



CHAFFEY HIGH SCHOOL

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Principal
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Dear Student and Parents of Students of Mr. James' Algebra I,

Welcome to Algebra I at Chaffey High School. I am pleased that you and your student are part of our class for the 2013-2014 school year. The following describes what our class is about and what I expect from your student. This letter states in simple terms what your student must do to be successful and how I want you to help. On the next page is a brief acknowledgment that I would like you to sign and return with your student tomorrow. How to help your student succeed:

1. Your student has been informed of the **notebook** that I require them to maintain for our class.
2. Your child must maintain very good attendance in order avoid falling behind.
 - a. Students who are tardy or truant four times may be dropped from the class.
 - b. Students with significant health issues must have their parent notify me now so that appropriate measures may be taken to assure satisfactory progress.
3. Check your student's work every day. Ask questions about their work and their learning.
4. Communicate any and all concerns with me promptly; don't wait.
5. If your student does not succeed in our class, he/she will be placed in the same course for next semester.

A little about me:

I have lived in Upland with my wife since 1978. Our twenty-year-old daughter will begin her third year of study at UC Berkeley this fall. We also have a married daughter who graduated from Westmont College in 1999 and completed a PhD in Environmental Sciences at UC Riverside in 2006. I like astronomy, camping and backpacking, playing guitar, gardening, computers and sports. After graduating from South Pasadena High School in 1972, I earned bachelor's degrees in Physics and Astronomy from the University of California at Berkeley. After working for a number of years in private industry as an electronic engineer and production manager, I entered teaching. I earned my Master of Arts degree in Education from the Claremont Graduate University in 1992. I have studied chaos theory and dynamical systems and have pursued research astronomy having co-published articles in the October 1994 *Astrophysical Journal Supplement* and June 20, 1999 *Astrophysical Journal* reporting research in which I used the Hubble Space Telescope in 1996. This is my twenty-third year teaching at Chaffey.

Teaching is something I truly love to do. I enjoy helping students understand and discover new things. It is important to me that your student succeeds in this class. This class may be easy at times and quite challenging at other times. This means they have to **work** at learning the material; they have to try every day to do their best. Above all, mathematics is an important and beautiful skill. Like all skills, they will need to **practice** this skill to perfect it.

There is a poem by Robert Frost that says, "Two roads diverge in a wood, and I -- I took the one less traveled by, and that has made all the difference." In this case, the road less traveled leads to education and personal growth and satisfaction, while the other road does not. **Please keep this letter for future reference.**

Sincerely,
Tom James
Departments of Mathematics and Science

From our class web page (<http://tajames.net>):

Parents:

Yes, there is homework every day, due the next day. Success always comes at a price: There is a cost to your student, your student's teacher, and to you. All three costs are necessary and these costs are worth paying because your student is worth it.

Your child's success, just like growing up and developing good character, is primarily YOUR responsibility! How to help your child succeed in our class:

1. Provide plenty of time and a place in your home for your child to do homework and study free from distractions. If this means rearranging things or your schedule, the sacrifice is worth it.
2. Consistently have a high expectation for your child's academic progress. Don't accept sloppy work, slacking off, or excuses. Nothing that your child is required to learn in high school is unreasonable or that difficult.
3. Make sure that each day's assignment is finished that day. As adults we are not permitted by our bosses to lag behind; our children should act responsibly just as we do.
4. Hold your child accountable: ask her/him to show you the day's assignment and to *explain* it to you. We are accountable to our bosses, landlords, pastors, mentors, etc. Children should be accountable to their parents or guardians at all times.
5. Learn about what your child is required to master. Parents cannot effectively guide children if they do not know what is happening in their lives. Of particular importance for our class is your awareness and your student's awareness of the California State Framework for Algebra. See my web page for a convenient link.
6. If your child is having trouble, find out why. Provide, or require that he/she receives, the help that is needed. Children do not automatically know how to manage their time nor do they know how to positively handle the difficulties they encounter.
7. Communicate with me (see below).

COMMUNICATION: Students and parents can reach me at 988-5560 ext. 2434 or by e-mail at tajames@tajames.net. Our web page <http://tajames.net> contains links that include current assignment information and other resources. These resources are also linked to School Loop. I can be reached in person after school almost any day until 4 or 5 p.m. Any issue that develops that affects your progress in the class should be discussed promptly with me.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I have read the expectations of the class and have discussed these with _____.
(student's name)

The best time to reach me by phone is:

(time)

(phone number)

Signed _____

Date _____

Please print name _____

Please write your questions, concerns or comments in the space below:
