

PINE VALLEY MIDDLE SCHOOL
COURSE DESCRIPTION
MS. SUSAN JOHNSTON
2009-2010

Welcome to the new school year. For your child, this last year at Pine Valley serves as a transition into high school. Much of the focus, this year, will be to ensure that standards are met and to realize the expectations for high school. Study skills will be emphasized in all aspects of the program and a commitment to achieve excellence will be expected.

Communication is a key component to success. Education is a partnership between home and school. I encourage you to use my email when questions arise. It is the most efficient way to contact me and allows me to respond in a timely manner. You are also welcome to request a conference.

Wishing you a successful year!
Ms Susan Johnston

COMMUNICATION:

- www.scholloop.com - email (student, parent, teacher, school); grades online, and assignments
- grades online – grades posted on schoolloop every 2 weeks; student's ID number needed to access
- email – schoolloop.com will access my address for communication
- voice mail – (925) 479-7744
- prep period – 3rd period daily

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

ENGLISH:

The English curriculum is a program that encompasses reading, writing, speaking, listening and critical thinking skills. The program is based on the California Standards for Language Arts. Because of the wide range of skills involved in the curriculum, many of these skills are also emphasized in the history curriculum.

Textbooks: *Prentice Hall Literature Anthology; McDougall/Little Grammar; Houghton-Mifflin Spelling; District Writing Project*

Additional materials that reinforce the standards will also be incorporated

CORE Literature: *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* by Mildred Taylor; *The Call of the Wild* by Jack London; *The Pigman* by Paul Zindel; *The Outsiders* by S.E. Hinton

Writing: Persuasive writing is the focus for 8th grade. However, all writing types will be assigned. Emphasis will also be placed on editing skills (i.e. writing conventions) and final publishing. Use of the computer for final drafts will be required.

Focus areas:

- Grammar punctuation, parts of speech, transitions, sentence variation, spelling rules, homophones, idioms, analogies, figures of speech
- Vocabulary development, paragraphing, thesis statement, counterargument, point of view, literary analysis, Cornell note-taking, public speaking
- Writing styles: personal narrative, non-fiction narrative, report of information, business and friendly letter, resume, critical, persuasive, speech, response to literature

HISTORY

The curriculum emphasizes significant events and critical turning points in American history. Connecting with our past enables us to understand the present and the future of our country. By understanding major events and people who formed our democracy, students will develop an awareness of becoming an active citizen and an appreciation for the rights we now enjoy. California Standards are used as a guide in studying this curriculum. The McDougall Littell text *Creating America* will be used as well as other supplementary materials. The California Language Arts Standards will also be incorporated into this curriculum.

Focus areas:

- Colonial Period; Revolutionary War; Declaration of Independence
- The Constitution; Bill of Rights; Beginnings of a Democracy
- Westward Movement; Louisiana Purchase; Manifest Destiny
- Civil War; Reconstruction
- Industrial Revolution
- Immigration in the 1900's
- World War I
- Connecting to the present

GRADING POLICY:

Grading is based on a point system. Classwork, homework, tests, and class participation will be added together to formulate a student's grade for both English and history.

Grading scale:

94% - 100% -A
90% - 93% - A-
87% - 89% -B+
84% - 86% - B
80% - 83% - B-
76% - 79% - C+
73% - 75% - C
70% - 72% - C-
66% - 69% - D+
63% - 65% - D
60% - 62% - D-
Below 60% - F

Grades will be posted online. If a copy of the grades is needed, please let me know and I will print a copy for home. Formal Progress Reports will be mailed after the fifth week of each quarter if a student is receiving a grade of C- or lower. The student will be considered in danger of failing. A conference is recommended so that the student has an opportunity to plan and to improve the grade.

BINDER REMINDER:

The Binder Reminder serves as a daily planner and another form of communication between school and home. Students are expected to write the homework, daily. A parent signature may be required if a student is in danger of failing.

DISCIPLINE POLICY:

All school and District rules apply to the classroom. (Refer to the Student Handbook)

Classroom Rules:

- Respect the right of others to learn in the classroom. Disruptive behavior that interferes with learning and teaching will not be tolerated.
- Respect the property of others and the materials that are provided in the classroom.
- Be prompt to class – in your seat when the bell rings.
- Tardies have consequences – 1st time-warning, 2nd time – litter pick-up, 3rd time 15 minute detention with teacher and parent notification, and finally 4th time and beyond-formal referral to office for 1-hour detention and parent notification.
- Be prepared for class with the proper materials.
- Complete all assignments on time.
- Food is not allowed in class. Gum is not allowed at school or in the classroom. A litter pick-up will be assigned.

ABSENCE POLICY:

Students are responsible for all work that is missed due to absence and it is the responsibility of the student to obtain these assignments. According to the SRVUSD homework policy, it is recommended that absent work be made up in a reasonable amount of time. However, it is highly recommended that a student complete the work in a weeks period following the absence due to the number of assignments given in CORE. **Tests must be made up, after school, within a week of the absence.**

LATE WORK: Late work will not be accepted unless a student has been absent.

ACADEMIC INTERVENTION:

As part of our intervention program for failing students in CORE, they may attend a Saturday School once per quarter. Students can make up a maximum of 3 assignments excluding major projects.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Ballpoint pens – blue or black and red
- 3-ring binder with subject dividers
- binder paper – preferably college-ruled
- highlighter
- colored pencils
- colored markers
- ruler
- History notebook – 100 page
- Glue stick
- Composition book

ALL ASSIGNMENTS MUST BE LEGIBLE AND WRITTEN IN BLUE OR BLACK BALLPOINT PEN, UNLESS DIRECTED TO BE COMPUTER GENERATED. ASSIGNMENTS WRITTEN IN PENCIL WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.

All assignments need the following:

Heading:

Right hand side of the paper:

FIRST AND LAST NAME

CORE AND PERIODS

DATE

TITLE OF ASSIGNMENT CENTERED

BEGIN WRITING ON THIRD LINE OF BINDER PAPER

GOOD LUCK!

PLEASE SIGN AND RETURN

Dear Ms. Johnston,

We have read and understood the expectations of your class.

I will do my best academically and socially.

STUDENT SIGNATURE

PLEASE PRINT NAME

I will monitor my child's progress to ensure success.

PARENT SIGNATURE

PLEASE PRINT NAME