English Language Arts 406 D’Arcy McGee High School

**Creative Writing Assignment**

**SUSPENSE**

In this assignment, you will write a short story or screenplay of **500-1000 words**. *Please respect the word limit.*

You must submit at least **two drafts** of your story: a rough one and a final polished copy. One draft must show evidence of thorough editing. *Write legibly.*

If you are writing a **short story**, follow the style (MLA) format discussed earlier this year (you have a handout). If you choose to write a **screenplay**, see me regarding the style you will use and for a refresher on the codes and conventions of scriptwriting.

Your **purpose** for writing this story or screenplay (script) is to explore suspense. Your story or screenplay must reflect a familiarity with the *techniques that writers use to create suspense* and with the *codes and conventions of the genre* (you have another handout). Your final product should be a story or screenplay that is engaging and exciting to read.

Your **audience** is the readers of a general-interest website aimed at adolescents. In a publicity campaign meant to accompany the release of an action-movie blockbuster, the website has issued a call for short suspense fiction (short story or screenplay) to be published in its upcoming issue. You are writing your story with the intention of having it published in the website’s next issue.

**Due date:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

◾"*There is a clear difference between surprise and suspense […]. We are sitting here and having an innocent conversation. Let us assume that there is a bomb under this table between us. […] suddenly there is a loud boom and the bomb goes off. The audience is surprised, but before this surprise they have only seen a very ordinary scene without any significance. Let us instead look at a suspense scene. The bomb is under the table and the audience is aware of this because they have seen the anarchist plant it there. They also know that the bomb will go off at one o’clock, and up on the wall is a clock showing that the time is now quarter to one […]. In the first scene we have given the audience 15 seconds of surprise […] but in the last scene we have given them fifteen minutes of suspense."*

**- Alfred Hitchcock**