

POMPTON LAKES HIGH SCHOOL

CURRICULUM REPORT TO THE BOARD: THE HUMANITIES



ENGLISH ♦ WORLD LANGUAGES ♦ SOCIAL STUDIES



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◆ SECTION I ◆ ENGLISH

OVERVIEW

The English program at Pompton Lakes High School (PLHS) continues to thrive as teachers have created an environment that provides all students the opportunity to excel and succeed. With rigorous yet attainable expectations and a student-centered philosophy at its core, the English Department serves to prepare each student to be college and career ready in the realm of language arts. The foundation of the English program is an emphasis on 21st century skills such as critical thinking, close reading, analysis, research, and narrative/argumentative writing. Students read and analyze both classic and modern literature, write in all the pertinent modes (that is, narrative, analytical/argumentative, and expository/explanatory), and engage in thought-provoking discussions that elucidate the many different facets to the human experience and our role in society and the world. The English program also prepares students for the future by blending elements of the digital age into their learning process such as web and database-driven research, broadcasting and multimedia, and other industry-appropriate technology. Perhaps most notable though is the program's strong focus on cultural literacy and awareness. Through literature, guided research, discussion, and relevant field trips, students are exposed to the world beyond Pompton Lakes and a myriad of disparate cultures far different from their own. In this way, students gain a greater appreciation of the world around them and are better equipped to enter a pluralistic society and find success in college and post-secondary career opportunities.

RECENT HIGHLIGHTS

- Junior Heather DeBoer earned first place in the Pride in Pompton Lake PRIDE Writing Contest for her three haiku poems, winning a Chromebook.
- *The Nest Review* proudly released its fall issue consisting of student-created poetry and prose.
- Mr. Robert Edgar, Mr. Robert Texel, and select Broadcast Journalism students filmed the new Eighth Grade Open House video with footage from the new camera drone that was purchased through a Pompton Lakes Education Foundation (PLEF) grant.
- Mr. Robert Edgar was recognized as Passaic County's Educator of the Year.
- With several more students achieving established levels of proficiency on the PSAT and Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB), only two students in the prospective graduating class need to participate in the Portfolio Appeals Process in order to meet the graduation test requirement.
- Advanced Placement (AP) English Literature and Creative Writing students took a field trip to the Dodge Poetry Festival in Newark, NJ, where they met the poets whose poetry they read in class and performed some of their own poetry.



Seniors Christopher Truono and Chloe Kanhai collaborate on a project in Broadcast Journalism.

- New works of literature that better reflect the changing socio-cultural climate of the 21st century student are continually considered for inclusion in the curriculum. Some examples include *Fever Dream*, *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, and *Handmaid's Tale*.
- Work samples, including close readings and essays, are continually collected by the department chairperson.
- The PARCC Prep course has been aptly transformed into an English reading and writing lab, using the Achieve3000 program to bolster reading and mini-conferences to remediate writing.
- A new class, Senior Portfolio, will be added to the program of studies to continue to improve proficiency on the New Jersey Student Learning Assessment (NJSLA).
- All English classes are currently using Google Classroom as the digital platform.
- An English research paper has been added to the curriculum at each grade level to better prepare students for the research process in college.
- The English 11 summer reading has been changed from *Lovely Bones* to *The Kite Runner*.

MAIN GOALS

- To continue to become more proficient in the use of Google Classroom and Google Apps for the English classroom;
- To continue to grow the English program, staying cognizant of any major curricular needs;
- To continue to search out new novels and relevant books for the English curriculum;
- To prepare students for success on the NJSLA and the SAT;
- To instill an appreciation for literature and to cultivate emotional intelligence among students by using literature as a mirror for the world and ourselves;
- To provide students exposure to and an understanding of different cultures, customs, and traditions through an examination of literature;
- To develop analytical and narrative writing skills, close-reading ability, and grow Lexile reading level over time; and
- To prepare students for college and the real world by fostering 21st century skills and habits of success.



Junior Rigon Abedini interviews department chairperson Mr. Michael Riordan for his Broadcast Journalism assignment.

**To access and view samples of student work,
please select (Ctrl+Click) the following links:**

The Nest Review: <http://www.thenestreview.wordpress.com/poetry>
Broadcast Journalism / The Cardinal Network: <https://thecardinalnetwork.wordpress.com/>

♦ SECTION II ♦

WORLD LANGUAGES

OVERVIEW

World Languages classes promote an understanding and appreciation of other cultures while also moving students towards fluency in a second language. Students are actively engaged in classes through authentic language learning experiences and skillful use of technology. The current languages offered include Spanish, French, and German with German being phased out over the next two years to better meet the needs of our students. Beyond the first level of each language, students have the opportunity to enroll in accelerated honors classes eventually culminating in AP Spanish or AP French. The curriculum of each class follows the state standards and adheres to the primary domains of speaking, listening, reading, and writing in a foreign language.

RECENT HIGHLIGHTS

- Spanish 1 General will be changed to Conversational Spanish to better suit the needs of the students.
- Students created their own planets and satires of modern society in French as a creative summative assessment for the novella *The Little Prince*.
- The department welcomed Herr Ryan Sondermeyer, a part-time German teacher, and Srta. Marisol Borges, a new Spanish teacher serving both the middle and high schools.
- A Spanish 2 placement test was created to assess the skill level of students in Riverdale School and St. Mary's School.

MAIN GOALS

- To continue to improve a program that instills a love and appreciation of language learning and cultures in students;
- To use the four modes of language learning—speaking, listening, reading, and writing—to move students toward fluency;
- To continue to create authentic learning experiences by exposing students to actual elements of the languages and cultures they are learning;
- To use technology to facilitate learning and engage students;
- To investigate and plan for a possible course for native speakers, along with other potential curricular offerings;
- To create a vertically articulated curriculum with Lakeside School, Riverdale School, and St. Mary's School through quarterly meetings and open communication;
- To stay cognizant of the most important trends in language learning and reflect upon the changing demographics of our town and school system;



AP Spanish students tackle some National Exam questions together in class.

- To prepare students for a multilingual world by immersing them in a second language;
- To instill in students a sensitivity to other cultures and ways of living; and
- To improve student job prospects by increasing fluency in a second language.



French 2 students break from their lesson to unveil some holiday spirit.

♦ SECTION III ♦ SOCIAL STUDIES

OVERVIEW

Among the goals of the Pompton Lakes Social Studies Department is to prepare students for participation in democratic life and the democratic-republican form of government. Inherent in such an endeavor is the need to analyze the many ways that government institutions operate, including the rights and responsibilities of citizens in a pluralistic society.

In a pragmatic sense, students must examine and understand the causes and consequences of historical events and make connections that identify developmental trends. Such training will contribute to intellectual development and enlightenment, while at the same time providing the scaffolding necessary for critical socio-political and economic thought. Indeed, PLHS students analyze the past in order to grasp the present and establish a foundation for their future ideas.

RECENT HIGHLIGHTS

- The Social Studies Department now offers three AP options: U.S. History, Microeconomics, and Government and Politics.
- All Social Studies classes use Google Classroom as a digital platform.
- All Social Studies classes implement a variety of digital applications and strategies that include but are not limited to Edpuzzle, WeVideo, Kahoot, Quizlet, Google Earth, virtual tours, and interactive maps.
- After a long interactive relationship with Congressman Rodney Freylinghuysen, the Department has reached out to Congresswoman Mikie Sherrill's office with the goal of further connecting our students with events in Washington, DC.
- Working with the League of Women Voters, the Social Studies Department continues to embrace the goal of registering all PLHS students to vote.
- The Social Studies Department continues to partner with the local VFW for its writing contest. Last year, current senior Ali Allegri received a \$400 award for her essay.
- In December 2018, the local VFW once again provided a Vietnam veteran to speak with the 60s to the Present class about his experiences in the war.
- All World History and U.S. History students utilize an online textbook.
- Each year, the U.S. History 1 Honors class takes a historical journey to Philadelphia under the supervision of Mrs. Caterina Hoffman and at least one other social studies teacher.



World History Honors students routinely use their HP ProBook laptops in class.

- The Social Studies Department regularly implements Document-Based Questions (DBQs), Research Simulation Tasks (RSTs), and NJSLA/SAT-related assignments to enhance college preparedness.
- The Social Studies Department continues to assume the responsibility of teaching students how to construct a thesis paper with MLA citations.

MAIN GOALS

- To deliver a thorough, interactive, and unbiased investigation of history and current events to each PLHS student;
- To encourage all PLHS students to become active socio-political thinkers who can make informed decisions in a democracy;
- To help students understand technological skills related to the exploration of national and world affairs;
- To enhance global citizenry by exposing students to a myriad of cultural practices and norms around the globe;
- To provide students with the sociological skills that are necessary for participation in a world that is stratified by race, gender, sexual orientation, and social class; and
- To inspire students to forever see history as a fascinating way to lend clarity to the present rather than as a collection of facts and dates.



Seniors Erik Widdowson, Matthew Cahill, and Meghan Keating prepare for a scene in the much anticipated holiday movie produced by educators and school leaders in the humanities.

