

		First Quarter	Second Quarter	Third Quarter	Fourth Quarter
Effort, Participation and Conduct					
Prepared for class (with assignments and materials)		3	3	3	4
Timely homework completion		4	3	4	4
Thorough completion of assignments		3	4	4	4
Active in class discussions		4	4	4	4
Active in class activities		3	3	4	4
Respectful of adults		4	4	4	4
Respectful of peers		3	3	4	4
Respectful of class norms and classroom environment		2	3	3	4
Course Grade					
Counts as					
Final projects, papers, and tests		½	A-	A	A
Quizzes, graded homework and classwork		¼	A-	A	A
Effort, participation, and conduct		¼	B+	B+	A-
Overall Grade for the Quarter			A-	A	A
				Final Grade	A

1st QUARTER
 We began the year with a discussion of *Warriors Don't Cry* by Melba Patillo Beals. These conversations will serve as the foundation for our study of the legacy of slavery and the events that led to the Civil War. In addition, students spent time discussing why it is important to study history, and how historians do their jobs. Students' own commentary led us to think critically about whether the historical record is better served from the bottom up or the top down and how the past is relevant to current events. Our activities have focused not only on understanding the events surrounding the Civil War, but also on how the genre of biography contributes to historical understanding. Concurrently, we are reading *To Be a Slave*, a collection of first hand accounts of slavery compiled and supplemented by Julius Lester. Students continued to develop their informal written responses to literature and have learned how to craft multi-layered thought questions that are the basis of class discussions in core and their other classes. Students are beginning the process of writing a formal essay about resistance to slavery. When complete, each student's paper will have gone through all the stages of the writing process, including drafting, revising, editing and finally publishing.

2nd QUARTER
 This quarter the eighth grade completed Lincoln's biography, Lester's *To Be a Slave* and wrapped up the study of the Civil War with historical fiction projects. Students demonstrated new historical understanding and further explored the connections between literature and history by writing letters with a partner about their books. The second quarter curriculum emphasized expository writing with a step-by-step approach to writing an essay on resistance to slavery in Julius Lester's *To Be A Slave*. In writing conferences, they learned how to revise, rather than merely edit, their writing in order to develop and support a more sophisticated level of textual analysis. We also launched our study of the Reconstruction Era and the measures taken after the Civil War to extend justice to all citizens. Students continued reading independently in order to reach the goal of completing 25 books outside of class by the year's end. Recently, they gave a book talk on one of these texts.
Teacher comment: The world needs more people like Rank. He has been engaged in all aspects of our study of slavery and the Civil War and is especially interested in their legacy and connection to the present. He is adept at building a conversation; he carefully listens to his classmates and often synthesizes his ideas with theirs, thereby deepening the discussion. His homework is timely, thoughtful, and completed with enthusiasm. He often comes prepared with a question or comment that unlocks a passage or a concept for the class. He is always organized and thoughtful in his approach to managing his materials and formulating, and then articulating, his ideas. Rank's essay on resistance to slavery is tightly constructed and concise, yet never loses a characteristic lyrical voice. In order to write a final draft of which he could be proud, he completely revised and reworked his entire paper, finally crafting a fresh and moving piece with a sharp focus. Rank welcomes the opportunity to improve his writing and also loves experimenting with genre in our writing workshop. It has been an outstanding start to the year, and I look forward to working further with him!

3rd QUARTER
 This quarter the eighth grade completed their study of the Reconstruction Era. Using are many primary and secondary resources, students explored the complex reasons the nation retreated from Reconstruction; we also considered what the Era's legacy has been for us as a nation. Linking social and literary studies, we read Larry Watson's *Montana 1948*. Through a variety of activities, students explored the thematic links between the novel and the Reconstruction Era, including the concepts of social justice, personal and national identity formation, and the strain family or cultural loyalty can place on one's ethics. In writing workshop, students finalized their nonfiction piece, and launched into poetry. In this unit, students read and discuss great poetry and write their own, using the models as inspiration. We have just begun our course of study using the material from *Facing History and Ourselves: The Study of the Holocaust and Human Behavior*. Concurrently, we are briefly learning about both World War I and the Great Depression in order to understand the integral roles they played in the start of the World War II.
Teacher comment: Dear Rank, You are having an outstanding year in core. You took charge of your learning and organization. Your earlier tendency to be distracted has moved into serious intellectual engagement. Your homework is lengthy, deeply grapples with important issues, and shows you pushing yourself. At times your anxiety about juggling many commitments caused you to feel overwhelmed. For the next year, do your best to plan ahead and complete work in advance. Your final piece is moving, polished, and works together as a whole. You astutely connect the anger you feel about social injustice with insights from your own experience. This insight demonstrates two things: one, an ability to use writing as a tool to think; two, an important shift in who you are. You love reading, writing, and the historical record and are a joy to teach. I'm looking forward to our final quarter together..

4th QUARTER
 In the fourth quarter, we completed our course of study using material from *Facing History and Ourselves: The Study of Holocaust and Human Behavior*. We studied how a confluence of specific socio-historical events and human behavior led to the dismantling of democracy, the rise of dictatorship, and finally to the hatred and horror of the Holocaust. We also read Elie Wiesel's *Night*. The final project called on students to write the author a letter about the book's impact; in addition, each letter included one of the following: research into the circumstances surrounding another genocide; research into the actions of a human rights leader; or a close reading of the author's language. Throughout the entire *Facing History* unit, the goal was to move students through shock to understanding and finally to the knowledge that an educated citizenry must participate in democracy to ensure that "Never Again" no longer rings hollow. In addition, this final letter allowed students to incorporate their research or textual commentary with their thoughts the author's style. Concurrently, we studied the events of the Second World War using *WWII for Beginners* and Freedman's biography of FDR. Finally, we returned to the first poem that we read this fall, Langston Hughes' "Theme for English B." Students wrote about how their understanding of this text had changed, and this activity marked the end of our poetry unit.
Student comment: I think that I have traveled a real distance this year as a writer and as a learner. At the beginning of the year, I did not put much effort in my revisions and was content to hand in a rough draft as a final draft. As I worked on each piece, I slowly began to realize that through revision I was able to more clearly express my ideas, which led to a tightening of my arguments. I enjoyed all of our class discussions and was an active participant. One thing that I noticed at the end of the year was that I was a much better listener; I did not always feel the need to comment and enjoyed listening to and thinking about my classmates' idea. I feel prepared and ready for high school English and social studies.