

Chip Barham

Mr. Barham

English I

1 June 2023

Introductory Letter

Dear Summer School Students,

Welcome to summer school! I know coming to school every day was probably not high on your list of ways you wanted to spend this summer, but I hope you are here to make the most of it and get the credit you need to continue on with English classes this fall at your regular high school.

Here at the beginning of this school session, I'm writing to you to let you know a little about me so that you can begin to get to know the person you will be dealing with for 3.5 hours every day for at least a month. I'll proceed in order of importance: first, I'm a Christian. Of course, this doesn't mean I think I'm perfect. Sometimes I make bad decisions. Sometimes I'm selfish. Sometimes I suffer the consequences of my poor choices. But my faith is what I always come back to, and as I do, I make fewer poor choices, and I discover on a deeper level who I really am and what I truly believe. My faith is at the heart of who I am, and I try to let it inform and direct everything I do.

What I do is varied. Most important, I try to be a good husband to my wife, a good father to my five children, and a good neighbor to everyone I encounter. When I want to enjoy myself, I like to read, drink coffee, go hiking, or watch mystery shows. Part of my time is spent attending church and hanging out with friends. I also believe exercise is important, and I like how I feel when working out is a regular part of my routine. One of my goals is to start up with CrossFit again this summer. Of course, I also teach. I have been teaching for twenty-seven years now, and for twenty-five of those years, I have been teaching freshman English. In Rutherford County, I've taught at Riverdale High School and Central Magnet School. I love almost all things that have to do with English studies, especially poetry, fiction, Shakespeare, and Greek mythology.

My goals in life include getting the rest of my children through college, someday traveling out West (through Colorado, Wyoming, and Montana), and retiring to a life of many grandchildren, numerous dates

with my wife, and serving in my church and community. My short-term goals include enjoying this summer session teaching English while still occasionally making it to the pool and spending some time in the sun.

So what about you? Who are you? How do you identify yourself and what you do and what you believe? In this class, I invite you to share who you are, your likes and your dislikes. I invite you to share your beliefs. I invite you to agree or disagree with others. I invite you to change my mind or the minds of your classmates, or your own mind. But I invite you to do it all in a spirit of civility and with the intent of getting to know and express yourself clearly and with respect, which is the goal of education.

Those are the essentials you need to know about me as we begin to learn about each other. What I hope you can see most from this letter is that I'm excited to meet you and to get to know you more as we work hard to learn together this summer. In fact, you're first assignment will be to write a letter back to me, letting me know more about you. Welcome to the class. I'm looking forward to working with you!

Sincerely,

Mr. Barham