Dear Parents/Guardian

Welcome to the first term for 2015. It will be incredibly busy! I am writing to inform you of your child’s workload for this term in English. It’s really important that all students start with a focus on achieving their best results in both semesters, as the grades given will be pivotal to a placing for next year—in particular, Manea, who can now be quite selective about who they will take as incoming students. Bunbury, Manea, Harvey Ag and others will want to see NAPLAN results and reports to make this decision when they interview students for a placement. Below is the ACARA Australian Curriculum overview for Yr 10. All students will have information descriptors handed out with rubrics for different assessment tasks. Students will be placed on an English tracker to show their progress.

Year 10 Level Description

The English curriculum is built around the three interrelated strands of Language, Literature and Literacy. Teaching and learning programs should balance and integrate all three strands. Together the strands focus on developing students’ knowledge, understanding and skills in listening, reading, viewing, speaking, writing and creating. Learning in English builds on concepts, skills and processes...

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In Years 9 and 10, students interact with peers, teachers, individuals, groups and community members in a range of face-to-face and online/virtual environments. They experience learning in familiar and unfamiliar contexts, including local community, vocational and global contexts.

Students engage with a variety of texts for enjoyment. They interpret, create, evaluate, discuss and perform a wide range of literary texts in which the primary purpose is aesthetic, as well as texts designed to inform and persuade. These include various types of media texts, including newspapers, film and digital texts, fiction, non-fiction, poetry, dramatic performances and multimodal texts, with themes and issues involving levels of abstraction, higher order reasoning and inter-textual references. Students develop critical understanding of the contemporary media, and the differences between media texts.

The range of literary texts for Foundation to Year 10 comprises Australian literature, including the oral narrative traditions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, as well as the contemporary literature of these two cultural groups, and classic and contemporary world literature, including texts from and about Asia.

Literary texts that support and extend students in Years 9 and 10 as independent readers are drawn from a range of genres and involve complex, challenging and unpredictable plot sequences and hybrid structures that may serve multiple purposes. These texts explore themes of human experience and cultural significance, interpersonal relationships, and ethical and global dilemmas within real-world and fictional settings and represent a variety of perspectives. Informative texts represent a synthesis of technical and abstract information (from credible/verifiable sources) about a
wide range of specialised topics. Text structures are more complex including chapters, headings and subheadings, tables of contents, indexes and glossaries. Language features include successive complex sentences with embedded clauses, a high proportion of unfamiliar and technical vocabulary, figurative and rhetorical language, and dense information supported by various types of graphics and images.

Students create a range of imaginative, informative and persuasive types of texts including narratives, procedures, performances, reports, discussions, literary analyses, transformations of texts and reviews.

As you can see, the tasks set are more complex than lower secondary and require deeper thought, discussion in class and more research, which of course increases the workload. To this end, each student must focus fully within class time and be prepared to do extra work at home, including home reading, homework and assignment tasks. All students are expected to have a diary to bring to each class and it is their responsibility to list all homework tasks and assignment due dates. I will also use the diary as a means of communication with you, and you may also wish to use this as a form of communication.

The main theme for this semester is Australia: its people, values, culture and historical and current issues. Students will select from “Deadly Unna?” or “Jasper Jones”, both of which are award winning novels. Although some time will be given for class reading, students will be expected to complete home reading to finish the novel by week 8 of this term. We will be discussing chapters each week and students will be completing written and oral responses within class time which will go towards their Reading grade. Writing will focus on the reading and viewing of a variety of texts about the theme, including poetry, song lyrics, cartoons, editorials, newspaper and feature articles. I will expect students to be watching a news broadcast each night and would like them to watch selected ABC “Australian Story” and “4 Corners” programmes, as these will often enable them to write better responses.

Viewing texts will be analysed regularly and will include some documentaries, and the mockumentary, “We Can Be Heroes” as a parody of the ‘Australian of the Year’ process and Australian culture. Could you please sign the permission slip below for your child to watch this in class, as it is a “M” rating. If you do not want your child to view this, please state this, and I will organise an alternative task.

Students have been given the first assignment, a Famous Australian Biography, which includes a Writing, Viewing and Speaking and Listening grade. All students will need to complete research at home, but anyone without a computer can utilise library books and is welcome to come into my room in the morning after 8am to access computers or the library after school. Some students will need to sit the OLNA tests soon if they did not achieve a Level 8 in NAPLAN.

Please can you discuss the importance of this year in establishing short-term and long-term goals, striving to work towards them at school, and maintaining an organised homework/study programme at home. You can contact me by phone, but emailing is easier and often quicker. Don’t hesitate to let me know of any concerns about your child, or if you wish to seek clarification about anything related to the English programme.

Kind regards,

Anthea Horton
English teacher
Friday, 6 February 2015
I DO / DO NOT give permission for my son/daughter, ______________________ to view (Student Name)
documentaries and the mockumentary “We Can Be Heroes” in term 1 English.

Signed: __________________________
(Parent Signature)