

BUFFALO CREEK MIDDLE SCHOOL

Research and Writing

MR. JOSEPH BAKER
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DESCRIPTION: This course trains students in research writing and analytical reading by focusing on research including thesis development, gathering and evaluation of source material, organization, and documentation.

COURSE GOALS: The purpose of Research and Writing is to enable students to read, write, and think analytically. Assignments will challenge students to understand and evaluate source material, to articulate their own views effectively, and to argue for those views in a well-reasoned and well-written short responses, paragraphs, essays, research papers and team writing projects.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

After completing this course, the learners will be able to:

- Find source materials using the library, Internet, and other sources
- Assess the validity and value of source materials. Organize information from source materials around a single thesis
- Defend a conclusion or opinion with the information gathered
- Write using appropriate academic style and grammar
- Define and avoid plagiarism

GRADING

Course grades will be based upon participation, individual assignment rubrics, and team project rubrics.

RESEARCH TOPICS

The research topics will include:

- Historical movements, events and people
- Global awareness
- Current events
- Student generated topics

EXPECTATIONS

Students will:

- Shake hands with Mr. Baker before entering the classroom
- Once inside the classroom, go directly to their assigned seat, read the board and take out required materials before the tardy bell rings
- Be active listeners
- Follow the 5 B's of Buffalo Creek

MATERIALS

Students should bring the following materials to class:

- College ruled looseleaf paper
- A two-pocket folder dedicated to this class
- Pencils

LEARNING TEAM

In order to be successful, learning teams will be utilized. Each team will consist of the student, parents and teacher.

TEACHER BACKGROUND

My name is Joseph Baker. It is my pleasure to teach at Buffalo Creek Middle School, I have been at this school since its' opening in 2007. I have a B.A. in Political Science from the University of South Florida. I earned an M.A. in Curriculum and Instruction at Nova Southeastern University. I also completed 21 semester hours at the Stetson University College of Law. During my tenure at BCMS, I have been featured on the news on WTSP Channel 10 in Tampa, been named WalMart Regional Teacher of the Year, Manatee County Secondary Social Studies Teacher of the Year, and I was twice a finalist in the Manatee Excellence in Education Awards. In addition to this course, I teach Advanced World History, 7th Grade Cambridge Global Perspectives and 8th Grade Pre-AICE Cambridge Global Perspectives. The 8th grade course is a high school credit class.

I love traveling and enjoy leading student groups on trips abroad. This past summer I led a group of 22 to Greece. I am organizing a trip to Germany, Switzerland and Italy for the summer of 2026. I am a passionate supporter of Liverpool Football Club. I watch every match either at home, or with an Official Liverpool Supporters Group. My wife Malissa Baker teaches music at our school. I have 3 children and 3 grandchildren. My wife and I live in St. Petersburg with our youngest son Steven and our cat Skrtel.

PARENT/GUARDIAN

By signing below, I am confirming that I read and understand this syllabus.

Student Name Printed: _____

Student Signature: _____

Class Period _____

Parent Signature _____

Parent/Guardian Name (printed): _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____