

English 9

About Your Teacher

Mr. Plansinis (Plan-SIN-iss), better known as “Mr. P” to most students, has been teaching high school English for 15 years. Originally from a small town north of Pittsburgh, Mr. P went to college at both Penn State Erie and West Virginia University before moving back to the Pittsburgh area.

Mr. P likes to walk around as he teaches, so don't be too freaked out by the giant lumbering through the room. He loves his morning coffee and writing weird example sentences. His pet peeves include students who line up at the door and unwanted style tips (his wife has already tried to improve his wardrobe for years).

Canvas

The Canvas page for this course is... not to sound too full of myself... awesome! I have playlists, calendars, and links for almost everything. If you're absent or just want to look ahead, you can see everything that we're doing.

Even though I use Canvas often, I'm not a 24-hour service center. I can't grade work or respond to messages immediately at all hours of the day. Be aware of the technology's benefits and its limitations.

Contact Me

jplansinis@efsd.net
412-896-2360 ext. 7804

What We Do

English in 9th grade, much like in middle school, is the study of literature, writing, vocabulary, and grammar with a focus on critical thinking and analysis. Here are some details on what we'll do to make this happen:

Folders – You will be given a folder for this class. When we begin a new unit (roughly each nine weeks), you will get a packet to put in this folder that will contain activities and assignments for the entire unit. The folder is then collected and graded 3-4 times throughout the nine weeks. Some of the assignments are checked for completion while others are checked more thoroughly. You can keep the folder with you or store it here in class, but keeping track of it is your responsibility.

Words of the Day (Bell Ringers) – Each day on the TV (or board), you will find two new vocabulary words. At the beginning of class, you will copy the words, their parts of speech, and their definitions into your folder, and then write a meaningful, original sentence for each one. The vocabulary will be graded with each folder check. On Fridays, there will not be any new words of the day; instead, you will have a quiz on that week's words. At the end of each nine weeks will be a larger review test on all the words from that grading period.

Reading – Reading assignments have been selected for your grade level, there are reading aides on Canvas, and some in class reading time is provided. Regular reading quizzes will be used to check that you have read assigned materials. Some of the things we read include:

- Selected narratives and persuasive essays
- Selected short stories
- *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee
- *Romeo and Juliet* by William Shakespeare
- One of the following 20th Century Dramas: *Our Town*, *Death of a Salesman*, *Twelve Angry Men*, *A Raisin in the Sun*, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, or *The Glass Menagerie*

Writing – You will be introduced to brainstorming activities, outlining practices, peer reviews, and revision strategies that will help you along the way. Very few people can write perfectly on the first attempt of any assignment; that's why we'll often use multiple drafts and revisions. Types of writing we'll do include a personal anecdote, journal collection, performance analysis, body biography, and persuasive and analytical essays.

Grammar – Grammar lessons will be included when relevant to the reading and writing that we're doing. We will look at existing examples and write using those grammar concepts as well. The grammar concepts will be tested as part of the unit they're included in.

Grading

Late Work - All assignments must be completed on time for full credit. Assignments can be accepted late for half credit. Large assignments (essays, projects, etc.) will be docked one letter grade for each day late until you reach 50%, after which it can be turned in for half credit.

Makeup Work – Making up missed work is your responsibility. If you're absent, you need to check Canvas or speak with me about making up the missed assignment. As a rule, you have the number of days you missed to make up the work. For instance, if you missed two days of school, you have two days to make up the work.

Zeros in the Gradebook – Anytime an assignment is not turned in on time, a zero will be put in the gradebook regardless of the reason. This is so that you are aware that the assignment is missing. If you were absent that day and the absence is excused, you will be given full credit for the assignment once you turn it in. If the assignment is simply late (not due to an excused absence), you will receive half credit for the assignment once you turn it in. If you never turn it in, the zero stays.

Passing the Course – You must earn at least a 60% average for the year to pass the class. Since English 9 is required for graduation, you will retake the class again next year if you fail.

Classroom Behavior

Phone and Earbud/Headphone Use – At the beginning of the period, your phone MUST be put in the phone holder and kept there until the end of the period. You may not use your phone or earbuds/headphones during ANY classroom activities.

Being On Time – Arrive for class on time. If you are late, get a pass from a teacher. If you don't have a pass, it counts as a tardy. After five tardies, you will receive a detention or office referral.

Personal Space – Do not touch another student's body, belongings, phone, desk, or invade his or her personal space.

Bathroom Procedures – If you must use the bathroom, use the Pass feature on your iPad to create a pass and have it approved by me. You may not use the bathroom as an excuse to be late to class. If you're going to be late, come to class and get a pass first.

Appropriate Language – Even if you swear, yell, and insult other people on your own time, don't do it here.

Food and Drink Policy – Food/drinks are permitted ONLY if they aren't distracting (too noisy, smelly, disruptive, messy, etc.). If it becomes a problem, it's banned for the whole class.

Cheating – Copying another student's work or taking it from the Internet counts as plagiarism, no matter how small the assignment is. You are not permitted to 'work together' on assignments unless I have given you specific permission to do so.

Consequences

This class utilizes the district's discipline guidelines as described in the student handbook.

1st Offense: Verbal Warning

2nd Offense: Teacher Assigned Detention and Phone Call Home

3rd Offense: Office Referral

Plagiarism Policy:

This class will utilize a program called Turnitin.com to check for plagiarism. All students are required to submit written work through that program (integrated with Canvas), which compares submitted work with all text on the internet as well as previous papers submitted to teachers who use Turnitin.com.

If you are caught plagiarizing on an assignment...

• **1st Offense:** Zero on the assignment; no option to make it up. Your parents will be notified.

• **2nd Offense:** Zero on the assignment; no option to make it up. Your parents will be notified. One day of in-school suspension.

• **3rd Offense:** Zero on the assignment; no option to make it up. Your parents will be notified. One day of out-of-school suspension.