

Sophomore English Syllabus

2025-26

Castro Valley High School

Mr. Olazabal Room F8

tolazabal@cv.k12.ca.us

bit.ly/mro_english

Greetings!

Writing and literature are tools for reflection, growth, and community. Without the contributions of each member of society, there would be nothing to learn from these works. As such, no study of composition, literature, or speech can be complete without understanding the context in which these were written, studied, and taught. In the case of our class, this course is a result of the contributions of not only the authors and teachers who created and curated the course materials, but also the ancestral voices, both willing and unwilling, of all our community members. The content of this course cannot help but reverberate with the voices of those whose labor and suffering built all that we hold dear. These include the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe, immigrants, migrants, enslaved people, incarcerated people, and so many others whose contributions are crucial to the foundation of our country. Echoes of their exploitation and their hope call us to pause, reflect on, acknowledge, and build each other up from all that was for the sake of all that will be.

Course Description

This course integrates the reading of literature with writing and speech. The literature component emphasizes the comprehension and analysis of short stories, plays, poems, and novels, as well as vocabulary acquisition. The writing component focuses on essay writing. The speech component requires students to formally prepare and present a variety of topics to an audience. Students read, read, discuss, and write about fiction, non-fiction, drama, and poetry throughout the year. Career exploration activities are integrated into the curriculum.

For HABiT students, course material will be taught through a HABiT “lens.” The Career Project will be HABiT-focused, and students will get an opportunity to explore internship opportunities.

Course Focus Standards & Skills

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> RL.2 - Identify, summarize, and analyze thematic development | <input type="checkbox"/> SL.4 - Presentation, memorization, & recitation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> RI.1 - Cite evidence to support analysis | <input type="checkbox"/> SL.5 - Using digital tools |
| <input type="checkbox"/> RI.2 - Identify, summarize, and analyze central ideas | <input type="checkbox"/> SL.6 - Adapting language based on context and task |
| <input type="checkbox"/> W.1 - Argumentative writing | <input type="checkbox"/> L.1 - Use standard English in speaking and writing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> W.2 - Informative/explanatory writing | <input type="checkbox"/> L.4 - Determining the meaning of unknown words or phrases using a variety of strategies |
| <input type="checkbox"/> W.8 - Analyzing and citing research | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SL.1 - Collaborative discussions | |

Materials (see me if you need assistance)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> College Ruled Spiral Notebook | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 Pencils with Erasers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> College Ruled Filler Paper | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 Blue or Black Pens |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1.5-2” Binder with Dividers | <input type="checkbox"/> Independent Reading Book |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3x5 Index Cards | <input type="checkbox"/> Current Class Text |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3x3 Sticky Notes | <input type="checkbox"/> School-issued laptop and charger |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Multicolored Highlighters | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Optional: water bottle</i> |

Tentative Course Texts

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>All Quiet on the Western Front</i> by Erich Maria Remarque• <i>Animal Farm</i> by George Orwell• <i>Antigone</i> by Sophocles | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Maus I and II</i> by Art Spiegelman• <i>Macbeth</i> by William Shakespeare• <i>The Poet X</i> by Elizabeth Acevedo• <i>Other supplemental texts as needed</i> |
|--|---|

Technology Use

Students are expected to bring their district-issued devices to class each day, fully charged and ready for use. Cell phones must be off and stored in the pocket chart during class unless specific permission is given. Smartwatches, earbuds, and headphones are not allowed during class, even if no audio is playing. Permission must also be requested before recording audio, taking photos, or capturing video.

Inappropriate use of technology will be documented in Aeries and communicated to the student's adults at home. Upon a third incident, administrative action will be taken.

Hall Passes

Students will be allowed four hall passes per quarter to use for emergencies, with teacher permission, at appropriate times. Only one student may use the pass at a time. Students should not leave class during the first and last 10 minutes of the period, during direct instruction, or when students are presenting. Students who are consistently out of class for more than 10 minutes may have their home adults contacted and may be referred to their Principal. Devices and backpacks must remain in the room while the pass is in use.

Slurs & Hate Speech

Slurs should not be spoken out loud during class. When reading a text aloud, do not read any slur (such as the "n-word" aloud. In writing, exclude the word whenever possible; if it is necessary to include it as part of a quotation, censor the word by using * or -. In recordings, the teacher will make a reasonable attempt to mute, delete, or skip any instances. When outdated terms appear in course content, substitute the outdated terms with words that are appropriate in modern contexts. If students are unsure about a term, they should ask the teacher for clarification, saying something like, "Can you tell me the appropriate word to use when discussing the people in this material?" When in doubt, ask!

Slurs and hate speech are never allowed at school, regardless of intent. Using slurs and hate speech will result in an immediate referral to your Principal.

Cursing and Foul Language

It is necessary that students feel safe in class. This means that any targeted language will not be tolerated. This includes racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic, ableist, and other slurs. Avoid any language that may make another student feel uncomfortable or unsafe. While profanity does appear in literature, using it in class is prohibited except when quoting literature.

Extra Help

Students needing extra time can request a Trojan Time with Mr. O. If you cannot attend Trojan Time, extra help is available during lunch and after school most days.

Grading

Late Work

Work is considered late if it is turned in after the due date. Late work may be turned in for two weeks after the due date. No late work will be accepted after a unit ends. Late work is not eligible for reassessment. In the case of an excused absence, students have double the number of days they are absent to submit their work (i.e., 2 days absent = due 4 days after return). In the case of an unexcused absence, all work is due upon return. *Accommodations will be provided in accordance with IEPs and 504s.* There is no grade penalty for late work.

Reassessment Agreement

Per the CVHS English Department agreement, students who earned a D+ or lower on any single major writing assignment can be reassessed during Trojan Time. Late work is not eligible for reassessment. Additional retake opportunities are at the teacher's discretion.

A student desiring reassessment on any focus standard task beyond the department agreement may meet with Mr. O during Trojan Time or by appointment to request and create a

study and reassessment plan. Make arrangements early and often! All reassessments are due two weeks before the end of the semester. Nothing submitted in the last two weeks of the semester is eligible for reassessment.

Other standard tasks and practice & process work are not eligible for reassessment.

Grading for Practice and Process Work:

Generally, if you do all parts of this work, you get full credit. You may get feedback that shows how you are developing on specific learning standards.

Your grade in English is calculated as follows:

Focus Standard Tasks:	75%
Other Standard Tasks:	20%
Practice & Process Work Tasks	5%

Grading Scale

Overall grades will average assignments and be computed as follows:

A	4.0 - 3.5	Meets all elements of the standard independently
B	3.49 - 2.5	Meets major elements of the standard but not minor
C	2.49 - 1.5	Meets most major elements of the standard
D	1.49 - .5	Meets only some elements of the standard
F	.49 - 0	No evidence of standard shown

Behavior Expectations

1. Follow all school rules.
2. Generally, all students should STAND:
 - a. Be **Safe**
 - b. Work **Together**
 - c. **Aspire** to do their best
 - d. **Never give up**
 - e. Value the **Diversity** of opinions and backgrounds of others
3. Come to class on time and be ready with class materials at your desk at the bell.
4. Take care of your needs (locker, bathroom, etc.) before or after class.
5. Do your own work. Don't share papers, use another student's work or ideas, or use AI/the Internet and submit the work as your own.
6. No food or drink in class, only bottled water.
7. No makeup or aerosol sprays in class.

Plagiarism:

Any incident of academic dishonesty will be handled according to the student handbook.

Expectations:

You can expect me to do my best to listen to and accommodate your needs for the class. I will come to class on time, organized, and prepared to teach. I will respect you and your opinions, and I will expect you to also respect me and your peers. I expect everyone to come to class prepared to actively learn and do their best.

Contact Information

Email me at tolazabal@cv.k12.ca.us or call me at (510) 537-5910 x3978. I will do my best to return correspondence within two working days.