



Saint Bonaventure High School

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Dear prospective English 12AP students,

I would like to welcome you to English 12AP! This past year of English has helped you hone your skills in language and composition as well as continuing your work in the many genres of literature. This will be the foundation needed to further understand the complexity and creativity of the English language. According to the Global Language Monitor, the English language is approaching one million words in its lexicon. The complete works of William Shakespeare contain approximately 24,000 of these words, about 1,700 minted by Shakespeare. By comparison, the French language only contains about 100,000 words (Payack, Paul J.J. *A Million Words and Counting*). We will only be scratching the surface of this complexity.

This ensuing year will continue your work of college-level English. All of those skills you have acquired in the past three years of English will be brought to bear in English 12AP, as well as skills you have learned in other classes. This is a college-level course, not a high school course. Be prepared for the increased workload and expectations. Be prepared to face new, and sometimes daunting, challenges. The *primary* purposes of this class are to master your current abilities with the written and spoken word and to learn new skills for literary analysis and interpretation at the college level. The *secondary* purpose is to prepare for the Advanced Placement English Literature and Composition Exam in May 2010. You should reconsider taking English 12AP if your plan is merely to earn an arbitrary letter grade, an extra point in your GPA or a test score to help you get college credit.

To be successful in English 12AP, you must be motivated, hard-working and disciplined. By the fact that you have been approved to move up to English 12AP, you have already exhibited these qualities. There will be times when the demands of this class will far exceed what you have encountered in the past. You may become discouraged or disappointed. That is when prayer and perseverance come into play. In the great words of Alexander Pope, "Hope springs eternal in the human breast; Man never is, but always to be blest."

In preparation for the challenging year ahead, during the summer you are required to read the following works (you can find them at your local bookstores, libraries or online):

A Prayer for Owen Meany by John Irving

Cyrano de Bergerac by Edmond Rostand

Silas Marner by George Eliot

Versification: A Short Introduction by James McAuley

We will be working on a project for the novel *A Prayer for Owen Meany* in the first two weeks of the school year. You will be tested on *Silas Marner* and *Cyrano de Bergerac* on the second day of class. There will be a few questions regarding *Versification* on that second day test as well. We will be working with the information in *Versification* by the second week of school. Although I will not be collecting any written work for these novels, I suggest that you take notes on them for studying purposes.

Your first assignment is to email me at cmcelvogue@saintbonaventure.com with your regularly used email address. There are times when I may need to contact you during the year. Emailing me will also be your confirmation that you received and read this letter. Feel free to contact me with any other questions or concerns.

I am looking forward to teaching you in this coming school year!

Sincerely,

Mr. McElvogue