August 28, 2019

Greetings to all the parents and guardians of da Vinci 6th grade class of 2019/20,

Welcome to an absolutely amazing school. I wanted to introduce myself with a brief letter that tells you a little about myself and the class I teach.

This is my fifth year here as da Vinci’s 6th grade Social Studies teacher. I have been teaching for 17 years. Prior to teaching at da Vinci, I taught Leadership and Entrepreneurship to 9th graders at L.E.P. High School. I was also the English/Language Arts, Social Studies, Math and Science to students in grades 6-8 at M.I.T.C.H. Middle School.

I received a Masters of Arts in Teaching from Lewis & Clark with a focus in Social Studies. For my undergraduate program I went to University of Arizona and graduated with a BA in Sociology and Political Science. Outside of the classroom I have worked as a freelance music journalist for Billboard, Gilde, and Jambase Magazines. I have written more than 70 articles on music and just published my first book last year. For 12 years I was also Oregon's team leader in voter registration with *Headcount* which is a national non-partisan voter registration organization.

*-Mr. Gershuny*

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**CLASS CURRICULUM**

In our class your student will be exploring human history from 3 million years ago during the time of the hominids, all the way until the time of the Ancient Greeks. We will be using the curriculum from *History Alive: The Ancient World* textbook and workbook as our guide, but we will go beyond the books to enrich the lessons. The curriculum for the year will be broken into these sections:

**Introduction/Getting to know you Hominids/DIG Project**

**Mesopotamia/Sumer Formal Essay Ancient Egypt/ Pyramid**

**Judaism Ancient India**

**Buddhism Hinduism**

**Ancient China/Formal Speech Ancient Greece/ Year long Timeline Project**

**HOME WORK**

We will be using homework as an opportunity to allow students to explore their world around them with weekly **Current Events**. They will be taught how to find grade level articles and how to properly cite them. They will then be expected to read and write on a topic of their interest each week. Current Events are invaluable because it allows students weekly opportunities to refine their reading comprehension, formal writing, and public speaking skills. It also alows students to bring up modern topics of their choosing. Every few weeks they will be creating a pamphlet of Current Events Assignments, that they will turn in as one large assignment.

**GRADING AND COMMUNICATIONS**

I use Synergy as a communication tool for you to get accurate updates on how your student is doing. One key thing to recognise is if you ever see a **zero** in an assignment, it is a direct message to you that the **assignment was not turned in**. A student would never receive a zero for work submitted.

If there is **no grade** listed, it means I have the work, it is **just not graded yet**. With over 150 students, at times turning in 3-5 pages of writing each, it will take a while to get all assignments graded and entered in Synergy. That is why the **“zero”** is a key communication tool in my classroom.

I will try to enter zeros the day the work was missed, so families can be aware as soon as possible. Students are also asked to turn in all of their work directly to me. This allows me to check in with your student directly, make sure the work is complete, before it is submitted, and remove any potential zero in Synergy. Incomplete work will not be accepted.

Late work is accepted until the week before the quarter ends. There will be a minor point deduction for their late work, but they can always achieve an “A” grade on their work. This allows students to work on any assignment to the best of their ability, and not to rush to just get it done.

My classroom website is **http://mrgershuny.weebly.com/** The two most important aspects of that page is the embedded Google calendar and the resources page. I use the calendar as another communication tool to let you know when assignments are due, and where we are in the curriculum. I also have uploaded many of the larger assignments into the “resource” page, in case a student is absent or loses the work.

Please feel free to email me at jgershuny@pps.net at any time. I try to respond to any email I receive during the school week within 24 hours, and it usually is a lot quicker than that. Calling during the school day is a bit trickier since students are often in the room, and these conversations are private, but accommodations can be made.

Thank you so much, and I can’t wait to get this year of learning off the ground!!!

Jason Gershuny

6th Grade Social Studies teacher

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Room 301

<http://mrgershuny.weebly.com/>

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