

**Contact Information:**

Heather Bice

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Google voice (text only): 619-537-6399

Office Hours, Daily:

10:00-11:00 am

1:30-2:30 pm

By appointment (schedule with me), based on availability.

Course Content:

English 5/6 is a two semester sequence that is required for graduation from Grossmont Middle College High School. The focus is to develop our skills in writing as well as explore meaningful pieces of American literature. The key texts used for study are by American authors; however, some supplementary materials will be non-fiction, may be author's who do not identify as American, or come from a variety of heritages but live in America. This course aims to show you where we've come from as a country, but also to explore where we, as citizens, want to go.

The core practices are that we will read and write and discuss frequently, that we function as a literary community, respecting our differences, that we have a variety of standards for "good" products, that our work is rooted in experimentation and effort, and that we're all exploring what it is to be simultaneously a teacher and a student, developing our voices together. This classroom is not a competition to be the best, but instead a community of learners.

Student Requirements:

- A. You should keep a writer's notebook (journal). Student's daily writing and warm-up exercises are to be kept here; it is a free space to explore, create, and reflect on ideas. Think of it as a starting point; many of these journal topics are useful to students when developing thesis statements for other writings.
- B. We will use the discussion board feature of Schoology as an extension of class. Your first blog assignment is already posted online for you. Please go to Schoology, find the "assignments and activities" tab and respond to the blog and two of your peers by Friday **at 11:59 PM**. The blog is time-stamped and you will be locked out of responding if the due date has passed. No late blogs are accepted.
- C. Students are expected to participate in the classroom "Open Mic" seminar. Twice a semester, students will give a presentation, reading, or performance and receive peer feedback. More information on this assignment will be provided in class.
- D. Participation is a standards based grade that students will receive at the end of every unit of study. Longer units may have a midpoint grade, as well. Students are expected to be active members of class; this means speaking productively in class by sharing ideas, answering questions, and contributing to the class as we learn together. **A student should be participating in class an average of three times every week in order to receive full credit.**
- E. We use Turnitin.com for some assignments, which is a plagiarism identification website. This feature is integrated with Schoology and will work with your Schoology account. A test assignment is loaded for you

and ready for you to try. Please submit your assignment with the file formatted as directed.

- F. I encourage each student to bring a few packs of sticky notes for use in Writers' Response Groups and other activities throughout the year.
- G. Students are also required to keep a portfolio as part of their preparation for the GMCHS "Senior Exhibition." We will begin building this together in class and add to it throughout the year. **This requirement is worth 10% of your overall grade.**

Homework Expectations:

Most homework will consist of the structured requirements listed above. Additionally, reading, writing, and studying for tests will be given for homework, but not every night. Most of the work to be completed outside of class will be part of long term projects like major writing assignments and presentations. A schedule will be posted daily in the classroom and on Schoology to help you stay on top of your assignments.

Grading:

I use Standards-Based (Mastery) grading. In my class, Standards-Based grades will account for 70% of the student's grade with the other 20% accounted for using the traditional points-based gradebook. Each semester, your final exam and portfolio will account for 10% of your grade.

The grades are updated regularly as assignments are completed and can be viewed on the Gradebook through *Infinite Campus*.

Standards-Based Grading

Assignments aligned to the California Common Core Standards for English will be assigned scores based on proficiency rather than points in the standards-based gradebook. The scale is as follows:

Level	Proficiency	Score
4	Mastery	100
3.5	Approaching Mastery	85
3	Proficient	75
2.5	Approaching Proficient	70
2	Below Proficient	65
1	Not Proficient	55

Finally, some final policies.

A. Unexcused vs. Excused Absences: Assignments and Tests

- Attending class regularly is important but it is understood that occasionally students will need to miss class. In order to emphasize the importance of attending class, all **unexcused** absences will make assignments or tests due that day ineligible for credit and no assignments, tests, quizzes or projects will be accepted. Catastrophic events will be dealt with in an appropriate and sensitive manner (computer and/or printer problems are not catastrophic events!)



- Students' major projects and papers are expected to be turned in on time, on the designated due date and at the beginning of the class period, regardless of whether the student is present in class. **In the event that a student is absent on a due date, they must still submit it through Schoology.**
- Tests missed during an excused absence must be made up within 48 hours of returning to class. It is the student's responsibility to determine what he/she missed and approach the teacher to schedule the make-up test. On Schoology, students' grade reports will reflect missing work as an incomplete, which functions as a 55% until completed.
- If you have a planned absence (college visit, athletic event, etc.), it will always work in your favor to tell me in advance rather than after-the-fact, even if your absence will be unexcused.

B. Plagiarism

- Plagiarism statement: Plagiarism is the use of any idea or phrasing of an idea traceable to a single source without proper acknowledgment, and constitutes the most egregious transgression committed by a writer. **Plagiarism is also turning in someone else's work as one's own or supplying one's work to another student for his or her use.** Cheating is copying homework, web sites, class work, quiz, and test answers from other students with or without their permission. Students who work "together" should not have identical work. While the wealth of information available to us via the internet and multimedia sources makes copying or incorporation of another's writing very tempting and effortless, a plagiarized piece will result in a **final, failed grade for the assignment**, parental notification, and a referral to the Principal.

C. I believe...

- in a low-threat/high-challenge learning environment: a classroom in which students feel comfortable participating and sharing ideas, free from judgment, harassment, and hate-speech; in which expectations are high and students are challenged to do their very best.
- in inquiry-based learning: that questions have many answers; that the best learning occurs through exploration, discussion, and research.
- That mutual respect fosters learning: I strive to create a warm, friendly, and welcoming learning environment, where I treat my students as individuals, respecting their differences and individuality, and I expect students to acknowledge my humanity as well.
- in influence versus control: My aim is to affect your learning; your ideas, perceptions and beliefs; and your sense of yourself as a writer and reader through materials, discussions, and inquiry—but not to tell you how or what to think.