

Pre-IB English 2



Course Description

Welcome to Pre-IB English 2 with Mr. Benton! This course challenges students to develop analytical reading and writing skills through the study of literary texts. We will examine prose and poetry from different cultures and a variety of historical eras. We'll use these texts as the basis for thoughtful class discussions and written pieces. Ultimately, this course will provide foundational skills for successful completion of the IB English component of the Diploma Programme. Engaged students will emerge from this course prepared to succeed in the sophomore AP English Language and Composition course.

Through the application, analysis, evaluation, and creation of complex ideas that are often abstract and multi-faceted, IB students are challenged to think and collaborate critically on the content they are learning. In this course, students will learn how:

- to closely read and annotate texts, taking time to make thorough observations;
- to generate original interpretations about literature;
- to express these ideas clearly and convincingly in written and oral presentations;
- to consider how the many choices authors make shape the meaning of a text;
- to develop claims (as a discrete element of a larger thesis statement);
- to outline arguments/analyses complete with supporting ideas, evidence, and commentary;
- to make use of smoothly integrated/woven and properly cited quotations as evidence;
- to individually practice new words and develop one's working vocabulary;
- to use a variety of sentence types (with proper use of conjunctions and punctuation),
- to make progress in following the proper conventions of Standard Written English; and
- to develop the attributes of an IB learner.

Classroom Policies

Expectations

Please bring completed assignments and all of the necessary materials to every class meeting. You'll also want to be mentally prepared; this means you're demonstrating knowledge of the text, contributing to class activities, actively listening to others, and taking intellectual risks on the daily.

Approach

Teaching in this course is driven by critical concepts and fueled by inquiry. The study of literature is rooted in both local and global contexts, and classroom activities are focused on effective teamwork and collaboration. Instruction is informed by diagnostic, formative, and summative assessment while also allowing for adaptations to meet the needs of all learners. See also "Grades & Measurement".

Absences

In the case of a student's absence, it is your (the student's) responsibility to obtain any and all materials and information delivered in class during the period of the absence; all class materials will be available on the course's class website (bentonenglish.com) and Canvas/ManageBac. Due to the nature of the block schedule, please do not wait until the next day class meets to make contact. In the case of a missed assessment, I generally expect you to make up the assignment the day you return. You must take the initiative to arrange a make-up quiz or assignment. If the work is not made up when scheduled or is not rescheduled after 36 hours, a zero will be given for the missed assignment.

Late Work

Assignments that are turned in one school day late will receive a 50%-off penalty; work that is turned in over one school day late will not receive a grade. The exceptions to this rule are some long-term assignments for which 10–40% (with the percentage steadily increasing throughout the year) will be deducted for each late day. In the case of extenuating circumstances (e.g. illness, personal problems), please contact me so I can determine the best course of action: keep me in the loop by proactively communicating so that I can be flexible to your needs. I'm a creature of mercy and am ready to extend grace at a moment's notice.

Academic Honesty

Students are expected to complete all assignments without the assistance of others unless I explicitly provide written permission for collaboration on a specific assignment. Your writing about texts should involve your own independent insight and thoughts. Sharing work with another student; discussing assessment questions; using another person's work for reference; including un-cited evidence; making use un-cited of analyses, claims, evidence, or commentary from generative AI; or using any other human's or AI's words or ideas without accurately citing the source will result in a grade of 0% on the assignment and a referral to administration for cheating. Students should report to tutoring instead of resorting to academic dishonesty. Per the International Baccalaureate English Department policy, each teacher reserves the right to challenge the authenticity of any student-generated writing. Inconsistencies in style, voice, and structure will require investigation to determine whether or not plagiarism occurred.

Submitting Assignments

All handwritten work must be *legibly written in blue or black ink* (not in pencil). Please use only the front side of the page. Instructions will be given in class how to scan handwritten work into a PDF for submission when necessary. Typed work should be in full MLA format unless otherwise directed, and an MLA template will be provided for students to use. More instruction will be given in class soon about different ways to submit assignments..

Necessary Supplies

- plenty of college-ruled notebook paper
- several blue or black pens (not pencils)
- a green, red, and purple pen
- the currently assigned reading
- 8 colors of highlighters or colored pencils
- a college-ruled composition book
- a way to reliably store handouts, notes, etc.
- an academic planner
- PCS-issued laptop computer

Texts

- *Persepolis* by Marjane Satrapi
- *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley (the 1831 edition, not the 1818 edition)
- *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe
- *Macbeth* by William Shakespeare (Cambridge, Folger, Oxford, Pelican, RSC, or Arden)
- selected short stories, poems, excerpts, essays, etc. (PDFs provided/linked)

Note: I recommend you purchase these texts—if possible—to allow for effective annotation; otherwise, significant Post-it notes can be used in a lender copy.

Annotation & Discussion

I expect my students are expected to read actively and — after some practice — to annotate in useful ways: noticing patterns, asking questions, tracking important details, identifying unfamiliar words, and collecting evidence for discussion and writing. Annotation is not decoration; the goal is to leave a trail of your thinking. Likewise, class discussions should be honest, respectful, and grounded in the text. Students may disagree, but academic conversations require listening, evidence, and maturity. Because many of our texts involve culture, identity, belief, power, conflict, and human failure, I lead my student to challenge ideas respectfully.

Good Communication

You can visit the course's website (BentonEnglish.com) anytime for digital versions of the weekly class agenda (also posted in class), handouts, assigned reading, and other useful info and links. Instead of Focus's messaging feature, I use Remind, which offers convenient and quick two-way communication for most questions. If you need to email me (at bentonro@pcsb.org), please provide your name and period/block in the message so it's easier for me to quickly identify you and better address your specific needs.

Grades & Measurement

I've designed this course to reward effortful planning, reasonable punctuality, and personal academic growth. For the most part, English is a skill-based course, so some assignments are scored not on mastery of content knowledge but on mastery of specific skills with the English language.

Notably, this course does not use a weighted gradebook, so all graded elements combine in the same "total points" pool. This allows me flexibility to provide multiple opportunities each quarter for students to demonstrate mastery of assessed skills. While the exact number and distribution of various tasks will vary from one grading period to the next, most graded work falls into the following four categories:

- **Classwork** includes in-class tasks such as daily bellwork, lecture notes, practice activities, active participation in discussion, and individual or group presentations. These elements will often be listed with a green arrow on the class schedule but may also come up spontaneously as needed. Collected classwork will be due every two weeks (and will be listed on the schedule board as such). Collaboration is encouraged and allowed for all classwork unless I specify otherwise.
- **Homework** encompasses any work that's meant to be completed (mostly) at home. Most homework should be approached over multiple days, not all at once; leaving it to the last minute puts students in a tough spot. Unlike classwork, collaboration is sometimes not permitted with homework; these tasks are designed to be completed independently ... with support: always take time during class and CTSS/DS to seek my help as needed.
- **Quizzes** are any in-class assessment, usually consisting of short response and/or multiple choice questions, that's designed to gauge your familiarity with a specific section of assigned reading or a particular body of content knowledge.
- **Tests** are an assessment of skill (not merely content knowledge) aligned to a particular standard or multiple standards; one example of a test in this class would be an in-class timed writing/essay (assessed with a rubric or a portion of a rubric).

Tips for a Great Year ...

- Do not allow a single assignment to pass you by. *Everything* counts !
 - Find a way to *get involved*. It will make a big difference in the college you get into and the scholarships you could earn. It will also make a positive difference in how much you enjoy school. Colleges are moving away from students who are involved in a million things to students who started during their freshmen year in a club, organization, or sport and continued all the way through. Don't put this off.
 - When it comes time to apply for college, *ninth grade counts* on your transcripts. If you don't like a subject or a teacher, it's no reason to ruin your own future. Seniors say over and over again that their future changed because of what they chose *not* to do during their freshmen year.
 - Get to know your *guidance counselor*, and make sure she knows who you are! This person will be filling out recommendation forms for you when college applications roll around.
 - Middle school is very much *over*. Now you have more freedom and more choices. No one holds your hand anymore. Blowing off assignments could cause you to fail. Colleges are *very* interested in your overall GPA, so every class is important. Enjoy your new freedom, but realize that you also have new responsibilities.
 - Communicate with your teachers. Email, Remind message, stop by: many of your teachers are very eager to respond to questions and will be significantly more merciful when approached one-on-one.
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Curricular Materials

This is an IB course with internationally defined standards and is designed to prepare students for the assessments they will take at the end of the Diploma Programme, earning them both college credit as well as meeting high school graduation requirements. As such, materials and discussions for this course may reflect topics not typically included in PCSB courses. While many of the assigned readings will come directly from the state-issued "BEST" lists and county-adopted resources, I will occasionally supplement those materials with a book from outside those categories; when that is the case, I will follow the district's Controversial Materials policy ([pcsb.org/Page/1530](https://www.pcsb.org/Page/1530)), communicating in triplicate a few weeks in advance about the supplementary text via a Remind message to my students, with a link on BentonEnglish.com and Canvas/ManageBac, and by a short letter home informing parents of any potentially controversial content with the option to opt out for an alternative text.

Student Name: _____

Class Name: _____ Class Period/Block: _____

After fully reading the syllabus, please sign, complete, detach, and return only this page by the due date or – if you’re entering the course later in the year – three school days after receiving this syllabus packet. Please keep the rest of the syllabus in your English folder until the end of the school year.

Syllabus Agreement

By signing below, I agree that I have read, understand, fully submit to, personally agree with, and shall willfully comply with all of the policies, rules, requirements, expectations, and consequences covered throughout this syllabus for Mr. Benton’s Pre-IB English 2 course:

Student’s Signature: _____

Parent’s Signature: _____

Teacher’s Signature: _____

Parent/Guardian Info (please fill in all that apply)

name: _____

relationship to student: _____

phone: (____) - ____ - ____

email: _____

|||||

name: _____

relationship to student: _____

phone: (____) - ____ - ____

email: _____

(If more space is needed for more family contacts, please attach additional sheets.)

Student Info

your phone: () - -

your email: _____

What school did you attend last year?

What was the name of your English/Language Arts teacher in 8th grade?

Do you have reliable access to the internet at home?

Are there any clubs or teams that you are currently part of or considering joining at SPSHS?

Why are you in the IB Program?

What do you hope to get out of this class (aside from a grade)?

What is your biggest motivation to do well in high school?

Which of the bullet-pointed Course Description skills would you identify as your strongest?