

Dear Parents,

Starting in the fall of 2006, schools offering Advanced Placement (AP) classes, as well as the teachers of these classes, will be required to adhere to a stricter set of guidelines. Those who fail to rise to the level set the College Board will lose the right to offer and teach AP classes. As the standards of the schools and teachers rise, the expectations of the class will rise as well. With this in mind, I'd like to give you a brief sketch of what to expect in AP English III.

AP classes are nationally coordinated classes developed by a private company known as the College Board. These courses allow students to prepare for college, broaden intellectual horizons, and stand out in the college admissions process by offering college level courses in a high school classroom. The year long AP English III course is designed to resemble a semester of Language and Composition required by colleges during a student's Freshman year. As a result, students are asked to use the skills they have learned in previous years and then move beyond those to accomplish goals they haven't yet been asked to accomplish. It is not uncommon for students who previously made A's and B's in a regular or honors English class to struggle the first couple six-weeks of a school year while they get used to the new expectations placed on AP students. While a student may make lower grades in the beginning, he should start to see these grades rise as the year passes, assuming the student fulfills all the responsibilities of the class and begins to master these new skills. It is a difficult class, but it is not impossible.

In addition to the district required summer reading assignments, AP English students are required to do all their reading outside of class as well as most of the work for projects, essays, and presentations. Most class time is used to fine tune skills in writing and reading comprehension necessary not only for the TAKS test, but also the national Language and Composition test offered by the College Board. Student who score well on this test have the opportunity to earn college credit at most national and even some international colleges and universities, allowing parents to save money on tuition. Understandably, colleges do not give away credit easily, which means the test has to meet the requirements of an equivalent college course. To insure students are prepared for this test, the College Board and Mesquite ISD have set high, and often rigorous, expectations for their AP classes.

My goal is not to dissuade you or your child, but to make you aware of the difficulty of what your child will be asked to do. **Once the school year begins, your child will not be allowed to transfer into a regular English class even if he is failing.** If you would like further information regarding the national guidelines set by the College Board for Advance Placement classes, please visit <http://www.collegeboard.com>. You will find information for both parents and students at this website. Also, feel free to contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

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