

Dominion High School

English 9

Teacher: Ms. Secrest

Room: 102

Email Address: amy.secrest@lcps.org

Dominion High School's Front Office: (571) 434-4400

I would love to meet with you outside of class to discuss any questions you might have or to review any assignment. Our first option is always to meet during **Titan Time (Block 7)**. If Titan Time does not work, please email me or stop by after class, and we will arrange a time to meet either before or after school.

A Little about Ms. Secrest

I am thrilled to welcome you to Dominion High School and to our English department! My name is Ms. Secrest. I grew up in Northern Virginia and earned a Bachelor of Arts in English and History from the University of Virginia. I earned my Master's in Secondary Education at George Mason University. When I'm not reading everything I can get my hands on, I love to hike, attend live theater in DC, write, and cheer on the Capitals.

My Commitment to You

You will have many teachers over your high school career and study a wide range of subjects. My job as your freshman English teacher is to help you become the best writer, communicator, reader, and thinker you can be. In my class, you will polish the skills you already have and develop new ones too. I will give you timely and detailed feedback and also teach you how to revise your own work.

You will be reading and writing *daily*. You will have the opportunity to read books of your choosing and to discuss texts that all your classmates are reading too. You will write on topics that are close to your heart and topics that we will wrestle with together. You will even stand up and present to your classmates – but don't worry, we'll have plenty of practice along the way.

The English 9 Curriculum

At Dominion, we focus on “strands” (or skills) in our English classes. These include: writing, literature, oral language, research, and vocabulary. In the chart below, you can find the skills we practice freshman year.

STRAND	MAIN EMPHASES
Writing	Focus on single and multi-paragraph writings of various types including narrative, literary, expository, and technical writings; focus on supporting details, purpose, specific vocabulary, and sentence structure; review of grammar, usage, and mechanics; editing for correct mechanics and usage
Literature	Reading in a variety of genres and print materials; analysis of literary selections; application of literary terms
Oral Language	Dramatic readings; critique of oral presentations; formal and informal oral presentations with focus on speech design, vocabulary, audience, purpose, and communication skills
Grammar	Ensuring that students have a solid foundation in grammar, particularly in rules relating to sentence construction and punctuation, so that they can improve and refine their writing
Vocabulary	Development of vocabulary through reading and writing activities

Texts

To practice these skills, we will read a variety of texts throughout the year. These texts include: Harper Lee’s *To Kill a Mockingbird*, William Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet*, and Homer’s *The Odyssey*, as well as many other short stories and nonfiction pieces. (This list is subject to some variation.)

We will occasionally use a literature anthology in class. Dominion provides these textbooks, and I will keep them in my classroom for you. You will check out the textbooks when you need to take them home with you.

Class Gradebook

Our online grading system is called **Phoenix**. Follow the “ParentVUE” / “StudentVUE” links on the Dominion website to log into Phoenix. Both you and your family will have access to our gradebook shortly after the school year begins.

I will not only use Phoenix to enter your grades, but also to post helpful materials and send class emails, as needed. Please make sure **both you and your parents** have working email addresses entered on Phoenix. If you do not have an email address, emailed messages will also show up on StudentVUE when you log in, but email is usually the quickest and most efficient means of communication.

Before I post your grade, I may post a “code” to indicate whether you have submitted that assignment. Please find below a key to the various letter codes you might see on Phoenix:

T = You have turned in this assignment, but I have not graded it yet.

L = Submitted late

S = Absent on due date (submit as soon as possible so that I can turn this into a **T**)

Z = You have not yet turned in this assignment and should do so as soon as possible. A **Z** counts as a *zero* unless I replace that **Z** with a grade.

X = You do not have to complete this assignment (typically used only in special cases of prolonged absences).

It is critical that you turn in your assignments on time. Failing to do so will have a significant impact on your final grade for each assignment and for the quarter.

Absences and Missed Work

You, the student, are responsible for any classwork, homework, or major assignments that were due while you were absent. Do **not** wait until the next English class to ask, “Did I miss anything last time?” Contact me as soon as possible to ensure that you do not fall behind your classmates.

Conclusion

The skills you learn in your English classes at Dominion will serve you for the rest of your life. Moreover, we believe the experiences you will have writing, reading, and engaging with your classmates in dynamic discussions will enrich your lives both inside and outside the classroom.

I am committed to helping you each step of the way. Please don’t hesitate to come to me with any questions or if you would ever like guidance on a particular project. I look forward to an exciting year with each of you!