



INTRODUCTION

My goodness...a mad rush has taken place in the first couple of weeks. We continue to explore and troubleshoot the "Synergy" program suite for attendance and grades—which you should have immediate access to, an obtuse web page system, a newer schedule, and new students. The pace and chaos will settle down soon. Please hang in there, communicate any issues/problems, and simply breathe.



READING [some is repeated]

DAILY READING & MEETINGS

During the first ten minutes of class most students have been doing a good job of reading a novel of choice. While students are reading I use the time to meet with students to talk about questions, get to know the newer students, go over absent work, and clarify mistakes on assignments. Students can sign up any time on the "**Binder Time**" clipboard to meet with me during Block to answer "me" questions (as opposed to the "we" questions for the whole class). Additionally, I talk with students who have called me and left messages at home or via email that I was unable to respond to the previous night.

Students should also be reading twenty to thirty minutes a night at home. In class and at home reading counts toward their reading log goal of 750 pages a quarter.

READING LOG/PROJECTS

The idea of a reading log remains simple...I want students to read. Student comprehension, inference, analysis, and synthesis improve with their reading. The reading log is a simple tool to keep track of how much a student is reading. Students are expected to read 1500 pages a semester—or whatever reading goal they set. I do adjust the goal to fit the abilities of the student and I will meet with each student at least once a month to track their progress.

The "log" sheets are fairly simple. A student only needs to fill in the title, author, and genre when s/he begins to read a book. As the student reads pages, s/he "logs" how much is read. We use the logs to spark conversations, recommend (or not) books, etc.

SHORT STORIES

"Sound of Thunder" by Ray Bradbury was the story we read last week (9/8-12). The story begins in the year 2055, a



future in which the time machine has been invented but is still very temperamental. A hunter named Eckels pays to go traveling back into the past on a guided safari to kill a *Tyrannosaurus Rex*.



As the party waits to depart they talk about the recent presidential elections in which the more moderate Keith, to the relief of many concerned, has just defeated an apparently fascist candidate, Deutscher. After the party arrives in the past, Travis (the hunting guide) and Lesperance (Travis's assistant) warn Eckels and the two other hunters, Billings and Kramer, about the necessity of minimizing their effect on events when they go back, since tiny alterations to the distant past could snowball into catastrophic changes in history. The hunters must stay on a levitating path to avoid disrupting the environment and only kill animals that were going to die within minutes anyway. The situation, however, takes a wrong turn.

This week we will be reading "There Will Come Soft Rains" by Ray Bradbury. The story is posted to the "[READING](#)" page on my web site. It does have a bit of hinted violence, but nothing direct.



The story begins by introducing the reader to a controlled house that cooks, cleans, and takes care of virtually every need that a typical United States family could be assumed to have. The reader enters the text on the morning of August 4, 2026 and follows the house through some of the daily tasks that it performs as it prepares its inhabitants for a day of work and school. At first it is not apparent that anything is wrong, but eventually it becomes clear that the residents of the house are not present and that the house is empty.

Students will be asked answer a question or questions about the readings ("The Monkey's Paw", "The Sound of Thunder", and "There Will Come Soft Rains") in both a written and artistic format. Written answers should be focused (not rambling) and clearly explained. The written answers should not be first drafts. Students should revise, edit, process, and proofread their answers.

Artistic responses should demonstrate effort but not hours of work. The artistic side should employ a draft and a finalized product of the student's "best" skills. Overall, each side should take at least 30 minutes of time and effort.

The first "reading response" is due at the beginning of class on Tuesday, September 23.

WRITING

VOCABULARY #1

The W³ and the regular (Binder) vocabulary assignments were due at the beginning of the class last Friday (9/12). I will be checking in with students who did not complete the assignment or who seem confused on the expectations. Copies of the assignment guidelines are posted on my web site.

We will be going over example quizzes and expectations this week in preparation and anticipation of Thursday's (9/18) vocabulary #1 quiz.

Word Within the Word (W3) student have stem definitions and questions to answer. W3 students need to decode (break down and figure out the meaning) of a bold word in the question in order to answer the question and explain their answer.



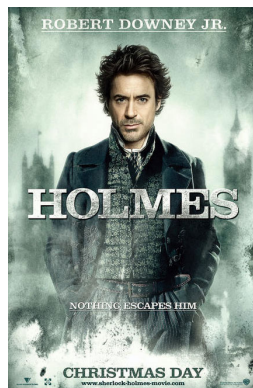
SUMMER MOVIE POSTER

We have been working on our first project...a summer movie poster. Students are supposed to turn a summer experience(s) into a movie poster with a title, tag line, image, and actors. The poster and a review are due at the beginning of class on Tuesday (9/16).

Students will submit a finalized—often referred to as a “published” copy—review at the beginning of class. The published copy needs to be double-spaced. It can be typed or written in blue or black ink and using one's best writing. The published copy should be free of grammatical mistakes, and presented in a logical order.

We have been and will continue to go over the requirements and expectations of the review. The final version should be at least a page, but not more than three pages. It should be a purposeful review written with one's best effort.

From Wednesday through Friday (9/17-19) students will be presenting their posters and review to the class. A handout explaining the project, the scoring, and a set of example movie posters that we discussed in class are available via the “WRITING” page of the Binder Block website



(<http://733257565503770808.weebly.com/writing.html>).

HISTORY

CURRENT EVENT #1

Students presented a current event last week (or on Monday 9/15). We will be reviewing and updating the current events and adding new ones throughout the week. On Friday (9/19) students will take a current events quiz over the fifteen (or more) most significant items. The quiz will also include questions from the three short stories we have read (“The Monkey's Paw”, “The Sound of Thunder”, and “There Will Come Soft Rains”).

Next week all students must present a current event on their assigned day. Directions, expectations, and the current event sheet are available for download via the “[CURRENT EVENT \(CE\)](#)” page of my web site.



WORLD GEOGRAPHY (7TH)

Students will be working in the computer lab all week on the significant seas, lakes, rivers, and mountain ranges of the world. Instead of completing maps by hand, students will complete maps electronically. The link is on the “[7th HISTORY](#)” page of the website.

Next week will be reading and reviewing the first chapter in the textbook, “The Legacy of the Roman Empire” (chapter 1: pages 1-17). The “guided notes” assignment for chapter 1 is due at the beginning of class next Wednesday (9/24). Throughout the rest of the week, we will continue working on latitude and longitude.



GEOGRAPHY OF THE AMERICAS (8TH)

Students will be working in the computer lab all week on the political maps and flags of North and South America. Instead of completing maps by hand, students will complete maps electronically. The link is on the “[8th HISTORY](#)” page of the website.

Next week will be reading and reviewing the first chapter in the textbook, “The Native Americans” (chapter 1: pages 1-15). The “guided notes” assignment for chapter 1 is due at the beginning of class next Wednesday (9/24). Throughout the rest of the week, we will be working on latitude and longitude.



BACK-TO-SCHOOL

Below you will find the schedule for Back to School Night for each of the grade levels. We have already completed the 6th grade night and only have the 7th and 8th grades left.

By Monday, the administration should have some of the schedule changes completed so that we will no longer have a conflict during 4th and 5th period.

Back-to-School Schedule:

- 6:00 TAG Parent Meeting
- 6:30 Principal presentation in the gym
- 7:00-7:10 Period 1
- 7:15-7:25 Period 2
- 7:30-7:40 Period 3
- 7:45-7:55 Period 4 (8th)
Period 5 (7th)
- 8:00-8:10 Period 6
- 8:15-8:25 Period 7
- Bells will be rung at the start and end of each period.

This is my first "Back-to-School" for West Sylvan. While I may be a new face to many of you, there are a few who will know me because I taught your older children or the children of friends.

I look forward to meeting everyone, but want to remind you that the 7th grade Back to School night on Tuesday (9/16) and 8th grade Back to School night on Wednesday (9/17) is not the time or place to have a conversation about the individual needs of your student. Please sign up during the evening or email me if you wish to meet with me. I want to respect your time and the time of those who come to the event. Thank you for your understanding.



CLASSROOM ITEMS NEEDED

- art supplies
 - colored paper
 - cloth scraps
 - scissors
 - pencil sharpeners
 - rulers
 - watercolors
 - paintbrushes
 - other?
- word games—Scrabble isn't the only one
- Brita water **filters**—the pitchers and the replacement filters
- plants
- technology?
- other?



BACK-TO-SCHOOL

**7th Grade = Tuesday,
September 16 from 6:30-
8:00pm**

Tips

**8th Grade = Wednesday,
September 17 from 6:30-
8:00pm**