

Ms. Jamie Bal  
World History  
Block A and B  
September 3, 2013

Dear 9th Graders,

Welcome to your very first week at Newton North! I hope you're all as excited as I am to start a fresh year at such an amazing school. Just like you, this will be my first full year at Newton North High School, so I know we both have a lot of new names and faces to learn. To help us all out, I have decided to introduce myself in a letter and look forward to your reply.

I grew up in the small town of Upton in Central Massachusetts, home to one stoplight, a hopping pizza joint, and a lot of cows. My quaint hometown was even given the prestigious Most Boring Town in Massachusetts award, so it goes without saying that I have always enjoyed traveling. I spent many summers visiting my family in Louisiana and the Mid-West as well as exploring overseas to visit some of the places we will be learning about this coming year. My latest trip was to Ireland last June, and I had the pleasure of seeing one of my favorite sites of all: castles! If you couldn't guess, I have a big soft spot for the Middle Ages, one of our units this year.

Moving out of my one-stop-light town, I had a big change in scenery when I came to Boston to attend Boston University where I received a dual Bachelor's degree in Social Studies Education and History while minoring in Business Administration. In my last year at BU, I had the opportunity to student teach here at Newton North and instantly fell in love with both the school and community. I was overjoyed to accept a teaching position here and can not wait to get started. As a result, I recently moved just over the Newton border to Brighton. So as we explore the rest of the world, I expect you all to teach me about the best breakfast nooks and movie theaters here in Newton.

When I wasn't busy reading up on Ancient China or balancing accounting spreadsheets, I spent all of my time at college in a theater with a crazy group called Wandering Minds. I joined Wandering Minds in my second semester of college and worked on fifteen productions with the theater group as a member of the tech crew. I loved every single production I worked on and each one came with unique challenges from painting a giant Hufflepuff banner to building a two-story rotating set. Theater taught me a lot, not just about construction, crafting, and the many uses of duct tape, but also about taking risks and working in a truly collaborative environment.

I am sure both of those skills will be important as I start my first year teaching here at Newton North and I am excited to collaborate with you as we delve into old times and new places this year in World History. I'm looking forward to a fantastic year with you all!

Sincerely,

Ms. Bal

# Homework

**Assignment:** Respond to my letter with one of your own.

**Requirements:** Your letter should be at least **one page** long, typed (single-spaced with a heading like mine). Please use **Time New Roman size 12 font**. Your letter should be well-written so please proofread.

Include the following:

- Your personal “history” (family, childhood, etc.)
- An example of one thing you are passionate about—explain how you became passionate about it and why it is important to you.
- What period(s) of history are you most interested in? Why?

Feel free to include any additional information about yourself that you would like me to know. Pictures aren't a requirement, but if you would like to include one, feel free!

**Due Date:** Beginning of class Monday (September 8)

**Grading:** I will read all of your letter and give you a homework grade for completing the assignment.