists #1-20 have stems and mystery questions.

**The W3 students on lists #21+, however, have a slightly new twist to their quizzes. W3 #21+ have stems, words, and definitions on the front side of the quiz, and a “flip side” on the back side of the quiz. The flip side involves using the context (the bold words) in a sentence to determine which word from the current list fits the context. I will review the new format with the students this week. The guidelines are posted on the W3 page of the website.

**Detective Story**

We finish the process of writing our first significant piece, a detective story. Students have created the protagonist (detective), antagonist (criminal), crime and setting, plot outline, the solution, clues to embed in the story, the exposition, the initial rising action, the middle of the rising action, the end of the rising action, and the climax through the resolution—including the revelation of the solution.

Students will work on putting it all together and finalizing the story—including a title, adding images (if desired), aesthetics, spacing, etc. A finalized/published copy is due by Thursday (12/12) at the beginning of class.

We will be working on:

1. At the end, reveal the motive of the crime. Be sure the ending is clear on who committed the crime and why, and how it was solved. There is nothing worse than leaving a mystery story extremely confused about what was going on!
2. Check the story at least two times and make sure there are no holes. Rewrite things as needed, and reword things to make them more interesting. Cut out as many things as necessary. Be ruthless! You want your story to be the best that it can be.

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History

**Current Event #7**

Presentations for current event #7 take place this week; Monday through Friday (12/9-13). Missing or make-up presentations will take place next Monday (12/16). The group current event quiz is Friday (12/20) and it will contain questions about our short stories.

**Colonial AMerica**

We will be finishing chapter 4, “Life in the Colonies.” We are working on how to take notes and how to complete guided notes.

There will be a test on the unit, both chapters, next Friday (12/13). It will involve students making, defending, and explaining an answer using a primary or secondary document. Fear not, we will work on it in class and examples will be provided.

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Planner **December 9 – 15**

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|  | **Monday 12/9** | **Tuesday 12/10** | **Wednesday 12/11** | **Thursday 12/12** | **Friday****12/13** | **Weekend 12/14-15** |
| **Writing**(Language Arts) | **Vocabulary #7**-regular = words #1-10-W3 #1-20 sentences-W3 #21+ list | **Vocabulary #7**-regular = words #11-20-W3 sentences & analogies-W3 #21+ ideas | **Detective Story**-time to finalize: title, images(?), spacing, aesthetics, final editing & revisions, etc. [12/11]\*finalized/published detective story due **beginning** of class [**12/12**]-share in small groups | **\*vocab #7 assignment** -due **beginning** of class -regular vocabulary = 5 sentences-W3 #1-20 = flashcards, sentences, & analogies-W3 #21+ = list & ideas**This I Believe**-how to write an amazing essay that does not bore the socks off of write & reader-introduction and timeline | **Vocabulary #7**-quiz **12/19****This I Believe**-topic choice and essay work\*finalized/published essay due by **1/22** |
| **Reading** | **20’ Reading**-student book of choice-student meetings**“The Giaconda Smile” by Aldous Huxley**-read aloud-class review & discussion | **20’ Reading**-student book of choice-student meetings**“The Giaconda Smile” by Aldous Huxley**-read aloud-class review & discussion | **20’ Reading**-student book of choice-student meetings**“The Giaconda Smile” by Aldous Huxley**-read aloud-class review & discussion**Reading Log vs. Project #5**-book review **or** an advertising campaign for a movie adaptation of novel: poster, radio or television commercial, billboard, + student choice | **20’ Reading**-student book of choice-student meetings**“The Giaconda Smile” by Aldous Huxley**-read aloud-class review & discussion | **“The Possibility of Evil” by Shirley Jackson**-read aloud 1/6-10-class review & discussion**Reading Log/Project #5**-time for students to work 12/16-20\*due 1/7 representing 250+ pages of reading (for a total of 1250+ pages) |
| **History****(Social Studies)** | **Current Event #7**-News Shark (AM) & Wake Up da Vinci (PM)**Colonial America**"Life in the Colonies" (chapter 4: pages 48-61)-work on guided reading notes | **Current Event #7**-Jackson’s Harem (AM) & #Molivia (PM)**Colonial America**"Life in the Colonies" (chapter 4: pages 48-61)-work on guided reading notes | **Current Event #7**-AZOJSS (AM) & Ginger Afros (PM) [12/11]-Larry Zarry (AM) & Numm-Nummz (PM) [12/12]**Colonial America**"Life in the Colonies" (chapter 4: pages 48-61)\*guided reading notes due **beginning** of class [**12/11**]-review chapters 3 & 4 [12/12] | **Current Event #7**-Galloping Pigz (AM) & Le Group de Friday (PM)**Colonial America Test** -document-based essay question | **Current Event #7**-make-up & missing presentations 12/16-group quiz 12/20**American Revolution**"Toward Independence" (chapter 5: pages 62-77)-Revolution Mobile Project assignment due 1/23 |
| **Other**Contact Information for Binder**da Vinci:** 503-916-5356 ext 79140 **Home**: 503-640-5265voicemail: 503-916-3600 ext 79140email: pbinder@pps.net **WEB PAGE** <http://733257565503770808.weebly.com/> | **Winter Talent Show** auditions @ lunch | **Winter Talent Show** auditions @ lunchLeo Leader lunch | **Winter Talent Show** auditions @ lunch**Periods: 2, 4, 6, & FLEX** with music teaser-Music Pullout 6th  | **Periods 1, 3, 5, & 7****Winter Talent Show** auditions @ lunch | **da Vinci Music Concert** @7:00-8:30pm | 12/16 BSU 3:30-4:3012/17 **midterm**12/18 **late opening**12/18 QSA 3:00-4:30 & Dance 1 & 2 Showcase rehearsal 3:00-7:0012/19 Dance 1 & 2 Showcase 5:30-6:30 & 7:00-8:30pm12/20 Winter Talent Show12/20-1/5 **Winter Break** |