



## ABSENCES

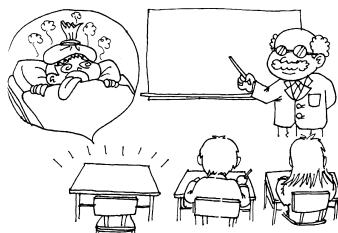
Absences create a few issues, but nothing that cannot be managed. There are a myriad of reasons to miss school, but all students are expected to be responsible for the information and assignments that they missed. An absence is not a free pass, but prolonged absences can (and often do) result in abbreviated work. Please communicate with the office and all teachers regarding all absences: from a momentary absence due to an appointment to a prolonged absence due to illness.

If a student is truly ill, please keep him/her/them at home and contact the office to keep us apprised of the absence. It will only create a small pandemic to send a "borderline" ill child to school. Please do not help spread the germs. Various plagues, that could be avoided if we work together to not spread the germs, devastate classes each year.

If the illness is only a day or two...let the child rest and recuperate. Do not tax his/her body more by trying to keep up with homework and lessons. It only exhausts the body and mind more. If the illness lasts for more than several days, please communicate with the office and teachers. Check in with us to see if there are things that could be done to keep from falling too far behind, or if some things can be shortened or eliminated.

If the absence is because of a family function (80<sup>th</sup> birthday for a grandparent, family reunion, family vacation, etc.) please notify the office and all teachers several weeks **prior** to the absence if possible. I am very supportive of family time. It is the strength from which an individual grows. Please keep in mind that the sooner we know of upcoming absences the easier it is on all of us. I often create alternatives or schedule work to be done ahead of time and create a plan for catching up upon one's return.

If a student is simply tired from a late night activity (attending a Dandy Warhol concert, midnight screening of the *Ender's Game* movie, or texting friends until dawn), please send them to school. Life is full of lessons and the natural consequences. It is okay to be a bit tired and worn-out in class.



In case of nothing to do, break glass and then sweep up broken glass.

In the case of an absence, do not panic. Do not break nearby glass in search of a "quick-and-easy" solution. Instead, try the following:

1. Consult the most recent **newsletter**. It may be in your email box, posted to the [Binder Block website](#), or printed (if you print it yourself).
2. Peruse the **planner**. We copy the next week's lessons into the planner at the end of every week. A copy of the planner is also on the [Newsletter](#) page of the website.
3. Check the Binder Core Google **calendar**.
4. Call a **classmate**. While this is similar to "Phone a Friend", it will not result in winning millions of dollars. It will, however, result in discovering information.
5. **Email** or **phone** [Binder](#) and any other teachers for help and guidance.
6. **Relax**. Students generally are allowed two days to make up work for each one missed school day. One should, however, check with each teacher to verify expectations.

Please communicate any issues prior to an absence or as soon thereafter as possible. I will do my best to respond in a prompt manner.



## READING SHORT STORIES

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.

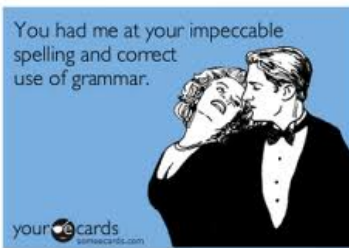
Ambrose Bierce's, "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge", is the short story of the week. Set during the American Civil War, "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge" is the story of Peyton Farquhar, a Confederate sympathizer



condemned to death by hanging from Owl Creek Bridge. At the beginning of the story, the protagonist stands bound at the bridge's edge. It is later revealed that after a disguised Union scout enlisted him to attempt to demolish the bridge, he was caught in the act.

In the first part of the story, a gentlemanly planter in his mid-30s is standing on a railroad bridge in Alabama. Six military men and a company of infantry men are present. The man is to be hanged. As he is waiting, he thinks of his wife and children. Then he is distracted by a tremendous noise. He cannot identify this noise, other than that it sounds like the clanging of a blacksmith's hammer on the anvil. He cannot tell if it was far away or nearby. He finds himself apprehensively awaiting each strike, which seem to grow further and further apart. It is revealed that this noise is the ticking of his watch. Then, an escape plan flashes through his mind: "throw off the noose and spring into the stream. By diving I could evade the bullets and, swimming vigorously, take to the woods and get away home." His thoughts stray back to his wife and children. The story then flashes back in time.

Next week I will be reading Anton Chekhov's short story, "The Bet".



## WRITING VOCABULARY #2

We begin work on vocabulary #2 this week. I will work with the Word Within the Word (W3) students who need a refresher or reteaching. The others will be working in small groups on decoding the words in the sentences portion of the assignment and on the analogies. The flashcards should be completed individually at home.

All vocabulary students should be reviewing their lists for five minutes a day. Repeated exposure to the stems will help in the long-term retention of the meaning and lead to greater success on the quizzes. Students who cram the night before or day of generally do not score as well, nor do they remember the meanings down the road.

The W<sup>3</sup> vocabulary assignments are due at the beginning of the class on Friday (9/26). On next Thursday (10/2), the W<sup>3</sup> and the regular vocabulary students will take a quiz.



## VEGGIE TALES PROJECT

Students need to have a decorated and named vegetable (or fruit) character with them at the beginning of class on Monday (9/22). There are a few students in room 32

who are allergic to raw potatoes, so **no potatoes** please.

The choice of the medium is crucial. Do not choose a delicate fruit or vegetable that will wilt and become rank. Choose, instead, a hearty medium that will withstand the days and weeks needed to complete the project and participate in the parade (to be held October 15).

The fruit or vegetable needs to be costumed. The adornment can come in a variety of fashions: recycled doll clothing, hand-crafted clothing, clothing and jewelry created by paint or markers, etc.

In addition to being costumed, the fruit or vegetable needs a name. It could be a clever play on an established character (Darth Tater) or a generic title (Dic-Tater). It could even be a creative patronymic (Billy Bob Joe).

Students will be introduced to the modes of writing: narrative, descriptive, expository, and persuasive. They will use a prewriting strategy (web diagram, fast write, outline, etc.) to help them craft a draft for each mode of writing. Students will workshop the idea and then move on to the next mode of writing.

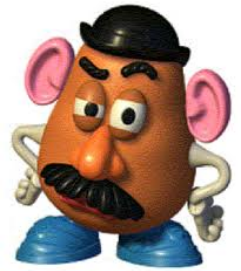
Eventually, students will submit a finalized—often referred to as a “published” copy—of one of the modes of writing at the beginning of class on Wednesday (10/15). The published copy needs to be double-spaced. It can be typed or written in blue or black ink and using one's best writing. The published copy should be free of grammatical mistakes, and presented in a logical order.

We will be going over story development, writing skills and techniques, and a plot line. The final version should be at least a page, but not more than three pages. It should be a thoughtful story written with their best effort.

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.

## HISTORY CURRENT EVENT #2

Students will be presenting current events all week (9/22-26). All missing or make-up presentations will take place next Monday (9/29). News items may come from any reliable





and non-comedic source

(sadly...the "Onion" and the

"Daily Show" are satirical and not valid sources of articles). I have a list of useful sources posted on my "[CURRENT EVENTS](#)" web page.

Students need to remember to prepare a current event the day before it is due. If a current event is not ready when it arrives in class then it will be presented the next day. Presentations are 30-45 second summaries of the news item.

An unfortunate new twist to the current events assignment is that newspapers will not be available in the Binder Block classroom this year.

"Oregonian Media Group will introduce new and improved digital products, including enhancements to Oregon's largest news website, OregonLive.com. The company will provide up-to-the-minute news and information, when and where readers want it -- on their desktops, laptops, smartphones and tablets. At the same time, it will continue to publish Oregon's oldest, largest and leading newspaper.

The Oregonian will continue to be published daily and sold at outlets in the Portland metropolitan area and elsewhere in the state and southwestern Washington. Home delivery will be Wednesday, Friday, and Sunday. Additionally, a bonus edition will be delivered Saturday.



(<http://www.oregonlive.com/news/index.ssf/2013/06/about-oregonian-media-group.html>)

Thus, students will be working mostly from **electronic sources** of news. There will be "current events" passes available for students in the day(s) prior to the due date of their current event assignment. I provide a daily visual and auditory reminder to students regarding upcoming current events. It is up to the students to request a pass to use one of the library computers to search for and print an article.

Sorry for any inconvenience and communicate any issues.

The individual current event quiz is next Friday (10/3). The quiz will contain ten to fifteen multiple-choice questions that involve the most significant/interesting news items presented in the last two weeks. Additionally, there will be a separate section of ten to fifteen questions on the short stories

we have read thus far. The current event questions are part of a history grade while the short story questions will be part of a reading grade. I try to knock out two birds with one stone with the current event quizzes—poor avian population.



## WORLD GEOGRAPHY (7<sup>TH</sup>)

This week students 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 Wednesday (9/24). Throughout the rest of the week, we will continue working on latitude and longitude.

## GEOGRAPHY OF THE AMERICAS (8<sup>TH</sup>)

This week students 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 Wednesday (9/24). Throughout the rest of the week, we will be working on latitude and longitude.



## BACK-TO-SCHOOL

If you missed the event, please contact me sooner than later to discuss any questions, concerns, or to calm frenetic nerves. Please do not wait until the end of the quarter to address grades...that is too late.

My schedule is fairly busy after school, but I am available prior to school any day. Monday is staff meeting, Tuesday through Thursday I coach a variety of soccer teams, but Friday afternoon is available in addition to mornings.

## CLASSROOM ITEMS NEEDED

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

