



## The High School for the Performing and Visual Arts

### Dear HSPVA English II Family,

Welcome back to HSPVA! This year will be filled with valuable growing opportunities for all students in room 132. As I enter my thirteenth year in the classroom, I am so grateful to be here with your student! We will continue to tackle challenging reading material, introduce new academic writing structures, and fine-tune our research skills. I am excited to drive our World Literature course with this overarching thematic question: **“What does it mean to be human?”**

Throughout the year you will find my website to be a valuable tool. From [www.worldhumanities.org](http://www.worldhumanities.org) you will access a day-to-day Google **Calendar**. It is constantly updated with the ebbs and flows of the school year, and this will be the best way to stay on track when students miss due to illness or art area activities. My **Contact Diaz** page is the quickest way to get in touch with me. I do not check my school email after I leave school for my second job (Mom). If you or your student has an urgent need, your message will be sent directly to my phone from the contact page. Each **Unit’s Page** will include documents, videos, links, and other engaging materials used in class. Do not be surprised to find your student coming home to share psychological experiments and TED talks! Finally, in the **Stuff** page you will find a plethora of resources about testing (STAAR and AP), reading strategies, writing tips and tricks, and general study skills advice.

Our little family will get right to work diving into the first of three major units. The year begins with **Unit 1: *Man’s Search for Meaning***. During the first weeks of the school year, we will refresh old English skills and define expectations for close reading, academic writing, and clarify testing formats. **Unit 2: *The Art of the Story*** will challenge our little artists to find the commonalities in the human artistic experience through the analysis of storytelling, mythology, Homeric poems, and other ancient and modern texts. **Unit 3: *To Turn the Light of Truth*** will be the culmination of a year’s worth of intellectual rigor, ethical reflection, and emotional engagement. With *To Kill a Mockingbird* as the spinal cord of the unit, we hope to translate the messages from the art and literature of the year to our own lives. Yes, the goal is to create more engaged and empathetic citizens as well as stronger readers and writers.

Every grade earned this year will be a reflection of learning and nothing else. You can expect to see no participation grades, no completion grades, and no grades rewarding bringing supplies. The good news is that besides studying and reading outside of class, your student really should have no homework. Our grades will be summative and formative assessments of the skills we have mastered in class.

This year all sophomore students will tackle the English II STAAR exam. If your student is enrolled in Pre-AP they will have the opportunity to taste and practice two college courses. As juniors and seniors students may choose to enroll in AP Language and Composition or AP Literature and Composition, I feel it is my obligation to be as transparent with Pre-AP students as early as possible. We will study these courses, practice writing prompts, and learn to test in a timed environment. My thirteen years of experience with College Board courses and standards will serve your student well.

Our year will be filled with experimentation and exploration, creativity and questioning, emotional connection and intellectual growth. I am excited to have your vibrant artist in my classroom. Please let me know what questions I can answer and concerns I can ease. We are going to have a wonderful year!

Warm regards,

*Gabriela Perez Diaz*

