



## ABSENCES

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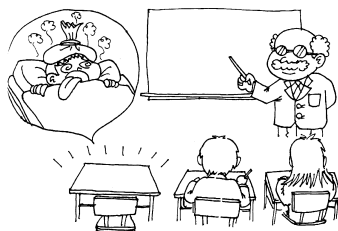
Absences create a few issues, but nothing that cannot be managed. There are a myriad of reasons to miss school, but all students are expected to be responsible for the information and assignments that they missed. An absence is not a free pass, but prolonged absences can (and often do) result in abbreviated 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



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

bit tired and worn-out in class.

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.

## SYNERGY UPDATES



From the district...

**ParentVUE & StudentVUE:** Parents and students who do not have access to Synergy should have already or will soon be receiving their login information. Parents who have an email address on file will be first asked to validate their emails and then will be sent their login information electronically. Remaining parents will be mailed home their login information. Please visit the [Spotlight Family](#) page for more information.



## READING SHORT STORIES

Students will be asked to answer a response concerning the next three readings ("An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge", "The Bet", and "The Witch") in both a written and artistic format for reading response #2.

The written prompt is: Which of the protagonists was

developed the best? What tools has the author used to develop the character? Cite and explain a specific example from the story.

The artistic prompt is to draw the scene being cited and provide a caption to explain the scene.

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.

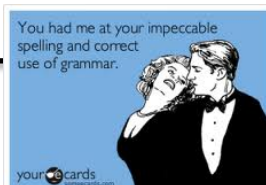
The first "reading response" is due at the beginning of class on Tuesday, September 23.

We resume our regularly scheduled short story program with Anton Chekhov's, "The Bet". "The Bet" is an 1889 short story by Anton Chekhov. It is about a banker and a young lawyer who make a bet with each other about whether the death penalty is better or worse than life in prison. The story, like many of our other stories, has a twist ending.

As the story opens, the banker is recalling the occasion of the bet fifteen years before. Guests at a party that he was hosting that day fell into a discussion of capital punishment; the banker argued that capital punishment is more humane than life imprisonment, while the young lawyer disagreed, insisting that he would choose life in prison rather than death. They agree to a bet of two million rubles that the lawyer cannot spend fifteen years in solitary confinement. The bet was on, and the lawyer cast himself into isolation for fifteen years.

The man spends his time in confinement reading books, writing, playing piano, studying, and educating himself. In the meantime, the banker's fortune declines and he realizes that if he loses, paying off the bet will leave him bankrupt. The day before the fifteen-year period concludes, the banker resolves to kill the lawyer so as to not owe him the money. How the story ends may surprise you.

Next week students will be reading Anton Chekhov's short story, "The Witch". It is about a witch.



## WRITING VOCABULARY #2

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 were due at the beginning of the class last Friday (9/26). This Thursday (10/2), students will take quiz #2.

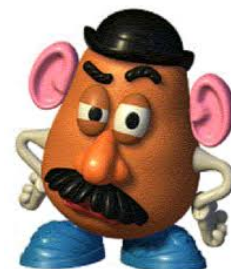
## VEGGIE TALES PROJECT

Students will be introduced to the modes of writing: descriptive, expository, narrative, 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 Tuesday, October 14. 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

[partial repeat]

Students will be presenting missing or make-up presentations 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 twist to the current events assignment is that newspapers will not be available in the Binder Block classroom this year.

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 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>)

Students will take a test Tuesday (9/30). The test will have a map assessment of the continents, oceans, questions from chapter 1, as well as an evaluation of latitude and longitude. We will review on Monday (9/29).

We will be venturing forth into our next unit of study, "Barbarians" beginning Wednesday (10/1).

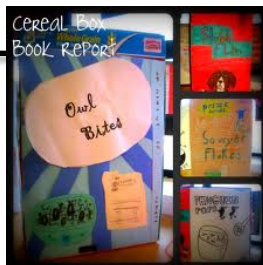
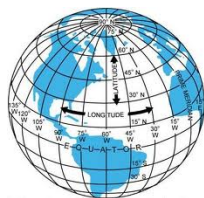
## GEOGRAPHY OF THE AMERICAS (8<sup>TH</sup>)

Students will take a test Tuesday (9/30). The test will have a map assessment of the physical and political features of North and South America, questions from chapter 1, as well as an evaluation of latitude and longitude. We will review on Monday (9/29).

We will be venturing forth into our next unit of study, "Explorers of the Americas" beginning Wednesday (10/1).

## CEREAL BOX

Looking ahead, the first reading project is a cereal box. Students will have to create a cereal box book report for a novel to represent 250 pages of reading. Students will create a cereal box book report. Decorate a real cereal box with illustrations and information related to the book you read



using the directions below. Use pieces of white or colored paper to cover the cereal box. (You will probably want to measure, cut, and create the different sides of the cereal box before gluing them on to your box.)

On the front of the box, students need to include the name of the cereal and a picture. Invent a name for the cereal that is related to the storyline of the novel and sounds like cereal. Do not use the exact book title.

Choose a shape for the cereal as well as colors and ingredients that all relate to the book. For example, for *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*, you might invent a cereal called Wizard Wands, a toasted oat cereal in the shape of miniature lighting bolts and brooms with marshmallow cauldrons and wands.



On the right side of the box, make a list of ingredients that includes the story elements of "Characters" and "Setting". Under the heading "Ingredients," list the main characters and write a sentence about each one. Then describe the setting under the same ingredients heading.

Create a "Nutritional Facts" chart that rates the book by giving the percentage of the RDA (Recommended Daily Allowance) in several categories (humor, drama, suspense, action, education, vocabulary, etc.) Make sure you include these and at least **one** category of your own.

On the left side of the box, write a "teaser" summary that describes the main problem and the solution of the book. Try to use words that will "grab" the readers' attention and make them want to buy your cereal. Unlike a real teaser, you will provide the climax to the novel.

For the back of the box, design a game that is based on the story. It can be a puzzle, a hidden picture illustration, or any other fun activity that might be found on the back of a cereal box. Make sure it includes information from the book.



On top of the box, include the title, author, number of pages, and number of stars you would give this book if you were a book critic. The maximum number of stars would be 5. Include at least three quotes from "famous" (made up) people who endorse the novel.

Finally, a good cereal often includes a prize. Your prize must be something that the main character could have used in the book or something that reminds you of the main character. You can either include a picture of the prize on the front of your box to let the reader know what is inside the box or an actual replica of the prize (that you create) that rests inside the box.

The cereal box book report is due at the beginning of class on Wednesday (10/15). Cereal boxes should be edited and revised. They should not be first drafts.