

Kenmore West – English 12 R  
Course Overview

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**I. Course Description/Content:**

English 12 is the culmination of your high school English career, and for better or for worse, you've got me. Lucky you.

This year will be a bit different to your previous years. Whether you're going into college, a trade, the military or straight into the workforce, your academic work from this particular year won't have as much of an impact on where you end up as last year's did.

So why bother in class this year? Seriously? Why give anything but the minimum effort in English this year? Most of you could diddle, just pass, and still get out of here in June.

So again I pose the question: why bother?

I could go on for a while on this one, but here's the guts of my response:

- It would be insulting to me and my goals as your teacher. Believe it or not I am a human who appreciates respect, and I enjoy interacting with our students in an atmosphere of mutual respect.
- It would drag down those around you, which is an insult to them. To your friends it is unfriendly. To the others it is simply disrespectful and unkind.

But most vitally, it would hurt you. It would cause you to become less of the man or woman you have the potential to become.

Quite honestly I don't want to see any of you waste what is a golden opportunity to learn for the sake of learning – for your own intellectual development – and not simply so you can ultimately “get a good job.”

We'll be reading and listening and viewing materials this year that have the potential to open your mind and take your intellect to places you've never imagined existed – if you have the humility to let them.

Here are a few thoughts worth considering from minds greater than our own:

*Real education must ultimately be limited to men who insist on knowing—the rest is mere sheep-herding.*

Ezra Pound, poet

*Education is not filling a bucket but lighting a fire.*

William B. Yeats, poet

Youth culture often glorifies slacking off as a cool reaction to the demands of the adult world.

That is a lie, and now would be a good time to realize it.

As ever, however, the choice is yours.

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I noted earlier that this year will be a bit different to your previous years, and I meant it.

Yes – we’ll be doing some of the classics: Hamlet, by William Shakespeare, and The Odyssey, by Homer for instance. We’ll also read a ‘new classic’ – Marcus Zusak’s The Book Thief. We’ll also spend some time learning how to ‘read’ film. And we might do an examination of *My Way*, a song Frank Sinatra made famous. Beyond that, we’ll also be looking at materials that are either Australian in their origin or thematic content. There are several reasons for this:

- I like the stuff, and know it best
- It is *good*
- It gives you exposure to material you would otherwise probably not encounter. Not because it is not good enough, but because there is simply so much good stuff out there.
- Studying and understanding the literature of another country will provide you with an opportunity to better understand your own country and your own self. Australian literature – written in English, yet a wildly different beast – provides an object with which to draw contrasts and comparisons.

Materials falling under our broad category of “Australian Literature” include loads of short stories, chapter excerpts from both fiction and non-fiction books, poetry, song, articles, criticism and maybe even the classic post-apocalyptic film *Mad Max*.

We’ll see how it all develops. We’re open to suggestions.

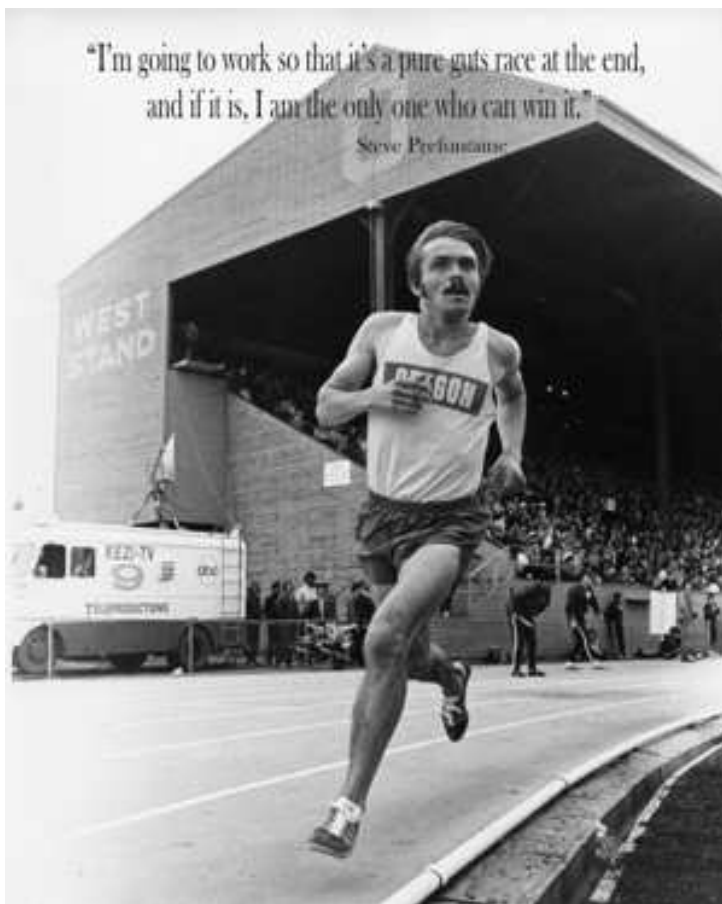
**Writing and Communication:** I will respond to several of the major units or works with a formal essay assignment with an emphasis on the essay’s content, organization, style, and mechanics. Students will learn to use the stages of the writing process from brainstorming to outlining, drafting and making final revisions.



*An Opera House in every home* , by Eric Thake

## II. Grading:

- A. **Marking Period Grades:** Each marking period, students will be evaluated on homework assignments, quizzes and tests, projects, essays and other writing assignments, and class participation.
- B. **Final Grade:** In calculating your final grade for the course, I will average the grades for each marking period (4 marking periods) and the final exam.
- C. **Class Participation,** to reiterate, is vital and graded.
- D. **Everyone does the English 12 Final Exam.** No Exceptions.
- E. **Can you please tell me what my grade is?** No. Please do not badger me to find out what your grade is. Check via your log-in if you really need to. That said, I'll do my best to get your work graded and back to you in a timely manner. The best way to ensure your grades are up is by actively participating in all classroom activities, and by doing all the work assigned you in a comprehensive and timely manner.



## III. Supplies:

Students will be required to bring the following supplies to class each day:

1. The text or materials in current use
2. Pens. If you will not bring your own, you might receive **NO GRADE** for the day's written work
3. Whatever organizational system works for you. I suggest either a folder or a binder. Either way, we expect you to have one
4. One marble journal to be kept in the room

## IV. Classroom Conduct:

### A. **Key Rules to Remember:**

1. Students will encourage each other academically
2. Students will respect themselves, as well as all others in the classroom
3. Be nice
4. Students will not be afraid to ask for help
5. Students will arrive to class on time
6. Teacher will be available for help when needed

- B. **Other Rules:** All rules set forth in the student handbook also apply (i.e., no headsets, no hats, no pagers, no cell phones, dress appropriately, etc.).
- C. **Dress Code:** Is respected and enforced in my classroom. This is a classroom. It is not a night club, not a beach, and nor is it a mall. Please use your heads and treat us *all* with some respect.

D. **Interruptions during class:** Please take care of things such as using the restrooms, getting a drink, going to your locker and sharpening pencils **before** class. Interruptions during class impair student learning you're your teacher's thinking).

E. **Cell Phone Policy:**

**\*IMPORTANT:** It is now strict DISTRICT-WIDE POLICY that **ANY ELECTRONIC DEVICES** (cell phones, ipods, cameras, etc.) are prohibited during the school day (8:05 am through 2:45 pm). Any such device will be **confiscated if seen**. For a first offence, the item will be returned at the end of the day. Upon any further infraction, the device will be returned **only to a parent** in person at the main office. In case of emergency, parents must contact their children via the school switchboard at 716-874-8401. Devices may be turned off and stored in lockers.

V. **Administrative Issues:**

A. **Late Papers or Major Assignments:** If you turn in a paper or major assignment late your grade will be docked one letter grade per day. After five **5** school days, **late work will not be accepted**. Exceptions will be made where circumstances warrant (i.e., lengthy illnesses, emergencies, etc.).

B. **Late Homework Assignments:** To get half-credit for late homework it must be turned in the next school day. After that, no credit will be given for that homework assignment. Those students who chronically miss homework will be required to stay after school to make up homework.  
**Home work is particularly important in this class because the success of our daily discussions will be largely contingent upon class members being up to speed, and their ability to contribute.**

C. **Tardiness:** 3 tardies = detention. Tardy means not being in your seat when the bell rings.

D. **Absences:** It is the responsibility of each student on their first day back in class following an absence to approach the teacher regarding the missed work. The student will be held accountable for all missed work.

Class participation is an important part of your grade. It is essential that you are prepared for class and that you think about what we have covered the previous day, focus on the new material, and anticipate what we might do the next day. As responsible young adults your input is invaluable to the success of this classroom.

I look forward to collaborating with you to make the most of the year ahead.

Regards,

Sean Scarisbrick

## Acknowledgements

### **Student's Acknowledgment of Course Overview for English 12**

I have read the English 12 Course Overview and am familiar with the requirements of this course.

Student's name \_\_\_\_\_ Period \_\_\_\_\_

Student's signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

### **Parent / Guardian's Acknowledgment of Course Overview for English 12**

I have read the English 12 Course Overview with my child and am familiar with the requirements of this course.

Parent or guardian's signature \_\_\_\_\_

Parent or guardian's name (please print) \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\* *Please flip page for an additional slip to be signed* \*\*\*

## Film Permission

Dear Parent(s) / Guardian(s):

We will be working through a good deal of great written material in your child's English 12 Regents class, including William Shakespeare's Hamlet, Marcus Zusak's The Book Thief, sections from Homer's Odyssey and an array of contemporary and classic Australian literature. As a capstone unit, we will be learning how to 'read' film in a process similar to the manner in which we have read other written texts (such as drama, novels, short stories, poetry and non-fiction).

We will watch individual scenes from a number of films. We will also watch the full length feature film *Run Lola Run*, and perhaps sections from *The Godfather* and *Mad Max*. This film study unit will include the viewing and analysis of at least one film with R rated content. We take great care in selecting films that highlight the various important aspects of film making, and to keep any R rated material to an absolute minimum.

I hope you will give your permission by signing in the appropriate space below. However, should you not want your child to view R rated content, a separate room will be provided during the viewing. Whether your child sees the film or not, his or her grade will in no way be affected. Please sign after one of the statements below, and have your child return this entire sheet to us by Friday, September 10. Thank you.

Sincerely yours,

S. Scarisbrick

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My son or daughter has my permission to view and analyze scenes from R rated feature films.

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My son or daughter may not view and analyze scenes from R rated feature films.

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\* Note: If student does not return permission slip, no admittance will apply by default.  
The student will be provided with other written material to work on. Thank You!

\*\*\* Please flip page for an additional slip to be signed \*\*\*