**On-Line Communication Guide**



This communication guide has been constructed for 8th Grade Language Arts classes. Please feel free to use any ideas you see posted here.

Communicating in an on-line class has both similarities and differences to the regular classroom setting. Since we do not see each other face-to-face, it is very important that you follow these guidelines carefully. If you have any questions about what you read here, please share your concerns in the “Ask the Teacher” area located in the Discussion section of your Course Tools. (more on this in a minute!)

**How to Connect: **

First, it’s most important to know how we will meet to discuss your learning and answer any questions you might have. Any emails you send to me during the school week (Monday, 8:00am through Friday, 3:00pm) will be returned within 24 hours. For example, if you send me an email on Monday at 3pm, I will have until Tuesday at 3pm to respond to your email. If you need to contact me over the weekend, feel free to do so. Any emails received after 3pm on Friday and before 8:00am on Monday morning will be returned by 8:00 am on Tuesday morning. All correspondence and/or assignments should be conducted through Cobb Blackboard. In the event of an emergency, you may use my school email address, tracy.efaw@cobbk12.org, or you may contact me by phone at xxx-xxx-xxxx.

**Class Announcements: **

If there are any announcements that need to be made during the course of our class, I will make them in the “Class Announcements” section of our Learning Management System. The “Class Announcements” icon will be starred when a new announcement is created. Be sure to check these each time you see a star, as the class announcements are generally very important!

**Emailing**: 

When sending any kind of email correspondence, please place your full name and a 2-3 word description of what your email will be about in the subject line of your email. This helps me to respond to you most efficiently. In your email, be as descriptive as you can when posing your questions or explaining your concern. Since we don’t meet face to face, being as explicit as possible is important. Also, be sure to proofread EVERYTHING you send in to me. You want to make sure your communication is error-free. One little typo can make all the difference in how something is perceived. Also, your correspondence is a reflection of you as a student. You want to make a good impression at all times, right?! Right!!

**Blog Expectations:** 

When communicating in your blog, once again, you want to be as clear as you can be. It is important to always remember your audience, and to write with the idea that people may write back to you. Your blog entries can be more conversational and less formal, and you are allowed to write in first and second person. Since your classmates will be required to respond to your blog posts, make sure you invite responses by posing questions or giving a variety of interesting perspectives for your audience to consider. This kind of response implies that you will be writing more than just a few sentences. In a good blog post, you should have a minimum of 10 good sentences. When someone responds to your post, make sure you respond back in a timely manner and with detail. In real life, if someone sat down to chat with you, you would always respond, right? And you would do so in more than a few words. So you want to do the same in your blog posts. Again, proofreading and editing your posts is important to do every single time, because in cyberspace you are what you write!!

**Blog Responses:** 

When you are responding to someone else’s blog, you will be expected to incorporate one or more of the following using the WISE acronym:

* Wonder: What does the blog post make you wonder about? Here, you can express several ideas of places your mind goes when you read someone else’s blog post.
* Inquiry: Does the blog post cause you to ask questions of the blogger? If you could ask good questions, what would they be? Your questions should be of a good quality that will make the blogger have to think or maybe research further in order to answer your questions.
* Share: Can you share information that you know to enhance someone else’s knowledge? Is there something that you have read or learned that could add to the dialogue taking place in the blog?
* Experience: Does a person’s blog post remind you of a personal experience that you can share? Does the blog help you to connect with something in your past or present?

**Wiki Expectations:** 

During the course of this class, you will be expected to maintain a wiki with your assigned group. Since your wiki will be a place for you to post your finished products, you will want to make sure your writing here is more formal and complete. In your wiki, you are sharing information you have researched, and you are presenting your findings. Therefore, you will only write in third person, and you will want your writing to assume a more authoritative tone. While your group members will be able to add or delete from your group wiki, they will be following the same rules, so that your wiki, at any given moment, will always have a professional feel to it. Again, the 10 sentence rule applies unless otherwise directed.

**Threaded Discussion Posts: **

When you are responding to a threaded discussion (these would be the discussions we maintain for class in which you will be writing to prompts and questions from the instructor), be sure to include your last name and a creative title for your discussion post. It is helpful to immediately see who is responding to a discussion question, so your name is especially important. When students fail to do this, it is often difficult to quickly discern who is responding to the discussion. So please be careful to ensure your name is posted along with the topic heading. Also, be sure that your discussion responses follow the guidelines for your blogs responses. You want to always want your responses to be WISE!!!

**Ask the Teacher: **

If, at any time, you have a question or need clarification about anything, feel free to ask questions in the “Ask the Teacher” area located in the Discussion section of your course tools. In every online course, students always need clarification, so don’t be afraid to ask. If you wonder about something, chances are good others are wondering too, so your questions will not only help you, but others as well. By asking questions, you are contributing to a positive classroom environment, so ask away!

**Recess? Really???: **

One of the cool advantages of online courses is we can do things online that we can’t in a regular school, like have recess! This is a place in the Discussion section of your course tools that you can chill out and “chat” with your classmates online for fun!! Ask questions, share experiences, and learn about your classmates *outside* of the “classroom.” Here is a place you can unwind and relax. Please use it! Again, this will help us to get to know each other better and develop a community, so that our classroom experiences will be more meaningful.

**Netiquette: **

It is an expectation that you maintain proper manners (etiquette) any time you post online. This means that you are expected to use appropriate language and tone when communicating. You should always write with the idea that our principal could be reading your posts! Keeping that in mind, here are a few ideas to guide you in your efforts to maintain a polite disposition online:

* Never use slang. (Yo bruh, you is swag!!)
* Never use text language. (R u mad @ me?)
* Never use all CAPS. People perceive that you are yelling at them when you use all CAPS WHEN YOU ARE WRITING!!! DON’T DO IT!!!
* When you are responding to others, always find something to compliment. When you want to point out an area for improvement for someone to consider, don’t put them down, instead make suggestions, e.g. “You might try…” or “You might consider…” People are more likely to consider your suggestions when you are supportive instead of critical.
* Respond to others as you would like others to respond to you. Even in cyberspace, we should all honor the Golden Rule!

Communicating is vital to your success in this course and to our success together as a class. We are a learning team, and your input is always valued, not just by your classmates, but by your instructor, as well. Always be sure to communicate your questions and concerns right away to avoid unnecessary frustration or confusion.

References

Patsalides, L. (2011, December 14). *Top five rules of netiquette in an online course*. Retrieved from http://www.brighthub.com/education/online-learning/articles/26946.aspx

Pearson Learning Solutions. (2011). *Academic executives blog*. Retrieved from http://www.pearsonlearningsolutions.com/academic-executives/blog/2010/09/27/educators-voice-best-practices-with-threaded-discussions/