**Syllabus for Literature & Composition I**

**2025 - 2026 School Year**

Instructor: Katelyn C. Kersey

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Room Number: 2510

Tutoring Hours: Tuesdays from 7:30AM-8:00AM or Wednesdays from 3:00PM-3:30PM

Dear Freshman and Parents/Guardians,

Welcome to Veterans High School! I hope you enjoyed your summer. I am looking forward to our year together as Veterans Warhawks. Please read the following carefully as you will be responsible for all the material in the syllabus.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION, OBJECTIVES, & GOALS**

This course will provide literacy experiences designed to refine listening, speaking, reading, and writing through the study of different genres.

Course objectives correlate with the *Georgia Standards of Excellence,* which can be found at <https://case.georgiastandards.org/391c3abe-c1ec-4a4a-a942-c9e152b35102/>.

Upon completing the Literature & Composition I course, students should be able to:

* Read, write, speak, and listen for a variety of purposes;
* Apply effective strategies and techniques in their own writing;
* Demonstrate understanding of the conventions and mechanics of writing;
* Progress effectively through the writing process;
* Develop vocabulary for vernacular and content;
* Analyze images and text in various modes to promote the development of critical thinking skills;
* Develop literacy, fluency, and comprehension through in-class and out-of-class readings; and
* Evaluate and incorporate reference documents into researched papers.

**REQUIRED MATERIALS**

**Student Provided Materials:**

Students will need the following materials each day in class:

* pencil or pen
* composition notebook
* binder
* paper
* tab dividers.

**School Provided Materials**

Textbook: “As a student of this course, you will be required to complete assigned reading and tasks from HMH Into Literature: Grade 9. You must have uninterrupted access to the text’s material. We offer the assigned text in both digital and hardcopy formats. You may choose not to request a hardcopy and in doing so fully understand it is your responsibility to maintain digital access to the text’s material. If at any time you or your teacher feel you cannot guarantee this, a hardcopy will be issued to you. If the hardcopy text becomes damaged or lost, you will be responsible for the cost of replacement (as set by HCBOE).”

Chromebook: All students are issued a district-provided chrome book for instructional purposes, student engagement, and student learning. Chromebook use is at the direction and discretion of the classroom teacher.

Novels: Various class novels throughout the year.

**GRADES**

Grades will be computed as follows, per Veterans High School:

Major Assessments 45%

Minor Assessments 20%

Daily Work 15%

Final Exam 20%

Infinite Campus: Students and parents may check grades at any time on Infinite Campus. Please see the counseling office if you are having trouble with Infinite Campus. Since students have access to their grades, they should refrain from asking me for their grade during class. I will happily discuss the details of a student’s grade with them during my tutoring hours.

Late Work Policy: STUDENTS are responsible for making up missed work after an absence. All handouts are kept in an “Absent Work” file for students to get upon their return to school. All online assignments can be viewed and completed via Canvas. Late daily work will be accepted until the end of the unit in which the work is assigned, but after that, the assignment cannot be turned in for credit. **If the assignment is more than 5 school days late, the highest grade the student can make is a 50%.**

Test Retakes: Students may retake **two** exams per semester (after one-hour of tutoring). Test retakes must be completed within **one week** of the return of the original exam. Students are not permitted to take home or photocopy any test materials, as doing so invalidates the test for all students. Test retakes do not apply to quizzes.

IXL: Students will be required to utilize IXL as a means of improving specific content skills. This will be a monthly minor assessment grade which will be due on the last school day of each month. To earn full credit, students must reach a SmartScore of 80% on the four assigned skills that month. There will not be an opportunity to earn a late grade on this assignment due to the abundance of time afforded to complete it. The day after IXL skills are due, students will be assessed on the content of those skills via an IXL Quiz. These quizzes cannot be re-taken or replaced.

Independent Sustained Reading (ISR): Reading is an important part of our course’s curriculum and is vital in growing our students in other disciplines as well. Research shows that avid readers are far more likely to succeed both academically and professionally. In order to grow our students as successful readers, we will provide protected reading time within the classroom and support student choice in reading. We encourage parents to be involved in this reading process and engage your children in conversation regarding their reading selections. A variety of grades will be earned for this work. At a minimum, students are expected to read their assigned novel in class and complete a journal entry each week.

* Final Exam / Exemptions: This course includes a cumulative exam at the end of the semester. The final exam can be exempted as per the guidance delivered in the student handbook.

**TARDIES AND ABSENCES**

See the Student Handbook for the school’s tardy policy.

When students are absent from this class, they must make sure their absence is excused through the office before I will allow them to make up the work. Please see the Student Handbook for the attendance policy.

**CLASSROOM EXPECTATIONS**

1. Come to class prepared to learn: Bring all materials and a good attitude when you enter the classroom. We will learn every day, no exceptions!
2. Respect yourself, the teacher, and others: Do not speak without raising your hand or get out of your desk when I am teaching. If something does not belong to you, do not touch it. Always keep your hands and feet to yourself.
3. Respect all ideas shared in class: Be mindful of your words. Speak with kindness at all times. Much of our class will be discussion based, and sometimes, you will disagree with something someone else says—that is OKAY! We can disagree, but under no circumstances will the use of derogatory, demeaning, or hateful speech be tolerated.
4. Always do your best: Give 100% all the time. You will never know what you are capable of if you do not try.
5. Preserve a positive learning environment: Follow **ALL** the expectations listed above and this will happen naturally.

**CLASSROOM RULES**

1. All electronic devices must be put away unless told otherwise. You should not be on your Chromebook if we are not using them for a lesson/activity. Phones and earbuds will be confiscated and given to the admin if out during class–NO EXCEPTIONS. Additionally, use of Smartwatches during class is prohibited. If caught using a Smartwatch, you will be asked to turn it in to an administrator.
2. Be seated at your desk and ready to learn BEFORE the bell rings. You should be actively working on the bell ringer before I enter the room.
3. Do not cheat, plagiarize, or copy work—someone else’s or your own.
4. Use polite and appropriate language when speaking to me and your classmates.
5. Turn in your best work on time.
6. Students will be afforded three bathroom breaks to use during class per semester. Use of these breaks will be documented and timed to not exceed 5 minutes. To use a bathroom pass, the student must leave their cell phone on my desk. If a student is tardy to class because they were using the restroom, that will count as one of their three bathroom passes! Once a student has used their three bathroom passes, they will not be permitted to leave the classroom to use the restroom for the remainder of the semester. I strongly encourage students to utilize time before and after class to use the restroom.

**CONSEQUENCES**

Failure to obey the rules listed above as well as those outlined in the VHS Student Handbook will result in the following consequences:

1. Verbal warning and redirection
2. Parent / Coach contact
3. Before School Detention (from 7:30am-7:55am)
4. Referral to office

\*\*The severity of the infraction may result in an immediate referral to the office.

**CANVAS**

To encourage a blended learning environment, online assignments will be posted via Canvas. Students should be familiar with navigating the online platform, communicating with their teacher via the platform, and submitting assignments online.

Please note, not all assignments in Canvas will be graded via Canvas. A student’s grade is accurately reflected on Infinite Campus **only**!

**PARENT & TEACHER COMMUNICATION**

The Houston County School District has launched a mobile app for teacher communication. Through the app, I will post weekly announcements containing timely information about the week ahead. Many questions will be answered in this announcement, but if not, the app can also be used to directly message me. Students and parents are welcome to reach out to me with any questions or concerns pertaining to behavior, grades, or assignments on Monday-Friday from 7:00AM-5:00PM. Email correspondence can also be used. If you choose to email me about your student, please include their first and last name in the subject line.

Phone conferences can be scheduled as needed, but due to the nature of my position I have limited opportunity to have a phone conversation during school hours. If you need to schedule a phone conference I encourage you to set it up through the app or through email so that we can both make sure we are available for the conversation.

Parent teacher conferences must be scheduled through the school’s counseling office.

Parents and guardians: I encourage you to send me a simple email to ensure your email does not get caught in our spam filter. Feel free to provide me with any information you feel pertinent to the education of your child.

**CLASS WISHLIST**

I am always in need of extra supplies to ensure learning never has to stop when materials run out. I use what funds I have to stock up on materials we use every day, but of course, that runs out quickly. If any parent/guardian is interested in donating materials to our classroom, please know how appreciative I am. I have included a “wish list” below of supplies we use frequently and often run out of.

* Highlighters (various colors for annotating)
* Notebook and/or copy paper
* Tissue paper
* Pencils
* Hand sanitizer

I am looking forward to a fun, exciting year with this group of students. Together, we will learn so much! If you have any questions now, or throughout the school year, please do not hesitate to email me.

Katelyn C. Kersey

English Teacher

Veterans High School

**Syllabus for Literature & Composition I**

**Student Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**  **Class Period: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Syllabus Contract**

***I have read and understand all the policies and requirements listed on the student’s syllabus.***

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Student Signature

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Parent/Guardian Signature

**Parent/Guardian Information**:

Parent/Guardian Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Best Contact Number: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Best time to reach you at this number: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Email Communication**

Parent Email: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Student Email: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Class Library and Book Club Contract**

Independent reading is a central focus in my classroom, as I believe it is critical to student development for them to spend time reading on their own. Reading is a skill. The only way to that skill is to *read*—this holds true for excellent readers as well as reluctant readers. My goal is for your student to fall in love with reading. I will do my best to motivate your student to read academically as well as for fun. Some of the reading will be assigned, but your student will have opportunities to select his or her own books to be read in book clubs and independently both inside and outside of the classroom.

To help your student fall in love with reading, I have worked hard to develop my own classroom library. This library is available to any student who wants to choose a book to read recreationally. Furthermore, students have access to the media center which hosts a plethora of titles for use in book clubs. Research shows that availability of books is a major factor in motivating teens to read. Students who are surrounded by books at school and at home read more. Students who read more, read better. I have found that having my own classroom library has dramatically increased the amount of reading my students do.

I want you to know I am sensitive to having appropriate reading material in my classroom library and in the media center. That said, what is considered “appropriate” may vary from one parent to another. Some parents do not mind their child reading Stephen King; other parents object to the horror genre. Please be aware that the selections in my classroom library and in the media center, just like any other public library or school library, range from elementary-level to university-level reading material. As a parent, I ask you to remain aware throughout the year of the books your student has chosen to read and assist in gauging appropriateness.

Rest assured the books in my classroom library and media center are never assigned. They are checked out on a voluntary basis only. Some students use my library often; others find books elsewhere. Any student who checks books out of my library is asked to have a parent or guardian sign below indicating that this classroom library section has been read and is understood. By giving permission to use my classroom library and the media center, also know that you are agreeing to pay for any lost or damaged novel. The replacement fee is $5 per title.

Let’s get reading!

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes, I have read this section, and my child has permission to use the classroom library and/or VHS literacy center library.

\_\_\_\_\_ No, I would prefer that my child not have access to the classroom library and/or VHS literacy center library.

Parent/Guardian Signature:

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