

# The Fresh Frosh

Members of this learning community will have a safe environment in which to strengthen skills and explore ideas.



“Such as we are made of, such we be.” ~ William Shakespeare

We are each complicated, complex individuals, each with different backgrounds, histories, and present realities that inform who we are. Who are you...who am I...who are we? As we work together to create the *WE* (the dynamic, supportive learning community we will build together) – much attention will focus on the *I*. For how can we know who *WE* be without understanding what we are made of?

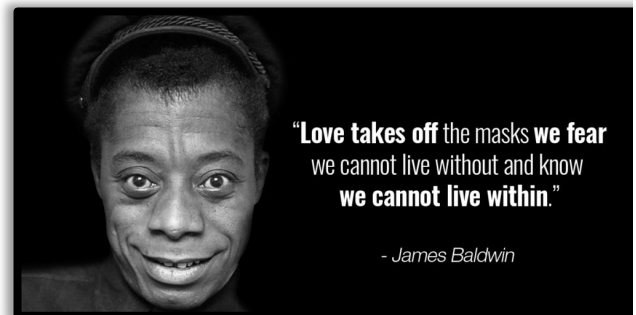
## Essential Questions & Guiding Themes

You open your eyes underwater...your limbs look fuzzy and unfocused; you lose your glasses...the world's a blur and you have difficulties finding your way; you embark on a six-month hike along the heavily wooded Appalachian Trail only to find that you've forgotten your map: navigation is virtually impossible.

As you probably know, in education, Essential Questions and Guiding Themes are the lenses that help us focus and examine ideas more clearly.

I see you as a **YOU**  
But to you, I am a **YOU**.  
He sees you as a **YOU**,  
But to you, you are an **I**.

One of my goals as your English teacher is to come to understand and respect you as an *I*, as *I* help you question and explore what your *I* represents to you.



### Our Themes

- IDENTITY
- SOCIAL LOCATION
- JUSTICE
- CONTROL
- SELF and OTHER

### The Nuts and Bolts Critical Thinking

READING WRITING  
EXPLORATION ANALYSIS & SYNTHESIS DISCUSSION

## Potential Units & Texts

### ~ Identity Matters ~

- Selected Short Stories
- *The Poet X*
- *The Kite Runner*

### ~ Snapshots of Adolescence ~

- *Feed*
- *The House on Mango Street*
- *Night*
- *Romeo & Juliet*

### ~ Language & Citizenship ~

- Grammar Unit
- *Lord of the Flies*

## Fresh Frosh Firsts

“What’s all the fuss about, anyway?” a new student exhibiting bravado begs of his teacher. “I’m starting high school, not my third year of medical school,” he continues. “What’s with all the hype?”

Ms. McCormick smiles, understanding the students’ concern. She knows that 9<sup>th</sup> graders are no longer the big-shots in the building. There are higher academic standards now. Increased independence. Greater accountability. “It’s the year you start to grow into your skin, to think about who you are and who you’d like to become,” she asserts. “What can be tough about it is that there are times when it may feel as though you’re walking a tightrope, swinging upside-down on a trapeze, and juggling bananas simultaneously.” Ms. Mc also urges her students to search for balance, reminding them that some stress is *good* because it can boost brainpower, help them complete tasks more efficiently, and even release endorphins that keep us feeling alive and excited!

While Ms. Mc knows that 9th grade is a jump from middle school she considers her students to be young adults and treats them as such.

## Our Learning Community

- Attending all classes
- Arriving to class **ON TIME** and **PREPARED** to participate in the activity *du jour*
- Completing and handing in all assignments on time
- Asking for clarification \*\*before a due date\*\* when uncertain about the specifics of an assignment
- Asking questions & seeking extra help!
- Making up all missed in-class activities and homework if absent. (It is the student's responsibility to consult classmates as well as email Ms. McCormick on the day of the absence to get classwork and homework!)
- Listening actively and responding thoughtfully and respectfully to **ALL** members of the learning community.

You might not like the way he wolfs down his pizza; you may not like the she plays ball; you’d rather come to school on a Saturday than have to converse with them one minute after the bell rings. Our likes and dislikes are our own prerogatives. “I respect that,” Ms. McCormick insists. Yet she urges each student to consider ways to contribute to a productive public space, to work effectively with all classmates, and to see others’ learning and growth as a shared responsibility. “We all need to come to trust each other. Maybe that’s one of the most difficult things I ask of my students.”



# The Fruits of Engagement

Students will be able to:

- Read texts actively and analyze them closely
- Incorporate description and detail into their writing, replacing abstract words with concrete language
- Write a well-organized, well-supported, coherent essay
- Work with classmates effectively and productively on projects and class assignments
- Participate in/lead group discussions
- Actively listen and respectfully respond to both peers and teacher during discussion
- Respond to each other's work and ideas in ways that both reinforce and challenge
- Gain confidence and competence in their verbal abilities which include: public speaking, understanding unknown words from context, integrating vocabulary words into their personal vocabulary
- Assume responsibility for their own learning process
- HAVE FUN in ENGLISH CLASS!

## Setting & Achieving Goals

When Ms. Mc talks about setting goals, she's not referring to those empty promises many of us make around the holidays each year. She means business: "Setting our own goals not only provides guidance and direction, it also allows us to monitor our individual progress and feel good about how far we've come and what we've accomplished. I often set goals to keep myself motivated. In fact, sometimes I learn my most valuable lessons when I realize that I *didn't* satisfactorily complete a task and I sit down to figure out why I wasn't able to do what I intended to do."

In her class, what students produce *is* important, but *how* they go about trying to reach their goals interests her just as



## Daily Essentials

- ☒ 3-Ring Binder (1.5inch min.) just for English
  - ☒ dividers labeled:  
Assignments / Handouts / Notes
  - ☒ lined paper (in the 'Notes' section)
- ☒ A plethora of writing utensils
- ☒ A charged computer!