MARKHAM DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOL

VISION STATEMENT
By pursuing excellence, embracing diversity, fostering a passion for learning and modelling positive character, Markham District High School strives to develop independent thinkers and contributing members of society.

GOALS
1. Strive for excellence in everything we do.
2. Provide a variety of programs to meet the individual needs of our students.
3. Provide a variety of sports, clubs and activities.
4. Communicate effectively with students, parents/guardians and the community.
5. Make expectations for students clear and visible.
6. Treat students positively and fairly.
7. Encourage expected behaviours, attitudes, values and life skills.
8. Recognize contributions and achievements of staff and students.
9. Provide an inviting, pleasant and safe environment.
10. Endeavour to make use of the diversified talents and backgrounds of staff and students.
11. Effectively team staff, students, parents and community to deliver a meaningful, quality education.

USING THE AGENDA PLANNER
- Take your agenda with you to all your classes. Record all your homework and assignments showing correct due dates.
- For long term assignments write down reminders on dates when sections should be completed, or when you should work on the assignment.
- At the end of the day review your homework assignments and take the right books home to do your homework.
- Record your marks on the Records of Achievement pages. This will help you monitor your progress and assist you in deciding where to put your time and effort.
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## MDHS Style Manual

### Important Dates
CHARACTER MATTERS!

Markham District High School strives to build a community with positive character. These characteristics are promoted in our curriculum and through our philosophy. Although all ten attributes are practised daily, each month one character attribute is emphasized, reinforced and celebrated.

Respect  We respect ourselves and treat others with courtesy, dignity and positive regard. We honour the rights of others. We treat their belongings, the environment and the world around us with consideration.

Responsibility  We are accountable for all of our actions.

Courage  We face challenges directly. We seek help from others when necessary.

Empathy  We strive to sense and appreciate the emotions of others. We demonstrate an appreciation of and concern for their feelings. We try to understand issues from their perspectives even though we may not agree with them personally.

Optimism  We maintain a positive attitude. We look on the bright side of situations. We are able to see opportunities even in the face of adversity. We have hope for the future.

Initiative  We act without being prompted by others. We are eager to do what needs to be done without having to be told to do it. We take the first step toward the achievement of a goal.

Honesty  We behave in a sincere, trustworthy, and truthful manner.

Fairness  We are sensitive to the needs of each individual. We treat each other as we wish to be treated ourselves. We interact with others without stereotyping, prejudice or discrimination. We stand up for human rights.

Integrity  We ensure truthfulness, sincerity and consistency between what we believe and say, and how we behave.

Perseverance  We stick to a goal and work hard even in the face of obstacles and challenges. We complete all tasks and assignments.
YOUR SCHOOL COUNCIL:  
A Way to Make a Difference

The Ontario Government passed Regulation 612 and 613 in December 2000 to clarify that the purpose of school councils is to focus on student achievement and on enhancing the accountability of the education system to parents. The MDHS Council is mandated to advise and make recommendations to the school principal and, where appropriate, the school board on matters related to school policies, school operations and the general school community.

Membership
The school council is composed of volunteers and includes parents of MDHS students, community representatives, the principal, teachers, students and a non-teaching staff member. Parents must always form the majority and any parent or guardian can volunteer to stand for election or appointment. There are no academic or professional prerequisites.

Why Get Involved With School Council?
The school council is an ideal way for parents or guardians to have a direct impact on school policies, activities and operations. It represents an opportunity to learn more about the school environment and the challenges faced in education today.
Participation by parents, working in a true partnership with staff, students and the community helps to maintain a healthy, productive and responsive school.

Meetings
Council meetings are held once a month in the Resource Centre (library). They begin at 7:00 p.m. and are open to everyone in the school community. At each meeting, a part of the agenda is left open for questions or new business. This is an ideal forum to raise concerns, issues or comments about MDHS.
Meeting Dates 2008-2009: – September 17, October 15, November 19, December 17, January 21, February 18, March 25, April 15, May 20, June 17.

Contact
The council's 24-hour voice mail number is (905) 294 - 1886 ext. 5105. Leave a message or drop a note in the school’s main office, and a council member will respond. Visit the School Council web pages at: http://www.markhamdistrict.hs.yrdsb.edu.on.ca/links/School-Council.htm
MESSAGE FROM YOUR STUDENT COUNCIL

Congratulations! You are the proud owner of an MDHS agenda. This agenda will help you organize your academic and social life at MDHS. Use it to record academic dates such as tests and assignments. You can also use it for recording the dates of BBQs, contests, and events hosted by your Student Council and other clubs.

Student Council Activities

The Student Council is composed of an active group of students dedicated to serving the needs of the students in the school. Elections take place each year in May when the President, Vice-President and other executive members are elected. The members of the Council attend meetings, solicit feedback from students, and work hard to increase the awareness and participation of students in their community, their school and their education. They are to be commended for their enthusiasm and dedication.

All students must purchase a Student Activity Card to be eligible for any of the many student sponsored activities during lunch and before or after school. The Activity Card also serves as identification for school events.

Get Involved and Get Hyped!

If you have any comments or suggestions, we want to hear your voice. Speak out and be heard about contest ideas, events, fund raisers and inter-school competitions. The sky’s the limit. It’s going to be an amazing year.

Your Student Council for 2008-2009

President..........................................................Kelly Hobson
Vice-President.........................................................Wes Lau
Events Convenor.............................................Carolyn Schmid
Executive Assistant............................Evan Chong
Spirit Co-ordinator..............................Riah Sethna
Treasurer.................................Herman Yeung
Assistant Treasurer........................Rachel Tan
External Affairs......................................Edwin Lo
Creative Co-ordinator..........................Jasper Fung
Sr. Officer of Publicity.................................Max Tazumi
Jr. Officer of Publicity.................................Marco Ng
SAA Representative..............................To be elected in June
Yearbook Representative.............................To be elected in June
Music Representative..............................To be elected in June
Grade 12 Rep..................................................Ian Campbell
Grade 11 Rep..................................................Candice Jagnandan
Grade 10 Rep..................................................Katie Shim
Grade 9 Rep..................................................To be elected in the fall
Student Advisor...........................................To be elected in the fall
POLICIES, GUIDELINES AND GENERAL INFORMATION

ACADEMIC HONESTY POLICY

True learning in an intellectually stimulating environment is enhanced when students consistently demonstrate respect for the intellectual property rights of others and adherence to a code of honour in all evaluated activities.

Definition of Cheating

- buying and/or selling of essays, assignments, or exam/test questions
- submission of the same piece of work in more than one course without the permission of the teacher
- preparation of an essay or assignment by someone other than the stated writer
- allowing one’s essay or assignment to be copied by someone else
- unauthorized giving/receiving of information or assistance during an examination or a test

Definition of Plagiarism

- use of ideas or thoughts of a person other than the writer without proper acknowledgement
- use of direct quotations, or of material paraphrased/summarized by the writer, without proper acknowledgement
- submission of an essay or assignment which has been written in part or in whole by someone else as one’s own
- submission of material which has been obtained from a computerized source, with or without minor modifications, as one’s own
- use of any information that is obtained from the Internet and/or other software programs and that is incorporated into a student’s assignment without proper documentation

Classroom teachers are experts in evaluating the writing of their students and they are most familiar with the writing styles of their students. For these reasons, they are recognized as authorities in identifying plagiarism. Therefore, when a situation arises of suspected plagiarism, it is the responsibility of the student to demonstrate the work to be his/her own. Students must be prepared to orally defend all written assignments. This includes answering questions about content, ideas, and resources, and providing rough drafts and notes.

Whether intentional or through ignorance of the rules, acts of academic dishonesty can lead to severe consequences for students.
**Process**

1. The student and the teacher will meet concerning the situation.
2. The teacher will complete an Academic Honesty Cover Sheet and submit the plagiarized work to the Administration.
3. Parents or legal guardians will be contacted and a consequence will be applied.

**Consequences**

Gradations of Academic Dishonesty exist, yet consequences will reflect one or more of the following:

- record of Academic Honesty infraction
- a failing grade or mark of zero for the assignment
- oral and/or written warning or reprimand
- a make-up assignment or re-write
- suspension from school and/or removal from a course

The teachers at Markham DHS are experiencing a tremendous increase in the amount of material taken from the Internet and used in student papers and assignments without proper documentation. This significant increase in plagiarism has resulted in the purchase of a Plagiarism Prevention Program called “Turn It In” which will be used for papers and assignments submitted for evaluation. *Turnitin* is the standard used at most Canadian Universities and Colleges. As described on the *Turnitin* website ([www.turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com)), the plagiarism program works as follows:

1. Students access *Turnitin* through an easy-to-use web interface, where they submit their work.
2. *Turnitin*’s servers compare submitted documents against vast proprietary databases using advanced pattern-matching technology. These databases include over 10 million student papers, millions of pages of books and journals and over 6 billion pages of the current and archived Internet. The database updates and adds to the Internet archive at a rate of 40 million pages per day.
3. The results are returned in the form of customized Originality Reports, in which any text matches found in the databases are highlighted and linked to their source. Originality Reports allow the teachers to make the final determination of whether plagiarism has occurred.

**ACCIDENTS AT SCHOOL**

All injuries must be reported to the person supervising the class or activity and to the Main Office where an appropriate report will be completed.
ACCIDENT INSURANCE
Student Accident Insurance forms are given to every student. The application form is filled out and mailed directly to the company. It is not returned to the school.

The information is also given to each new student who enters the school during the year. Students planning to participate in athletics as members of school teams are normally expected to purchase such insurance.

ASSESSMENT & EVALUATION
At the start of each course students will be given the course evaluation policy. This will include the types of evaluation used and their relative value. It will outline the ramifications of missed tests and overdue assignments. Students should share this information with their parents/guardians.

Guiding Principles for A & E
- The purpose of assessment and evaluation is to improve student learning in both content and skill areas.
- In order to accomplish this, teachers use a variety of A & E practices and tools which are continually reviewed.
- A & E practices should be fair and equitable and address the needs of all types of learners.
- Communication regarding A & E should be ongoing, clear, and meaningful between all stakeholders: students, parents/guardians and teachers. Communication includes formal and informal reporting such as student-teacher conferencing, phone calls to parents/guardians, and regular mark updates.
- A & E practices should be aligned with the School Plan for Continuous Improvement and Y.R.D.S.B. initiatives such as Pathways, Literacy & Learning, and Transitions.

Key Definitions
Achievement Categories: Assessments and evaluations will be conducted according to four achievement categories mandated by individual subject guidelines.

Assessment: The systematic and ongoing process of collecting, describing and analyzing information about student progress and achievement in relation to curriculum expectations and the achievement chart. The three types of assessment are as follows:
- Diagnostic: to determine specific learning needs in relation to the expectations which will be taught in a course.
- Formative: to monitor progress and ensure that students are progressing towards achievement of the curriculum expectations.
- Summative: to provide a cumulative array of student achievement data based on curriculum expectations.
Evaluation: the process of integrating and synthesizing summative assessment information from various sources to:

- Make inferences and judgments about how well students have achieved the curriculum expectations.
- Place a percentage grade on a student’s achievement of the expectations in relation to the achievement chart for each subject discipline.

**Final Evaluations/Examinations**

All students are required to participate in the summative assessments which total 30% of the final grade. Students are also required to write their exams in the place, at the scheduled time, and on the date indicated on the exam schedule. The schedule is made available to students at least two weeks prior to the commencement of each exam period. Vacations, summer jobs, and other planned excursions are to be scheduled outside of the dates indicated on the exam schedule. Any student who misses an exam due to extenuating circumstances (medical emergency, court appearance, bereavement) must provide proper documentation (medical certificate, court subpoena, death certificate). These students may be required to write a make-up exam in order to receive their credit. Students who miss final evaluations and/or examinations without extenuating circumstances will receive a mark of zero.

**Expectations for Students:**

In order to clearly demonstrate his/her mastery of course expectations, the student will:

- Respect the integrity of the assessment and evaluation policy.
- Take responsibility for his/her own learning.
- Arrive at class prepared with all materials necessary to participate in the lesson.
- Be proactive and respectful in communicating with the teacher.
- Meet the expectations of the course through regular attendance, and completion of all homework, assignments, and assessment and evaluation activities.
- Participate fully in group assignments.
- Observe deadlines for the submission of assignments.
- Be academically honest and submit original work.
Expectations for Parents/Guardians:

In order to support the learning process, parents/guardians will:

- Be a partner in the learning process by staying informed of important dates and school current events, reading the school newsletter and other communiqués.
- Be familiar with and support school policies and procedures, including: attendance, assessment and evaluation, character education, dress code, cell phone use.
- Work collaboratively with teachers and their daughter/son: monitor homework, communicate with the school on issues that impact on learning, value and respect instructional time.
- Celebrate the success of our staff and students.

Expectations for Teachers:

In order to clearly ascertain a student’s mastery of course expectations, the teacher will:

- Distribute a course evaluation outline within the first week of classes and clarify issues.
- Identify major assignments at the beginning of the course, where possible.
- Give appropriate notice for all evaluations.
- Provide sufficient and varied assessment and evaluation opportunities.
- Provide exemplars.
- Evaluate students according to Ministry guidelines for assessment and evaluation.
- Provide feedback in a timely manner.

Athletics at Markham D. H. S.

Sports and athletics represent an important component of the education of the total student. Markham District High School, through its department of athletics (Physical Education), provides many opportunities for student participation, development, and access to regional and provincial competition. Programs are reviewed annually and are offered if coaching supervision is available, funding is in place, and student interest is strong. Funding is provided by the York Region District School Board, supported by Student Council assistance and by the participants directly. Each team will have a $20.00 student participation fee to subsidize costs associated with league, transportation and officials’ fees. There may be other supplementary fees collected for some sports with respect to team uniform purchases, tournament entries and extended travel. At Markham we attempt to keep athletics in proper perspective realizing that they are a valuable experience within the context of the students' education.
Markham’s athletes have always had a favourable reputation throughout York Region. In order to continue this tradition, students must remember that participation on a school team is a privilege. Unsportsmanlike behaviour will not be tolerated or condoned by the coach, athletic department, or administration.

To be eligible to represent Markham in interschool competition, a student must be in regular attendance, maintain a minimum of 55% in all courses and consistently meet the behavioural expectations of the school. In addition OFSAA and YRAA regulations state:

Student/athletes who have achieved twenty-two (22) credits must be taking four (4) non-semestered full day school credit courses over the school year or two (2) full day school credit courses per semester.

This excludes night school or other continuing education courses.

**Athletes' Commitment**

When a student/athlete makes a team, he/she is expected to complete the season as a member of that team. If the student/athlete quits the team before the end of the season (unless for medical reasons etc.), he/she will not be allowed to participate in another sport for that season. A tribunal, made up of the Principal, the Athletic Director and the particular coach, will be available for student/athletes who decide to appeal this decision.

A FULL commitment to the in-season sport is expected from each student athlete. In order to accomplish this, the following must be adhered to: Student Athletes may participate in ONE sport only in each of the sport seasons; fall, winter and spring.

**Athletic Awards**

Each year Markham recognizes special athletes that have made an extraordinary contribution to our athletic program. Listed below are the specific awards and their criteria.

**Award Criteria**

Junior Athlete of the year............................. Athletic Ability and Achievement (Gr. 9 & 10 Male & Female)

Senior Athlete of the year............................. Athletic Ability and Achievement (Gr. 11 - 12 Male & Female)

Male & Female athletic citizens............................. Athletic Leadership

Ross Barnhardt Award................................. Athletic Ability & Sportsmanship (Male & Female)

1. A student must have 80 points gained from interschool competitions to be awarded an athletic letter.

2. A Gold "M" will be awarded to any athlete accumulating 120 points or over.

Interschool teams - 80% attendance at games and practice compulsory.

Badminton ................................................................. 10 points
Baseball ................................................................. 10 points
Basketball Jr., Sr. ....................................................... 10 points
Chearleading ............................................................. 10 points
Cross Country Running .............................................. 10 points
Curling ................................................................. 10 points
Flag Football ........................................................... 10 points
Football ................................................................. 10 points
Golf ................................................................. 5 points
Ice Hockey ............................................................... 10 points
Rock Climbing ......................................................... 5 points
Rugby ................................................................. 10 points
Slow Pitch ............................................................... 10 points
Soccer ................................................................. 10 points
Softball/Baseball ..................................................... 10 points
Swimming ............................................................ 10 points
Tennis ................................................................. 10 points
Track and Field ......................................................... 10 points
Ultimate Frisbee ......................................................... 10 points
Volleyball Jr., Sr. ....................................................... 10 points
Team M.V.P. .......................................................... 5 points

Individual Champions

Interschool individual ........................................... 5 points
Track only - setting York, Zone or O.F.S.A.A. Record 5 points

Officiating (per season)

Interschool officiating (rated) .......................................... 10 points
Interschool officiating (unrated) .................................... 5 points
Supportive - managers, timers and scorers 5 points
S.A.A. Member ........................................................ 5 points
S.A.A. Executive ...................................................... 10 points
Possible Interschool Teams

Fall Sports
Basketball ....................................................... Junior Girls, Senior Girls
Cross Country ................................................................. Co-ed
Football ................................................................. Junior Boys, Senior Boys
Golf .............................................................................. Co-ed
Soccer ................................................................. Senior Boys
Tennis ................................................................. Co-ed
Volleyball ................................................................. Junior Boys, Senior Boys

Winter Sports
Badminton ................................................................. Junior and Senior
Basketball ................................................................. Junior Boys, Senior Boys
Curling ........................................................................ Girls, Boys, Co-ed
Hockey ................................................................. Boys Varsity, Girls Varsity
Swimming ................................................................. Co-ed
Volleyball ................................................................. Junior Girls, Senior Girls

Spring Sports
Baseball ................................................................. Boys Varsity
Flag Football ................................................................. Girls Varsity
Rugby ................................................................. Junior Boys, Senior Boys, Girls Varsity
Soccer ................................................................. Girls Varsity
Slo-pitch ................................................................. Girls Varsity
Track and Field ................................................................. Co-ed

CONDUCT/PARTICIPATION IN CO-CURRICULAR EVENTS

Markham DHS proudly offers students many opportunities to enhance a student’s educational experience through school sports and clubs. Students must remember, however, that participation on a school team or club is a privilege. Disrespectful behaviour will not be tolerated or condoned. This includes criticism of event organizers, sports officials, confrontations with other participants, and/or the use of profanities during events or games. Students who do not represent MDHS in a positive manner will not be allowed to continue participation on the team or club. Each participant on a MDHS team or club is a student first and an athlete or club member second. Participation requires an academic and attendance record that satisfies the parent, staff advisor, coach, subject teacher and administration.
ATTENDANCE EXPECTATIONS

ABSENCES AND LATES (ATTENDANCE)

Students at Markham District High School are required to attend regularly, be punctual, and participate in all scheduled classes.

FULL DAY ABSENCES

- A parent/guardian phones the school in the morning with a valid reason. Students over 18 may call themselves.
- If no phone call is made, upon return, the student brings a note with a valid reason for the absence to the attendance office. The student will be issued an admit to class slip by the attendance secretary.
- The student shows the admit slip to each subject teacher. Until a note or phone call is received, the attendance secretary will mark the student as truant, phone a parent and assign a detention if the parent does not account for the absence. Students who do not attend a detention will have that detention doubled in length and/or be suspended.

ABSENT FOR AT LEAST ONE CLASS

- A parent/guardian phones in the morning with a valid reason. Students over 18 may call themselves.
- The student goes directly to the attendance office and signs in. If the student arrives late for a class, a note from the parent/guardian should accompany the student. The student will be issued an admit to class slip by the attendance secretary.
- Until a note or phone call is received, the attendance secretary will mark the student as truant, phone a parent and assign a detention if the parent does not account for the absence. Students who do not attend a detention will have that detention doubled in length and/or be suspended.

LEAVING BEFORE THE END OF THE DAY

- The student signs out in the attendance office with a note from a parent/guardian. In the case of an emergency, the attendance secretary will phone the parent/guardian.
LATE FOR CLASS (ARRIVING AFTER THE BELL)

- The student goes directly to class where the teacher changes the attendance scan sheet to “late”. If the scan sheet has already been sent to the office, the student will be asked to go to the office to sign-in.
- The subject teacher will discuss the lateness at the end of the lesson. The student may be asked to make up the time with the subject teacher. Persistent lates will be dealt with first by the teacher and then by a referral to the Vice-Principal. Consequences for persistent lates include detentions and/or suspensions.

EXTENDED ABSENCES

Students planning to be absent for 3 or more days for reasons other than illness must complete an “Extended Absence” form (available in the Attendance Office) at least one week in advance of the leave. This form must be signed by the Principal or Vice–Principal. It is the student’s responsibility to catch up on all work missed. Assessment opportunities may be lost as a result of this absence.

BUS TRANSPORTATION

The York Region District School Board does not provide transportation for secondary school students living within local transit service areas. All regional and special programs are included in this policy excluding gifted (P680.0). Some physically and cognitively challenged students may be exempt.

In areas that are not served by local transit, students living within 4.8 kilometres as measured along safe walkways to their nearest secondary school shall not be entitled to transportation. Public transit tickets and monthly passes are available for sale in the main office.

Bus Passes

Each student that is traveling via school bus will be issued a bus pass. This pass must be carried by the student whenever they are using this service. If a student fails to produce their bus pass when asked, they will be given a 24 hour time period to produce the pass. If the pass is not produced then the student will be denied access. If a student loses their bus pass there will be a $25.00 replacement fee. Bus passes that are tampered with will be confiscated by the administration.
Safety Procedures

- Be at the bus stop 5 minutes early.
- Watch for the driver's signal before crossing the road.
- Board quickly using the handrail and go directly to your seat.
- Remain seated while the bus is in motion.
- Eating and drinking on the bus is prohibited.
- Keep the aisle clear.
- Do not put anything out of the window.
- Shouting, horseplay and fighting is prohibited.
- When leaving the bus, stay off the roadway.
- If you must cross the road - walk 10 steps in front of the bus, wait for the driver's signal, look both ways, then cross the road.

At all times students should be aware of an alternative place to go should bus service be cancelled or delayed, or should schools be forced to close due to an emergency.

Cafeterias and Food

You may bring your lunch and eat in one of the cafeterias or you may purchase a lunch (cold or hot) and eat it there. All food and drinks must be consumed in the cafeterias. **There is to be no food or drinks in the classrooms, stairways, library, halls, or gym areas.** The cafeteria is open to students from 7:30 – 8:05 in the morning and for lunch. Students are not to go to the cafeteria between classes. The cafeterias are your dining rooms while in school. Treat them as you would your home! Use the garbage receptacles for your refuse and recycle whenever possible.

**Students who fail to clean up after themselves may be assigned a detention to be served cleaning up the cafeteria or school grounds.**

The Cold Cafeteria is a **peanut-free** zone. For the safety of those with severe allergies, do not bring or eat any peanut products in the cafeterias.

Code of Conduct

All members of Markham District High School are committed to excellence by providing all individuals – students, staff, parents/guardians and community members at large – with opportunities to learn and to grow. The Markham District High School Code of Conduct was developed in consultation with Staff, Students and the School Council. It is a working document that all stakeholders will review as necessary.
Our community demands respect and tolerance for individual differences. We will work to support and develop these attitudes by:

- Fostering a belief in and a commitment to non-violent conflict resolution.
- Valuing actions and behaviours that are positive, supportive and respectful of the rights and personal freedoms of others.

Our goal is clear: to provide the safest, most effective, and most nurturing environment for individual and collective growth. Both the Code of Conduct and the Safe and Supportive Schools Policy apply to all students anywhere on school property, on adjacent property and at all school-related events and activities.

**LEARNING ENVIRONMENT AND EQUITY**

All students deserve the best learning environment where the uniqueness of people is respected. Insults, disrespect, and other hurtful acts disrupt learning and teaching. Members of the school community have a responsibility to maintain an environment where conflict and difference can be addressed in a manner characterized by respect and civility. Thus, all school members must respect differences in people, their ideas and opinions; treat one another with dignity and respect at all times, and especially when there is disagreement; respect and treat others fairly, regardless of their race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age or disability; show proper care and regard for school property and the property of others; take measures to help those in need.

**RESPECT AND RESPONSIBILITY**

Students and staff are to be treated with respect and dignity. In return, they must demonstrate respect for themselves, for others and for the responsibilities of citizenship through acceptable behaviour in accordance with the Safe and Supportive Schools Policy. Respect and responsibility are demonstrated when a student comes to school prepared, on time and ready to learn; completes homework, submits assignments on due dates, and is prepared for tests and examinations; shows respect for themselves, for others and for those in authority; uses respectful language in an appropriate tone of voice, both in and out of the classroom; refrains from bringing anything to school that may compromise the safety of others; follows the rules and takes responsibility for his or her own action; identifies him/herself when asked for his/her name by a staff member; follows a staff member’s directions when asked to accompany them to the office.
SafetY
All staff and students must respect each other’s right to personal safety, to
dignity, and to attend school and school activities free from fear or
intimidation. This provides a safe and secure school environment.
Use/possession of harmful and/or illegal substances such as alcohol and drugs
on school property or at school-authorized events will result in suspension from
school and may also result in criminal prosecution.

Improving Behaviour
Any one or more of the following actions may be employed to improve student
behaviour:
• counselling by teachers, guidance counsellors, Administration
• parent consultation by phone or through meetings at the school
• exclusion from class for a specified time; removal of privileges
• referral to outside agencies and/or student contract
• payment for or replacement of stolen or damaged goods
• suspension from school for up to twenty days
• expulsion from the York Region District School Board

Change of Personal Data
It is essential that the school is able to contact the parent or guardian in case of
an emergency. Please inform the Main Office immediately of a change in
address, home or business telephone number or guardianship.

Communication/Keeping in Touch
Keep in touch by adding your name and email address to our distribution list.
You will receive our weekly bulletin as well as special distributions of
information throughout the year. Visit our website at:
http://www.markhamdistrict.hs.yrdsb.edu.on.ca/index.htm?page=default
and click on the flashing E-mail icon to submit your information. While you
are at the website, please feel free to explore other pages loaded with beneficial
information to assist you and your children. Staff contact information is
available by following the following link:
http://www.markhamdistrict.hs.yrdsb.edu.on.ca/links/staff-list-Teachers-1.htm
DRESS CODE
Appropriate dress makes a positive statement. Like many workplaces, the school community expects certain dress and deportment that is appropriate and non-offensive. Although clothing is a personal statement, students are expected to dress appropriately for school. Clothing and accessories that are offensive or degrading to oneself or others will not be allowed. Acceptable clothing does not include words or pictures which are drug, alcohol or violence-related or which may be considered obscene, revealing or suggestive. Pants sagging below the waist should be pulled up so as not to expose undergarments. Deliberately torn clothes and bare feet are not allowed. Hats, bandanas, sweatbands and all other headwear other than for religious purposes may not be worn in the school.

ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT
Cell phones, pagers and other personal communication devices are disruptive to the learning of others, can infringe upon an individual’s right to privacy and can contravene the Freedom of Information/Protection of Privacy Act. The use of cell phones, pagers and other personal communication devices is not permitted inside the school. The classroom teacher’s permission is needed for the use of electronic equipment such as iPods and MP3 Players in the classroom.

LASER PENS
Laser pens are not permitted on school property. Use of laser pens will result in a suspension. The device will only be returned to a parent or guardian.

LEISURE EQUIPMENT AND SKATEBOARDS
Sports equipment, roller blades and other leisure items ARE NOT to be used inside the school building. Use of leisure equipment may result in privileges being removed and the leisure equipment being retained by the Administration until the end of the school day. Skateboards may not be used on school property.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES
At the sound of the alarm all staff and students must evacuate the building. Students are expected to follow all teachers’ instructions and use the fire exit indicated on the emergency information sheet in each room. When outside the building, everyone must stand well away from the building and the fire routes. No one is to re-enter the building until the all clear signal is sounded (three short rings of the bell.) In the event of a major emergency, students will be accommodated at Reesor Park Public School.
EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Markham District High School is proud of its extra-curricular program and the excellence that its students have achieved in athletics, music, theatre, and interest clubs. M.D.H.S. students have participated in extra-curricular events and competitions at the local, provincial and national level and have learned the value of hard work, endurance and commitment. Markham District High School continues to be an advocate of extra-curricular and community service programs, believing that young people have many talents worthy of exploration and many ideas from which all can benefit.

We believe that extra-curricular programs promote wellness and that all students should be encouraged to explore interests and develop skills, which will enhance their appreciation of society, and their ability to succeed.

We believe that all students should be encouraged to participate in extra-curricular programs, and that students should be recognized for their accomplishments outside the classroom through an awards system.

Subject teachers may ask to review the student's participation in the extra-curricular program if work completion and poor attendance is occurring. Possible exclusion as a result of this policy can be appealed by students, parents or teachers.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are a vital and integral part of many of the courses offered at MDHS. They provide a different and valuable learning experience for each student. All students must complete a permission form for each field trip that they take. This form includes location, date, and cost to the student and duration of the field trip. The expected behaviour for all students and staff on any field trip is the same behaviour as in the school. Any infraction of school policy on a field trip will have the same consequences as would apply in a classroom or on board property. All participants of a field trip are to use the transportation provided. Students must go to and return from a field trip with the rest of the students. **Missed schoolwork must be made up.**

In most instances, students will share the costs for the field trip. Students forfeiting the privilege of attending the field trip due to misbehaviour, illness, or family emergency will sacrifice their monies paid. This is necessary since costs remain fixed once we have committed to the carriers.


**FREEDOM OF INFORMATION AND PROTECTION OF PRIVACY**

All general information in the custody or control of the York Region District School Board that is not confidential in accordance with The Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and other relevant legislation and regulations shall be publicly accessible.

All personal information in the custody or control of The York Region District School Board shall be treated as confidential, and:

- Shall be collected, maintained, used and disposed of only in accordance with the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and other relevant legislation and regulations.

- Will not be disclosed to anyone other than the person to whom the information relates except in accordance with applicable legislation, regulations, Information and Privacy Commission orders and court orders.

- Will be retained for a period of one year from its last use or for a longer retention period as required by law, Board policy or procedure, or essential Board practices unless both the person to whom the information relates and the Board consent to the earlier destruction of the information.

The public's rights of access to general information and particularly an individual's rights of access to their personal information shall be communicated. The costs of information access shall be recovered in accordance with the Act.

**GUIDANCE SERVICES**

Guidance counsellors are assigned according to student surnames. Please check in the Guidance office for your counsellor's name.

The M.D.H.S. Guidance Department provides a broad range of programs and services for our students, their parents and the school community.

Guidance Counsellors address questions and concerns regarding high school program planning and academic success, post secondary educational alternatives and career choices. They also assist with personal and social issues.

During each year of high school, counsellors teach Guidance curricula designed to inform students about useful study skills, careers, researching and applying for college and/or university and making a successful transition to their chosen post-secondary destinations: apprenticeship, college, university or the workplace.
Students are also interviewed individually to review their academic progress and to discuss their personal goals. Many students and parents consult with counsellors regarding personal concerns and individual or small group counselling is available upon request. Counsellors also provide referrals and liaison with community social service agencies if this is needed.

Throughout the school year, the Guidance Department organizes and assists with many special programs. Some of these are related to health and social issues such as smoking or substance abuse.

Our comprehensive University Information Program includes speakers from all Ontario and many out-of-province universities. A similar College Information Program is also offered.

The Guidance Department at Markham welcomes inquiries from students and parents. Appointments may be arranged in the Guidance Office or by telephoning 905-294-1886.

Regional information for Guidance Services for the York Region District School Board can be accessed on the internet website:

http://www.yrdsb.edu.on.ca/guidance.services

**HALLS**

Students with an unscheduled period (study period) are required to be in the cold cafeteria, hot cafeteria, the Resource Centre, or out of the school building. Students shall not be in the halls while classes are in session. This will prevent interruptions and disturbances to classes during instructional time.

**HOMEROOMS**

Homerooms have been assigned on the basis of Period 1 classes.

Students will get to know their homeroom teachers, as they will also have these teachers for Period 1. You should feel free to consult these teachers concerning any problems or procedures.

Students who do not have a 1st period class will be assigned a Guidance Homeroom and, if in the building for announcements, should be in the Library or Hot Cafeteria.
HOMEWORK POLICY

Homework is any activity assigned to be completed outside normal classroom time. Homework is an integral element of the educational process which allows students to review, reinforce and clarify concepts already studied, as well as to prepare materials yet to be covered. Students develop self-reliance, independence, and good study habits appropriate for life long learning by accepting responsibility as part of the learning process.

At Markham District High School homework, in many different forms, is a part of all courses. This homework includes:

1. The completion of each day's work.
2. Work specifically assigned to be completed at home. This includes preparation of materials for the next class, and assignments often with more distant due dates.
3. Review in preparation for tests and other assessments.
4. Regular daily review.

Teachers will assign homework that:
- supplements or supports classroom activity
- prepares material for future study
- consists of clearly defined tasks
- is meaningful and relevant
- is monitored in a variety of ways

Students are responsible for:
- making every effort to complete homework by the due date
- requesting clarification or assistance when necessary
- recognizing that attention to homework is essential to academic success and will impact overall performance.

Parents may encourage completion of homework by:
- providing a quiet area for study
- allotting a specific time for homework
- assisting as appropriate
- inquiring regularly about homework assigned
- consulting the classroom teacher if problems or questions arise

The amount and frequency of homework will vary with the grade and program of each student. The time it will take to do the homework will depend not only on the grade but also on the goals and the independent learning skills of the student. As a guideline, students can expect to do homework as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grades</th>
<th>Hours per day (average)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grades 9 and 10</td>
<td>1 to 1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grades 11 and 12</td>
<td>1.5 to 2.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY USAGE

The school computers and network resources are provided for instructional purposes only. School staff monitors all usage of the system and all information stored in the system. The appropriate use of information technology at M.D.H.S. includes respect and consideration for the rights and properties of others; respect and confidentiality in the use of passwords; the use of equipment and tools for academic purposes as directed by teachers. Students will only use software licensed to M.D.H.S. Unauthorized access, alteration, destruction, removal and/or disclosure of data, information, equipment, or software will not be tolerated. Malicious, inappropriate, unethical or non-academic use (including leisure game play) is unacceptable.

Please refer to the YRDSB Acceptable Use Policy found in the board pages of this agenda.

LIBRARY/RESOURCE CENTRE

Staffing:
The staff includes one full-time teacher librarian, Mrs. Gibbs and one part-time teacher librarian, Mrs. Evans, and a library technician.

Library Hours:
The library is open from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday. Students are welcome before school, at lunch, after school and during their spares.

Computers and other equipment:
Computers are available for Internet use and for word processing. It is expected that the library computers will be for school related subjects only. Games are NOT allowed. Hotmail should only be used to send school assignments from one file to another. Students also have access to a scanner, colour printer, TV/VCR and DVD player.

Resource Collection:
There are approximately 16,000 books in the library collection. We also have a collection of CBC-TV News in Review videotapes from September 1990 to the present. There is another collection of assorted videos available for English, Family Studies, Art, Health and History primarily.

Our collection of articles from SIRS (Social Issues Resources Series) is especially useful for history, science, geography and family studies courses.

The library subscribes to a wide assortment of periodicals including popular magazines such as People and Teen People and business magazines such as Fortune, Business Week and Canadian Business. Time and Newsweek are also available.
Borrowing Privileges:
Students may borrow up to 10 items at one time including videos, maps and items from our vertical files. Students should have their student cards with them when they are borrowing materials from the library.

On-line Databases:
The library has on-line subscriptions to Electric Library, Grolier On-line and EBSCO. The EBSCO database includes Novelist and Canadian Reference Center.

Markham District High School Library Catalogue:
One computer in the library is designated for searching our Book Catalogue. You may also access the Book Catalogue from the Library web page. Look under the Banner for the Link to the Catalogue.

Library Web Page:
The library web page may be found as a link on the MDHS website. It contains direct links to research databases and also many links to useful Internet sites and library documents. The links are categorized by subject area. Students will find all of these extremely useful for many different courses.

Fines:
Fines for overdue books are 25 cents per day to a maximum of $2.50 per item. Students are expected to return overdue books and other materials and/or pay their fines before borrowing additional materials.

All borrowed materials must be returned by the end of the school year. Any lost materials and fines must also be paid.

LOCKERS
We expect students to respect the property of others and of the school. **Lockers are school property and as such are subject to being searched without notice to or permission of any person.** Students must register the lock and combination with the office. Only the lock registered for a specific locker is to be fastened to that locker. Lockers will be checked periodically to see that the combination registered opens the lock on a locker. **Unregistered locks will be cut off.**
Do not divulge the combination to your lock to anyone. Large amounts of money or articles of significant value must not be brought to school, as their security is strictly the responsibility of the student. The school does not accept responsibility for lost or stolen items whether they belong to the student or are loaned to the student. All contents of lockers must be removed by the last regular school day in June for summer cleaning. Contents left in the lockers will be removed.

**LOST ITEMS**
Students who lose something should check the Lost and Found box outside the Principal’s Office. Items that are found should be brought to the Lost and Found. All remaining items in the Lost and Found are donated to charity at the end of each month.

**MEDICAL INFORMATION**
Students with a medical condition or allergy need to report the information to the main office. This information will be shared with subject teachers when necessary, and will be invaluable in an emergency.

**OPENING EXERCISES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**
Students are expected to be in class before the opening exercises begin. They are expected to be silent and attentive during the opening exercises and announcements. Students in the hall or cafeteria during opening exercises are expected to stand still. All students are to demonstrate respect for the anthem and for those making announcements.

**PARKING**
There are a limited number of parking spaces for students. Students who park at MDHS must have an identification sticker which must be visible in the front windshield of the car. Students may park only in the Student Parking area. Cars without stickers or parked in other than student designated spots may be towed at the owner's expense. Applications for these stickers are available in the administrative office. Student parking spaces are not reserved and, as such, you may not find a space available when you arrive. Cars parked in the M.D.H.S. lot are at the owner’s own risk. Students who drive recklessly or dangerously will have their parking privileges revoked.

The number of available parking spaces will be reduced during the construction of the new MDHS. The parking regulations referred to above will be strictly enforced.
PEER MEDIATION
Differences between students should be settled through discussions. Staff members, counsellors and other students can provide help in resolving disputes. PEER MEDIATORS are also available to assist. All responses to disagreements should reflect Markham District High School’s commitment to a safe and supportive learning environment. Fighting will not be tolerated and will result in suspension for all student participants no matter who starts the fight.

PERSONAL PROPERTY
Students should not bring valuables to school. The school does not carry insurance for any items brought to school by students or teachers. Bicycles and cars are also not covered by Board insurance while on school property and must always be locked securely. Do not keep valuables, money or expensive clothing in a locker or Phys. Ed. change room as the school is not responsible for missing items. Leave your valuables at home.

PIZZA LUNCH WEDNESDAYS
Every Wednesday during the school year, Markham Baptist Church hosts a pizza lunch across the street from the school. Activities include ping-pong, foosball, video games & basketball, and the opportunity is open to all Markham District High School students who have lunch during period 3 or 4 that day. Pizza is $1.25/slice and pop is $1/can. Students are welcome to stay for the activities, or "grab'n'go". If you have any questions, contact any of the Pizza Lunch staff or the church @ 905-294-5830.

REGULAR DAY SCHEDULE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Day 1</th>
<th>Day 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:10 - 9:30 A.M.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:10 - 8:15 A.M.</td>
<td>Announcements</td>
<td>Announcements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:35 - 10:50 A.M.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:55 - 12:10 P.M.</td>
<td>3 LUNCH 1</td>
<td>8 LUNCH 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:15 - 1:30 P.M.</td>
<td>4 LUNCH 2</td>
<td>9 LUNCH 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:35 – 2:50 P.M.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SAFE AND SUPPORTIVE SCHOOLS POLICY

The Safe and Supportive Schools Policy is distributed to students at registration. It is reviewed by homeroom teachers on the first day of class, at the assemblies at the beginning of the school year and by administrator visits to classrooms in the fall. Students and parents are expected to read the policy and retain it for reference. Additional copies are available in the main office.

SMOKING

It is Board policy that smoking is not permitted on Board property or at school sanctioned events.

Possession of cigarettes and smoking cigarettes on or adjacent to Markham DHS or at associated school activities (e.g. dances, field trips, etc.) is not allowed.

(Adjacent to: any property that is within visual distance of Markham DHS.)

Escalating consequences include:

- Parents are phoned and the student’s name is recorded
- Parents are contacted and the student will perform 1 hour of school/community service
- York Region Health Services are informed of the offence and the student may be charged.

SNOWBALLS

Students are reminded that while throwing snowballs can be fun, it is also a potentially dangerous activity that can result in personal injury and damage to property. It is therefore an activity forbidden at MDHS and violators can expect to be disciplined.

STUDENT TIMETABLES

On-Line Course Calendar

Students may access the York Region District School Board calendar at:

http://www.yrdsb.edu.on.ca

by clicking on the “Quick Links” item “2008-09 Secondary Course Calendars” found on the bottom right of the page. Choose the Markham District HS link to reach our on-line calendar.
Spare Period(s) on Timetable
Grades 9 and 10 students must maintain a full timetable throughout the year (8 courses). Grade 11 and 12 students may apply for a reduced course load of 7 courses in Grade 11 and 6 or 7 courses in Grade 12. However, this is not recommended and would only be granted in special circumstances. Permission for a reduced course load in the senior grades is only granted by the Administration. Students who have dropped a course will not be allowed to enrol in the same course in the following year until all students choosing the course for the first time have been given an opportunity to enrol.

Timetable Changes
Requests will be considered on an individual basis. Due to staffing changes student timetables may be affected early in the school year. Changes with the least impact will be implemented.

STUDENT, PARENT AND TEACHER RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Students have the right to:
- a meaningful education with suitable and challenging courses, adequate facilities and learning materials
- guidance in making career and program decisions
- a pleasant, positive school atmosphere
- participate in the extracurricular activities available for S.A.C. card holders
- be disciplined in a firm and fair way, and be treated by all staff with respect and dignity
- appeal or redress treatment perceived as unfair as outlined under the appeal procedure
- extra help from teachers, at mutually convenient times, for work missed due to involuntary reasons;
- expect equality, tolerance, freedom from harassment and respect regardless of ethnic origin, sex, sexual orientation, age or disability
- be fairly evaluated with reasonable access to their marks taking special circumstances and exceptionalities into consideration

Students have the responsibility to:
- respect the authority of school personnel
- be punctual and regular in attendance
- work diligently and cooperatively to meet the requirements of courses, complete work missed when absent from class, prepare for extra help sessions, and complete all assignments, to keep a record of their progress in each class
- show respect and courtesy to all staff, students, and visitors regardless of ethnic origin, sex, sexual orientation, age, or disability and refrain from the use of inappropriate behaviour and language
• contribute positively to the learning environment and allow others to work without disruption
• respect the property of the school and others
• obey all school rules and adhere to the school’s code of behaviour
• develop and maintain a wellness lifestyle with respect to personal hygiene and to the use and abuse of alcohol and drugs
• make educational choices responsibly and seriously after consultation with parents and school staff

Parents/guardians have the right to:
- expect that their student’s rights will be respected
- examine and discuss the school’s courses of study and the Ontario Student Record for their student. (Requests for changes may be made to the principal.)
- expect reasonable behaviour from their student and other students when at school, when at any school sponsored function and when on school buses
- receive regular communication from the school
- discuss any concern for their student with the school
- be informed of any serious behaviour or academic problem with their student to facilitate collaborative action as soon as possible
- be informed as soon as possible in case of personal injury or other unusual occurrence

Parents/guardians have the responsibility to:
- promote regular and punctual attendance
- provide the school with written reasons for absence from school
- cooperate with the school to develop positive attitudes toward learning and good behaviour
- be interested in and discuss with their child his or her progress and involvement at school
- be interested in and discuss with their student’s teachers his or her progress and involvement at school
- provide time and a place for school work to be done at home
- consult with their child to help select appropriate courses and levels of difficulty which will maximize the chances for educational success for their student
- ensure the physical and emotional well being of their student, leading to increased learning potential
- inform the school of unusual circumstances that may affect their student’s performance at school
Teachers have the right to:
- expect reasonable behaviour from all students when in class, on the school premises, at school functions, and when on school buses
- cooperation from all students
- be treated with respect and dignity
- receive support from the principal and vice principals in doing their job
- refer to the principal or a vice principal any student who misbehaves, is uncooperative or who is not trying to learn
- be given any information of unusual circumstances that may affect a student’s performance at school whenever this information is in the best interest of the student

Teachers have the responsibility to:
- provide appropriate instruction and evaluation
- assist students to learn in class and, when appropriate, after class ensure the rights of students
- reinforce positive behaviour
- report and be willing to discuss student progress and conduct with students, parents and the school’s administration with due regard to students’ rights and appropriate confidentiality
- endeavour to enforce school rules fairly and consistently
- act as a kind, firm and fair parent would act
- withdraw a student from an activity that is potentially dangerous to that student or others
- model appropriate behaviour such as punctuality and courtesy
- provide classes with one week’s prior notification of major evaluations
- keep an accurate record of student attendance

TELEPHONE MESSAGES

It is not possible to relay messages to students except in the case of a real emergency. Classes cannot be interrupted to call students to the office for a message or telephone call unless the call is by a parent or guardian, and has been cleared through a Vice-Principal.

Several pay telephones are available near the cafeterias.
10 STEPS TO SUCCESS AT MDHS

1. **Attendance** - Attending school punctually and regularly will give you the best chance at being successful.

2. **Attitude** - Be positive about school. Remember that getting an education is an investment in your future.

3. **Organization** - A large part of the success you will have will depend upon the organization and control of your time. Set aside time to get your work done, allow enough time for special assignments and arrange time for preparing for tests and exams.

4. **Notebooks** - Organize your notes to ensure success. When you miss a day of school or a class, catch up on any notes you missed.

5. **Assignments** – Always remember to hand in all of your assignments. Term marks count for the majority of your marks.

6. **Exams** - Examinations and the Culminating Activities near the end of the year are important evaluation methods. Be prepared for them and treat them seriously.

7. **Homework** - Homework is expected of all students in high school. In grades 9 or 10, it may involve 1 to 1.5 hours each night. Sometimes you will have more to do. You can always review! Make sure that you do all homework assigned. The best way to make sure that it is done is to set aside a certain time each day to do it. Do it promptly and carefully early in the evening, and then enjoy the rest of the time left in your evening.

8. **Equipment** - All courses require notebooks and pens and pencils. Many courses have special equipment requirements. Whether it is a gym uniform for Phys. Ed., safety glasses for Tech., math sets for Math class or certain books for English class - make sure you go to class well equipped.

9. **Health** - You will do better at school if you are healthy than if you are tired, hungry and out of shape. Get enough sleep, eat regularly and well, and try to include some kind of exercise in your daily routine. Start your day with breakfast; you can't expect your body and brain to function without fuel.

10. **Balance** - Above all, make sure that your life is balanced. The best students spend time on schoolwork, also join into extracurricular activities, have an active social life, and spend time with friends and family. If any of these activities occupies too much of your life, you will be less content because of the imbalance.
TEXTBOOKS

Textbooks are the property of The York Region District School Board and are on loan to students. Please take care of them. Students are responsible for returning them in good condition. The school is aware that books are not new when issued and some normal wear through usage is expected. An appraisal for damaged or lost books will be made by the subject teacher. Payment must be made at the school office before final report cards, transcripts and timetables are distributed. Students must return all materials not later than the last regular day of class.

VIDEO SURVEILLANCE

As part of the York Region District School Board’s commitment to provide a safe environment for students, staff and the community, all York Region secondary schools are equipped with video surveillance systems. The cameras are to assist in deterring violence, vandalism or any other criminal act. The permanent cameras have been installed to monitor parking lots, entrances, halls, locker areas, offices and other key areas of the school.

VISITORS TO SCHOOL

Parents are always welcome to visit the school. Individuals who are not MDHS students are visitors to the school and must identify themselves in the main office upon arrival. Normally, only visitors conducting school business are permitted; therefore, friends should be told to wait off school property.

All visitors are required to report to the main office upon entering the school. Persons under the age of 16 who are in violation of the school’s visitor policy may receive a summons to court. Students over 16 may be subject to arrest and/or fine by the police.
M.D.H.S. Style Manual

1. TOPIC ASSIGNMENT AND TOPIC SELECTION

A. If You Have Been Assigned A Specific Topic In An Assignment:
   - read the question or assignment carefully
   - underline key words or phrases
   - check a dictionary for connotations of words that have several meanings
   - read the list of terms of instruction
   - limit your topic if it is broad or general
   - ask yourself all the questions you can think of that apply to this topic. Have classmates ask you questions as well. Ask about the origins of the situation or object, its parts, the relationship of the parts to the whole, causes, effects, implications, etc. Find your specific approach to this topic
   - decide the audience for whom you are writing
   - write a statement of purpose

B. If You Are Required To Select A Topic:
   - read the question or assignment carefully
   - underline key words or phrases
   - check a dictionary for connotations of words that have several meanings, for language variations, for accents and/or gender
   - read the list of terms of instruction
   - try to choose a topic that appeals to you. You may want to consider a topic with which you are familiar and attempt to broaden your knowledge. Or, you may choose a topic that you know little about and wish to explore this area. Regardless, choose a topic that will provide a POSITIVE challenge, you may be working on it for some time.
   - adjust your focus on your topic so that it fits the criteria of the assignment
   - you may wish to do some preliminary research to ascertain the availability of resources
   - write a statement of purpose
C. Understanding The Expectations Of The Wording Of Your Assignment:

Various instructional words have very specific meanings and you will encounter a variety of them throughout your academic career. Always clarify the teacher’s interpretation of the instructional words in the assignment. The following is a list of generally accepted definitions for instructional words.

- **Analyse**: Break down and examine all parts or elements of and explain relationships between parts. This pattern is used when describing the steps or stages of a process. You will usually describe the process in chronological order, step-by-step.

- **Cause and Effect**: Trace a result back to its source and look for both immediate and ultimate causes and results. Find a system of organizing the causes and effects.

- **Classification**: Identify the categories within a topic and sort data into these categories.

- **Compare**: Explain the differences and similarities, concentrating on the similarities. Use specific examples to be clear.

- **Contrast**: Explain the differences, again using specific examples.

- **Define**: Explain the meaning of, or identify the main characteristics. Usually, a definition includes a classification and one or two identifying characteristics. Avoid the use of “is when” or “is where” when writing a definition. Make sure to give the limits of the definition. Example: amulet – an ornament worn as a charm against evil

- **Describe**: Recount, characterize, sketch, or relate in sequence of story form.

- **Evaluate**: Carefully appraise the problem, citing both advantages and limitations. Emphasize the appraisal of authorities and, to a lesser degree, your personal evaluation.

- **Explain**: Clarify, interpret, and spell out the material you present. Give reasons for differences of opinion or of results, and try to analyse causes.
Identify  
Capture the identity of giving one or two main distinguishing or essential characteristics.

Illustrate  
1. Explain or make clear by using examples, comparisons or facts.
2. Draw a diagram or sketch.

Justify  
Prove or give reasons for decisions or conclusions, taking pains to be convincing with examples.

Outline  
Trace ideas in order by following main ideas, supporting ideas, and details in the order in which they have been presented.

Prove  
Establish that something is true by citing factual evidence or giving clear logical reasons.

Relate  
Show how things are related to, or connected with, each other or how one causes another, correlates with another, or is like another.

D. Writing A Statement Of Purpose

A statement of purpose is a sentence which states our intentions for the essay. It clarifies whether you wish to inform, persuade or entertain your reader, and gives some indication as to how you will approach your topic.

E. What Type Of Paper Are You Writing?

There are a variety of ways to communicate through writing. Some are very loose and unstructured; others are very formal and require considerable organization and research.

Where most students tend to concern themselves with the length of the paper, less consideration is given to the type of paper. This is bad. Ask your teacher to give you clear instructions as to what type of paper you are writing. Some examples of various papers are:

a) The Report  
This form of writing requires you to communicate facts, data, etc., without original thought or opinion.

b) The Thesis Essay  
This form of writing will require you to state your thesis and then to develop your arguments to substantiate your point of view. You will select facts and arrange arguments designed to convince your reader that your thesis is valid.

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c) The Discussion
This form of writing requires you to discuss the significance or importance of a particular concept. This will require a clear definition of the problem followed by presentation of information which deals with ALL sides of the question.

d) The Formal/Research Essay
This form of writing will require a great amount of thought and research before you begin writing. Your research will help you focus on a thesis or a central idea. Your work will be detailed and organized, including footnotes and bibliography. This is a more elaborate product than the thesis essay. It should include material from secondary sources. This assignment may require you to keep a log of your progress and to confer with your subject teacher as you proceed.

II. RESEARCH
No matter what kind of essay you are writing, it will involve research. Your subject teacher can indicate which type or research is required in a particular subject area.

Primary Research
This occurs when you yourself make some observations on a particular topic. You may design questionnaires, experiments, or interviews to help you gather data first-hand about an idea you wish to explore, but essentially that idea came from you applying your knowledge to a new situation.

Secondary Research
This requires you to consult other sources than your own knowledge: newspapers, magazines, documents, journals, encyclopaedias, books. You consult those sources not just to obtain facts, but to learn what others think or know about your topic. Your essay may contain sections in which you cite these authorities to help prove your point; that requires correct documentation.

Plagiarism:
Plagiarism is a very serious offence. It involves passing off as your own someone else’s words or ideas without giving credit to the author. Even if you paraphrase the ideas, you must identify your source for your readers. You can best avoid plagiarism by keeping organized notes during your research.
Note taking:
You will find it most convenient to gather the important information about your source the first time you use it to gather information.

You will need to record the following bibliographical information:

- the title and edition
- the author and/or editor
- the publisher
- the place and date of publication
- the volume number (if a magazine or journal)

In addition, as you take notes from the source, note carefully the page number from which a useful quotation or fact was taken. You may also wish to include the library from which you obtained the source, and the call number, if a book.

Some researchers use a separate index card or piece of paper for each source they consult, and write the appropriate bibliographical information on it. Computers now make it easy to create a database for each consulted source. Whatever system you use, it is important to keep sources separate and record all pertinent information.

If, while you are researching, other ideas occur to you, write them down in a different colour to clarify which are your ideas and which came from another source. Remember that secondary research is intended to support your main points, not substitute for them.

III. THE THESIS

If the paper you will be writing does not require you to write a thesis, then you can skip over most of this section. However, you should know that a thesis is to the essay what a topic sentence is to a paragraph. Your writing will improve if you understand the principles of developing a thesis. Your thesis will provide you with a focus for your writing and define the boundaries and scope for your supporting arguments. It is important to have a clear thesis prior to writing your first draft.

A. What Is A Thesis?

A thesis is a single sentence that shows your position on a particular issue. This position will be made clear by the development of arguments and the presentation of evidence which proves the thesis to be valid. Your teacher can provide you with examples specific to your subject area and the nature of the assignment.
B. How Do You Support A Thesis Statement?

Ask yourself “What has caused you to think this statement to be correct?” Write down 5 or 6 responses. Choose 3 or 4 that you can best answer. The answers become the arguments you will develop to support your point of view.

C. Outlining Your Essay

Your essay will include an introduction, a body and a conclusion. Your aim in the introduction is two-fold:
a) to capture the reader’s attention and 
b) to state your thesis.
The most common way to do this is to begin with a broad general statement about your topic, then narrow it down to your statement of thesis. This places your thesis in the last sentence of your introduction where it will receive the most emphasis.

In the body of your essay, you will develop the argument which supports your thesis. First, decide in what order you will present your arguments. Place each argument in the body in a paragraph of its own:
a) state your point directly and positively in the first sentence of the paragraph
b) explain, clarify, qualify, amplify or elaborate on your point
c) give evidence in the form of a quotation, a reference, or paraphrase information you have found in your research
d) interpret or explain how the evidence relates to the point you were making.

Your conclusion will restate your thesis in different words and then move out to a more general concluding statement. However you structure it, be certain your conclusion relates to your introduction.

D. How Do You Arrange Your Arguments?

Your outline may indicate an obvious arrangement of arguments. Try to choose an organization that best suits your topic. Some possibilities are:
• general to specific
• most important to least important
• most familiar to least familiar
• chronological order
IV. DOCUMENTATION

Because you are borrowing the words, facts, or ideas of others when you do research, you must tell readers that you have borrowed the material and from where you have borrowed it. To make sure your work is honest rather than plagiarized; you must acknowledge all borrowed material in two locations:

1. with in-text parenthetical citations within your essay, and,

2. with an alphabetized list of your sources on a separate page at the end of your essay.

You must give credit to the author of anything you use in your essay, not only direct quotations and paraphrases, but also opinions and ideas, and facts or figures (unless the material is widely known, such as a date).

Teachers require special documentation styles or formats in their students’ essays. In the past, this has meant using either numbered footnotes at the bottom of each page or numbered endnotes at the end of the essay, followed by a bibliography listing all sources. Footnotes and endnotes have been replaced with the more modern technique of using embedded citations (also known as in-text parenthetical citations) within the text of the essay. These citations are placed at the end of a quotation or paraphrased sentence and are placed in parentheses. An embedded citation serves two purposes. The citation tells readers that the material is borrowed, and it also refers readers to more detailed information about the source so that they can locate it.

The older term, Bibliography, has been replaced by Works Cited or References because sources now usually include electronic and visual material as well as print sources.

The two documentation styles used most often are:

Modern Language Association (MLA) which is used for English, history, the arts, and languages. This style gives authors’ names and page numbers for citations which are embedded in the essay, and then has a Works Cited list, containing full bibliographic information, at the end of the essay.

American Psychological Association (APA) which is used for science, the social sciences, business, and mathematics.
This style gives authors’ names, publication dates, and page numbers for citations which are embedded in the essay, and then has a References list, containing full bibliographic information, at the end of the essay.

**For each research assignment, ask your teacher which documentation style should be used. Examples from the MLA Style are given below. Examples of the APA style are available in the school library.**

**MLA Documentation Style**

**EMBEDDED CITATIONS**

**Format:**

The author’s last name and the page number from which the quotation, paraphrase, or idea is taken must appear in the text, and a complete reference must appear in your Works Cited list. The author’s name may appear either in the sentence itself or in parentheses following the quotation, but the page number should always appear in the parentheses.

**Examples:**

**Direct Quotation — One Author:**

Some argue that “a dream is the fulfillment of a wish” (Freud 154).

Freud states that “a dream is the fulfillment of a wish” (154).

**Paraphrase of Author’s Idea — One Author:**

The historian, Crane Brinton, believes that the French and Russian revolutions had similar causes. (Brinton 155).

**Direct Quotation – More Than One Work by the Same Author:**

“There is room enough in anyone’s backbone for too much duplicity” (Laurence, Jest 182).

**Long quotation:**

Place quotations longer than four lines in a block of lines and omit the quotation marks. Start the quotation on a new line, making sure you indent. Single-space the quotation. **Your citation should come after the closing punctuation mark.**
Ralph and the other boys finally realize the horror of their actions:

The tears began to flow and sobs shook him. He gave himself up to the first time on the island; great shuddering spasms of grief began to wrench his whole body. His voice rose under the black smoke before the burning wreckage of the island; and infected by that emotion, the other boys began to shake and sob too. (Golding 186)

Direct Quotation --- Plays:

When quoting from plays, cite the act, scene, and line numbers for Shakespeare’s plays, and the page number, act, and scene (if any) for other plays.

Later in King Lear Shakespeare has the disguised Edgar say, “The prince of darkness is a gentleman” (3.4.147).

In Death of a Salesman, Linda defends Willie Loman by stating:

He’s not the finest character that ever lived. But he’s a human being, and a terrible thing is happening to him. So attention must be paid. He’s not allowed to fall into his grave like an old dog. Attention, attention must finally be paid to such a person. (Miller 56; act 1).

MLA Style: Preparing Your Works Cited List

This list, placed on a separate piece of paper at the end of your essay, should include all the sources you have quoted, paraphrased, or summarized. It provides the information necessary for a reader to locate any sources you cite. Each source you cite in your essay must appear in your Works Cited List.

General Rules:

- Arrange your sources in alphabetical order by the last name of the author.
- List the author by last name, follow it with a comma, and then first name.
- If a source has more than one author, invert only the first author’s name, and then continue listing other authors.
- If a source has no author, put it in the list by title. When putting it in alphabetical order, ignore

- You may choose to underline the title or to use italics. Be consistent by using one form only in your Works Cited List. Both forms are correct. Examples which follow will consistently be underlined.
- Indent second and third lines five spaces.
- Double-space between entries.
- Capitalize each word in the titles of books, articles, etc., not including ‘A’, ‘The’, or ‘An’ if they appear in the middle of the title.

‘An’ if they appear in the middle of the title.

- For well-known encyclopaedias, it is not necessary to list the publisher or place of publication.
- Usually it is only necessary to list the edition number (if any) and the publication date.
- If you are listing more than one source by the same author, put the sources in alphabetical order by title, and instead of repeating the author’s name, use three hyphens ( - - - ).

**MLA Style Works Cited List: Basic Forms for Sources in Print**

**BOOKS**

Follow the general format shown below and in the examples:

*Author (s) Title of Book. Place of Publication: Publisher, Year of Publication.*

**One author:**


**Two authors:**


**More than two authors:**

No author given:


Second or Later Edition:


Multivolume Work:


Book by an Editor:


A part of a book, such as an essay in a collection:


Print encyclopaedia with author given:


Print encyclopaedia article, with no author given:


Reference Book Article:


Dictionary:

Government Publication:

Pamphlet:

A translated work:

A novel or a play from a book that is a collection of several novels or plays:

MAGAZINES, NEWSPAPERS OR JOURNALS

Format:
Author (s). “Title of article.” *Name of Magazine*. Day Month Year: Page Numbers.

Magazine article with author given:

Newspaper article, with author given:

Newspaper article, with no author given:
MLA Style Works Cited List: Basic Forms for Electronic Sources

BASIC FORMS FOR CD-ROM AND COMPUTER DISK SOURCES

Treat sources on CD-ROM or diskette the same as you would for sources in print, with two main additions: the medium (“CD-ROM, “Diskette”) without quotation marks, and the distributor of the electronic work, if one is given, as well as the publisher.

Encyclopaedia article on CD-ROM, with no author given:


Encyclopaedia article on CD-ROM, with author given:


CD-ROM Periodical Database:


CD-ROM Newspaper Article Database:


BASIC FORMS FOR ONLINE SOURCES

Note: If it is available, list the date of the latest revision of the site. It is also necessary to list your date of access because online sources are often updated and information available at one date may not be available at a later date. Be sure to include the complete address for the site, and enclose the address in <angled carets> so that the address is clear.

ONLINE ENCYCLOPEDIAS

Article in an online encyclopaedia, with no author:

Article in an online encyclopaedia, with author:


ONLINE NEWSPAPER AND MAGAZINE ARTICLES DATABASE SUBSCRIPTIONS

Format:
Author. “Article Title.” Original Source of Article Date of original source: page numbers. Product name Name of Library subscribing to the service. Date of access <electronic address of subscription product>.

A magazine article found in an online subscription database:


A newspaper article found in an online subscription database:


A reference source found. In an online subscription database (no author)


WEB PAGES ON THE INTERNET

Example:
Author(s). Name of Page. Date of Posting/Revision (if available). Date of Access <electronic address>.

A personal or professional Web site, no date of posting available:

A personal or professional Web site, with date of posting available:


MAGAZINES AND JOURNALS ON THE WEB (NOT ON ONLINE DATABASES)

Format:
Author(s). “Title of Article.” Title of Journal Issue or Year: Pages. Date of Access <electronic address>.

Example:

Online Government Publication:


DISCUSSION LISTS AND NEWSGROUPS

A Usenet Group:

E-MAIL MESSAGES

Author(s) name. “Title of message.” E-mail. Date.

Personal e-mail message:
ONLINE IMAGES, VIDEO, AND AUDIO CLIPS

Format:
“Description or title of image, video, or audio clip.” Date of posting. Type of image. Retrieval date <Internet address>.

Example:


OTHER TYPES OF SOURCES

VIDEOCASSETTE OR DVD

Format:
Title. Director (if known). And Producer (if known). (Date). Title. Format. Distributor, Date.

Example:


Video, CBC News in Review:


DVD:


TELEVISION OR RADIO PROGRAMME

Format:
Episode Title. Name of Program. Format. Name of network. Local station, city. Date.

Example:

AUDIO RECORDING, TAPE OR CD

Example:

IMAGES

Slide/Transparency:

Map:

ORIGINAL WORKS OF ART

As Viewed at a Museum or Art Gallery:

As Viewed in a Book:

LIVE EVENT

Stage Play:

Concert:
Reducing Acid Rain: A Success Story?

Acid rain is an environmental issue that affects plant and animal life, lakes and rivers, buildings and structures, and human beings. Precipitation that contains acidic gases such as sulphur dioxide or nitrogen oxide has the potential to cause serious environmental problems. Since the 1960's scientists have studied the harmful results of acid rain and looked for ways to reduce harmful atmospheric pollutants (Howard and Johnston 16). In recent years, efforts to reduce the negative effects have been successful. People have recognized acid rain as a serious environmental threat and have taken steps to stop it (Anderson 121).

Laws reducing air pollution have helped to reduce the initial causes of acid rain. In the 1970s a drop in the fish population and changes in lakes and forests alerted environmentalists to the problem (Lucas). In response, the federal and provincial governments together created the Eastern Canada Acid Rain Program, aimed at reducing the amount and type of pollutants allowed into the atmosphere (Environment Canada). In 1991 the Canada-US Air Quality Agreement was signed, designed to control air pollution that would move from one country to another. A recent report states that “in the Great lakes region, there has been a 76% reduction in toxic substances and that greater numbers and diversity of wildlife, including frogs, turtles muskrats and herons are reappearing in the area” (Environment Canada).
Public awareness of the dangers of acid rain to the environment has led to voluntary measures that have a positive effect. Some large corporations have used technology to control dangerous emissions and are now using energy more efficiently. Other companies have done their part by inventing and manufacturing environmentally friendly products used by both industry and individuals (Lucas). There are many things that ordinary people are doing in their homes and yards and while shopping and travelling, to reduce acid rain emissions.

Many people automatically turn off lights and electrical equipment, reduce their driving and select public transportation or carpools, take up sports that do not require the use of fuel, make responsible choices when shopping, recycle at home and at work, and express opinions to elected officials regarding environmental policies. (Ferguson)

**MLA STYLE: SAMPLE ‘WORKS CITED’ LIST**


A Note about Annotated Resource Lists

Sometimes your teacher will require an Annotated Works Cited list either when the project is completed or during Stage 2 when you are locating and selecting resources.

Set up your list in the same way as in the example above, but include an annotation of about five lines for each entry, which gives the following information:

- The author’s background and qualifications (this may be difficult for Web sites)
- The author’s thesis/point of view
- Details about the specific information present in the source
- A comment on whether the source is biased
- A comment on the usefulness of the resource

(The above sections on documentation and the MLA Style are taken from: 2003, Toronto District School Board. Student Research Guide.)

V. THE FINAL COPY – GENERAL LAYOUT

A. Paper

8 ½ x 11 typed, double spaced, one side of un-punched, unlined white paper. Retain a copy of your paper.

B. Title Page

State the title of the paper, teacher’s name, your name and the date. Course code and section should also be included.

C. Table of Contents

Not always necessary. Check with your teacher.

D. Page numbering

All pages are numbered consecutively beginning with the second page of the body of the essay. Number the pages of the main text in Arabic numerals, placed in the upper right-hand corner. Pages before the beginning of the text should be numbered in lowercase Roman numerals in the upper right hand corner.

E. Headings

When using sections and subsections, follow this guide:
- centre spaced underlined, for major headings
- side spaced underlined, for minor headings
- there should be no red underlining

F. Margins

Left and top of page 2.75 cm. Right and bottom 2.5 cm.
G. Spacing
   Double spaced throughout, except for longer quotations which are single spaced.

H. Title
   The title appears on the first page of the essay. Centre the title 5 cm from the top of the page. Capitalize, but do not underline your title.

I. References
   Include endnotes, then bibliography as the final pages of the paper.

(Staple pages together securely. Do not use paper clips. Folders or special covers may or may not be required.)

VI. INDEPENDENT STUDY CONFERENCE
   The Conference is a discussion that occurs either between the teacher and student or students at different times during the process of the independent study.

A. The context of the conference will be relative to the current stage of your ISP. Because an ISP is a progression of stages, conferences early in the project may deal with:
   - topic selection
   - narrowing the topic
   - setting goals/objectives
   - determining a plan of action (process)
   - format
   - research

B. Towards completion of the project, conferences may deal with:
   - editing, revision
   - process evaluation (keeping students “on track”)
   - format
   - clarifying concerns

Your subject teacher must inform you of the following:
   - number and dates of conference
   - format
   - conference length
   - expected stages to be complete
   - any items required at the interview
C. **Tips for Students:**

- be on time
- be an expert on your topic and be confident about what you know
- be prepared with any questions you have about your topic
- be prepared to summarize orally your topic

Take notes on what your teacher says about your topic and follow up on any research suggestions made. Remember that the interview isn’t only for teacher evaluation; it should also help you work out difficulties with your topic.

VII. **PREPARING FOR A PRESENTATION**

Many students feel insecure about facing their peers to give a seminar or other presentation; however, students who prepared their work conscientiously and who follow these guidelines will breeze through their presentations with ease. Read on for the secrets of success!

- Know your text. Be able to go to specific portions of the material to support points you wish to make.
- Don’t ever chew gum or eat while presenting.
- Don’t ever read a presentation. Eye contact is essential for presenters to gauge whether or not the listeners are following the material.
- Rather than taking a sheaf of notes, take a clear and simple outline which states the few points you wish to make.
- Relax. Everyone will be in the same position sooner or later. To prepare, you might try deep breathing.
- Don’t become so fixated on what you convey that you alienate the participation of others. Remember that the purpose of your presentation is to discuss the material and the issues that it raises with the members of the class. The presentation is not for the teacher.
- Although you want to encourage discussion, you must control it.
- Always bring the class back to a specific point you want to make.
- Remember that you are interpreting, not rehashing, the information. Examine what the writer says.
- Talk to your audience. Be knowledgeable enough about your topic to jump around it when you talk. Don’t become stuck on chronological sequence.
- Use your voice to its best advantage. Consider volume, tone, pitch, and inflection when conveying your material. All of these can help you emphasize a point.
- Leave your listeners with a definite impression of your topic in about four major points. Naturally, there will be other points to make, but keep reiterating the major ones.
• To help listeners make notes, show your outline on an overhead or on the board so that they know what to expect.
• Encourage class participation and welcome criticism of points you have made. This strategy may start an argument that makes your seminar truly interesting.
• Radiate energy and enthusiasm. These are contagious and will allow your listeners to become involved in your presentation.
• Book any necessary A-V equipment well ahead of time, and be sure you are familiar with its use.
• A video is a tool to help you convey aspects of your topic; it should not comprise the whole presentation. Lead into the video by suggesting what the class should look for, and summarize what you hope they noticed.
• Utilize pictures, posters and diagrams.

How to Respond Successfully To Test Questions and Tasks Involving Reading and Writing Skills

A. Get some sense of the information you will be searching for in the reading passage. Skim over the questions before you read the passage. Next, read the passage and then return to the questions.

B. Consider, is the question asking you simply to find and write information directly from the passage? You may see phrases such as, “What event occurred…?” “Which word means the same as…?” “When did…” “Who was…?” As quickly as you can, read sentences or paragraphs to be certain that you have the right information to respond to the question. Do not rely upon your memory when the answer is important and easy to find in the text selection.

C. Think: is the question asking me to make an inference, that is, draw a conclusion, make a prediction, or interpret from details provided? For example, if you see a young man with a reddish, perspiring face walking along the street carrying a hockey stick and a gym bag, you might conclude that he has just come from playing hockey. **Ask yourself one or more of the following questions:**
  • What do I already know about this topic that helps me to “read between the lines”?
  • What is the main idea here?
  • What do I think may happen or might have happened?
  • If I put all the facts together, what conclusion can I reach about this situation, event, or person?
D. When responding to multiple choice questions:

- Read all the alternatives first.
- Realize that you can choose only one answer, therefore, only one answer is correct.
- Do not rely on your memory, especially if you think that more than one answer is a possibility. Re-read part or all of the selection to help you choose.
- If a multiple-choice question has options, which are names, events, dates, or numbers, be sure to re-read to find the correct information.
- Some multiple-choice questions ask you to draw an inference or to reach a conclusion or to state the main idea. See the tips above in #3 for help with this process.
- Be aware that answers for multiple choice questions do not follow a set pattern; for instance, the answer is not always the first choice, or the last choice, or the second choice. The answers are randomly distributed.

E. When responding to “short answer” questions on a sight passage:

- If the question asks for information, which comes directly from the text, simply write a few words or a short sentence. You will likely not have time to write a lengthy answer, and it is not required.
- If the question asks for your opinion, or for you to respond based on your own experience or knowledge, you should choose one or two particular pieces of information from the sight passage and add your own comments, or state your opinion on those issues based on what you know or have experienced.

F. If the passage has a diagram, chart, graph, or illustration (picture), consider:

- How does the text (words) connect to the picture, chart, graph, or diagram?
- Does the diagram, picture, or chart help you to understand parts of the text better?
- Does the graph, illustration, or chart provide additional information to what is in the text?
- Does the chart, diagram, or illustration provide information that is different from what is in the text?
- How might I have to read this chart, graph, or diagram, differently from text (words)? Do I need to read it from bottom to top? From left to right? Do I need to consider the overall impression of an illustration?
To respond to some reading passages, you may be asked to write a paragraph, a summary, or a series of paragraphs, perhaps in the form of a letter stating your opinion about something. Words like “paragraph,” “summary,” or “letter” signal writing prompts. In other words, you should respond as you would for a writing assignment, being careful to organize each paragraph with a topic sentence and supporting details, to use correct and varied sentence structure, and to take care with your grammar, punctuation, and spelling.

**General tips about test-taking:**

1. Take off your watch and put it on the desk in front of you so that you can quickly remind yourself of the time you have left to work.
2. Quickly glance over the various test tasks if you can, e.g., you may have 3 pieces of reading with questions and 2 writing tasks, and mentally try to divide your time into segments for each task. Remember that the writing tasks may take a longer time than the reading tasks, as you think and organize your thoughts before writing. On the other hand, if you are writing about things that you know, you may be able to work more quickly; whereas, reading new material may take a little longer.
3. Work steadily at one task at a time, doing your best to respond well. Don’t spend a great deal of time thinking about and worrying about things to which you can’t respond. Rather proceed with things you know that you can understand and do, and then return to problem areas if you have the time. Get as many questions and tasks completed as possible, working quickly and efficiently.
4. If you have time, re-read your answers to the questions on the reading tasks to make sure that they are clear and that you understand them. If they are confusing or unclear, cross out words with a single line, or add words using a caret ^ or inverted v
5. If you have the time, check your punctuation, spelling, and sentence structure on the writing assignments, making corrections as necessary.