

ENGL 379

Things to Accomplish While in Your School

Practical Stuff

- Where should you park?
- What time are teachers required to be in their classrooms?
- What is the daily bell schedule? What variations exist?
- Are you required to wear an ID badge? If so, where do you obtain one?
- Can you register as a substitute teacher with this school and district?
- Which events (e.g., prom, sporting events, holidays, special school days, etc.) disrupt teaching?
- Get a copy of the school/district calendar. Note holidays, grading periods, teacher work days, early-out days, and other events that might affect your students and your teaching.
- Where's the library? Who's the librarian?
- Where is the faculty restroom?
- Where should you keep your materials?
- When do the grading periods/terms end?
- When is your cooperating teacher's preparation period?

Things to Do

- Give your cooperating teacher your email address and phone number.
- Get a copy of your teacher's teaching schedule
- Schedule a time to talk with your teacher about the 377 assignments you must complete in her classroom.
- Get a copy of the seating chart for the classes you'll be teaching.
- Schedule times to plan (or to review) your first lesson and to teach it.

Copy procedures

- Where in the building do you access copy machines? Do you make copies yourself or does the school have a copy aide?
- Are there limits to the number of copies you can make?
- What about transparencies? Can you make transparencies from copies or laser printers?

Technology

- What technology resources are available at the school? (Computer labs, LCD projectors, DVD players/TVs, etc.) How do you schedule the use of these? How are these resources scheduled by teachers?
- What form of electronic gradebook does the school/district use? So students/parents have access to this gradebook?
- What access do students have to technology? (at home, via computer labs, etc.)

Administration

- Who are the principals/assistant principals in the school? Are they responsible for different areas of school administration? (scheduling, discipline, extra-curricular, etc.)
- Is there a protocol in place for referring students to the administration for discipline or other concerns?
- What is the name of the English department chair?
- Who are the secretaries? What jobs do they have that might impact your work?
- How do you arrange for a substitute teacher (interns)? Whom do you contact at the school if you're going to be sick and/or must miss school?
- How are counselors in the school assigned to students? What's the procedure for discussing a student with a counselor?

School Policies

- There should be a faculty handbook or other document that outlines school policies for students and faculty. Spend some time reviewing the handbook, especially looking for these things
- What are safe-school violations and how are you to handle these as a teacher?
- Is there an attendance policy? What is your responsibility with regards to that policy?
- How often are you expected to update grades and attendance for classes?
- When/Where/How often are faculty meetings held?

Disclosure Documents

- Collect and read the disclosure document of your mentor/cooperating teacher. Look for these things:
 - What philosophical beliefs about teaching or content does the disclosure reveal?
 - How does the teacher handle late work or excessive absences?

- What rules are outlined in the disclosure document?
- What other important policies or issues are covered?
- If possible, collect and read disclosures from multiple teachers and compare them.

Curriculum

- What textbooks are available in the classroom? Which are being used?
- What collections/classroom sets of books are available?
- Which of the language arts (reading, literature, grammar, writing, listening/speaking, media) are emphasized in this class?
- What are the primary literary texts used in this class?
- Are there any packaged programs (e.g., Accelerated Reader, My Access, Read 180) used in this class? If so, how are they used?
- How is the library used to support teaching and learning?
- Have there been any recent attacks on books or films used in this school? If so, which texts were attacked and why?
- What curricular material is covered in the grades immediately before and after this class? For example, if you're in a 10th grade class, what novels or plays are read in 9th and 11th grade? What writing forms are emphasized in 9th and 11th grade?

Teaching

- What novels and other literary works will be taught this semester?
- What additional texts are available or will be used?
- What are the students' general strengths?
- What are the students' general weaknesses?
- What topics has the class already studied?
- What topics will be studied in the next 3 months?
- How is instruction organized: thematically, by genre, by language art?
- What are the daily routines in class?
- What skills are emphasized by District or State Core Curriculum for this class?
- What might you teach for your lessons this semester?