

# The Sophomore Something

*an occasional e-newsletter produced by the 10<sup>th</sup> grade AGS team left*



**September 30** marks the end of the first grading period. If your student has late or make-up work to submit, please encourage them to see us during tutoring times as soon as possible.

**October 5: Travel Time!** Please attend this 10<sup>th</sup> grade parent meeting to find out more info about our Learning Expedition to Costa Rica! We'll meet in the library at 6 p.m.

**October 6 and 7:** the first [JOURNAL](#) is due. This interdisciplinary writing assignment includes two entries from English II, two entries from World History, 1 entry from Chemistry, and 1 self-directed entry. Parents can help with this assignment by brainstorming global issues and offering editing/proofreading support.



**Will the real Gonzo please stand up, please stand up?**

AGS teachers love to show off their school spirit. On "Twin Day" of Homecoming Week, we couldn't resist, and all embraced the "creepy mustache" trend that Chemistry teacher Robert Gonzales is bringing back in style.

## Curriculum Corner

**CHEMISTRY,**  
Robert Gonzales

From the positive kernel of densely packed protons and neutrons, we have emerged into the whirligig excitement of the electron cloud. In the gossamer spaces where electrons reside students often space out themselves, lost in the abstract notions of quantum variables.

As we construct a more elaborate view of the atom, from nucleus to the outer reaches of electron density, we will be focusing on periodicity, the patterns that will give us an understanding of the physical and chemical trends that are woven into the design of the periodic table. We will start to make connections to the stellar births of our atoms and their journey through space, time, and even plants to make us into our own shining stars.

Just like my mustache, we continue to grow and become fuller in our understanding of the content and the resources available to facilitate student success.

**WORLD HISTORY,**  
Edward Tierney:

In World History, we have been making connections to *The Ramayana* and *Siddhartha* with our World Religions unit. We learned about the spread, origin and basic beliefs of Hinduism, Judaism, Buddhism, Sikhism, Christianity and Islam.

We have also begun our first project of the semester, the Ancient Civilization Magazine, a major grade which counts in both History and English. Students have chosen a civilization and a group of students to produce this product, which is due on October 21. Students will have over four hours of library time in addition to class time to work on this project. We are encouraging students to meet up with their groups outside of class time either at someone's house or at Austin High. Ms. Webster or Mr. Tierney's room can be made available for these meetings during lunch or before or after school by request. Our next unit is on Law and Government in the ancient and medieval world.

When you ask your kids what they did in school, do they say "nuthin" or shrug their shoulders? We've decided that our middle man often lacks communication skills, so look for this e-newsletter every now and then to fill you in on the real deal. We're still working on the name for our newsletter (we came up with several wildly inappropriate titles and just kept coming back to the idea that it oughtta be "the sophomore.... something," so that's where we landed. You can see Issue 1 on at [www.agsaustin.org](http://www.agsaustin.org).

**ENGLISH II – World Studies,**

Stacy Webster:

What do Luke Skywalker, Simba, and Pee Wee Herman have to do with Rama and Siddhartha? Everything! Our current unit, Ancients and Archetypes, delves into Joseph Campbell's journey of the hero. While students are learning about the patterns of the periodic table in Chemistry and the patterns and universals of civilization in World History, we're delving into the power of the monomyth, the one "shape-shifting yet marvelously constant" pattern of storytelling. Your students will probably begin to see the hero cycle in every film and novel, so buy them lots of popcorn if you don't want them whispering to you in the movie theater.

At home, you should see students reading *The Ramayana* or *Siddhartha* (they had a choice), and soon they will be working on a product that tracks the steps of the hero cycle in their novel. Students should be writing, too; please encourage your students to share journal drafts or their ancient civilization magazine article with you, so that you can make suggestions for their revision and proofreading process.

If they won't let you help with any of this, maybe they'll let you quiz them with flashcards for their upcoming root words quiz. A great website, [quizlet.com](http://quizlet.com), can help create electronic flashcards and games -- check it out!

**GEOMETRY,**

Kyle Smith:

Your great kids have demonstrated that they know what Geometry is, and with the completion of their collage projects, they now know *where* Geometry is -- everywhere!

Their hard work is evident in their excellent depictions of vital terminology. This mathematical lexicon has laid the foundation for the gratifying and fascinating geometrical landscape that awaits them.

The most exciting announcement for the second six weeks is that Geometry class now has a website: [smithsmath.com](http://smithsmath.com). Parents and students can use it to explore useful links for online resources, class notes, assignments, test dates and more.

Early and often our lessons have been peppered with compelling examples of how math influences their past, present and future. I think the collective favorite so far has been the demonstration of artificial intelligence (see [cleverbot.com](http://cleverbot.com)).

It has been overwhelming to see the enthusiasm this group of students has shown for many of these mini-lessons; gratefully an enthusiasm that has piqued a new interest and appreciation for the obligatory nuts and bolts that build that knowledge.

From here we will be illuminating the relationships between the shapes, angles and situational differences that will help them better understand their world.

**SPANISH,**

Kevin Gillion:

Sr. Gillion has added a page on his website for Parents. It is aptly titled, "Parents." This page contains English navigation help, a list of last names of students attending tutorials by date, and will be updated in the future with additional parent-friendly features. More importantly, Sr. Gillion is holding a three hour Spanish writing workshop this Saturday, 9/24, in Room 169 from 9:00 AM to noon. All are invited.

Help with snacks or breakfast tacos is welcome and appreciated.

**ALGEBRA II,**

William Kiker

In Algebra 2 this six weeks, we are currently studying some foundations we will need for the functions we will discuss this school year. Most of the students have seen these concepts before in Algebra 1 and Geometry, so we plan to cover them in more depth and apply them to real data to gain more insight and meaning.

Students are also working on their Linear Regression Project where they are investigating a relationship between two globally-relevant variables that they have self-selected to arrive at some conclusion. Many students have picked very interesting variables and we are all really excited to see the outcome and conclusions made from this project! More to come in the next installment of our newsletter-- stay tuned!



## Have you heard of Irish Spring? How about an IRISH SPRING BREAK?

Sophomore teachers Ms. Webster and Mr. Tierney are leading a group of students to Ireland on an EF Tours this Spring Break. Sign up by November 1. Email [tierneyworld@gmail.com](mailto:tierneyworld@gmail.com) for more information .

Erin go bragh! (Ireland forever!)

## Passports needed for international travel

**COSTA RICA AND PASSPORTS:**  
Join us on October 5<sup>th</sup> at 6 p.m. in the AHS library for a parent information meeting about our Learning Expedition to Costa Rica. Please check on existing passports or sign up to get a new passport for your child ASAP. If you already have a passport, check the expiration to see if it needs to be renewed. According to the U.S. Govt. website,

passports are valid for only five years if issued to a child under the age of 15. If over age 16, they are valid for 10 years. It is recommended that a passport be renewed if it expires within 9 months of travel.

**Teacher Request:** While passports are muy importante, please avoid missing school to obtain one. 😊



Click this link: [PASSPORT](#) for more information about obtaining a passport in Austin, TX



## Monitoring student progress online

GRADESPEED (Parent Connection) is a great tool to keep track of your student's progress. We expect and encourage students and parents to use this resource as an information tool. However, Gradespeed is always a work in progress until teacher grades are submitted and verified (typically on the Monday following the end of a grading period).

Assignments turned in late may take several days to be recorded due to teacher paperwork overload (naming it "gradespeed" didn't make grading go faster, but we are happy to sign a note or gradesheet to let parents or coaches know that we received the work).

Also, teachers may enter an assignment name but not a grade to hold a place or to indicate an assignment has been collected, but not yet graded or recorded. Most zeros can be replaced with a passing grade when students turn in late work or retake/correct test questions. (All teachers follow their department policies to determine how late work is accepted and assessed.)

Be on the lookout for zeros or "msg" which means "missing." Students should attend tutorials to address any missing assignments. Thanks for checking and we appreciate your patience and understanding!



Ctrl + Click on each hyperlinked site to the right to enter a whole WORLD of information about AGS classes. →

## Have you bookmarked the teachers' websites?

- [Mr. Tierney's World History Wikispace](#)
- [Gonzo's Chemistry Website and Blogonzo](#)
- [The Webster Web: Webby's English Website](#)
- [Senor Gillion's Sitio Web](#)
- [Mr. Kiker's Algebra II Site](#)
- [Smithsmath: Mr. Smith's World of Geometry](#)