

## 2026-2027 AP English Literature & Composition Syllabus

**Instructor:** Zachary Jostad

**Room:** 1555

### **Required Materials:**

Charged Chromebook

Composition notebook (or some other way to take notes)

Loose leaf paper

1-2 inch binder or folder to keep paper copies and notes

*Not required, but recommended:* personal copies of major texts

### **Course Goals (modified from The College Board):**

The course includes intensive study of representative works from various genres and periods, concentrating on works of recognized literary merit. The pieces chosen invite and reward rereading and do not, like ephemeral works in popular genres as detective or romance fiction, yield all (or nearly all) of their pleasures of thought and feeling the first time through. The AP English Literature and Composition Development Committee agrees with Henry David Thoreau that it is wisest to read the best books first; the committee also believes that such reading should be accompanied by thoughtful discussion and writing about those books in the company of one's fellow students.

### **Reading (from The College Board):**

Reading in an AP course is both wide and deep. This reading necessarily builds upon and complements the reading done in previous English courses so that by the time students complete their AP course, they will have read works from several genres and periods – from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 21<sup>st</sup> century. More importantly, they will have gotten to know a few works well. In the course, they read deliberately and thoroughly, taking time to understand a work's complexity, to absorb its richness of meaning, and to analyze how that meaning is embodied in literary form. In addition to considering a work's literary artistry, students reflect on the social and historical values it reflects and embodies. Careful attention to both textual detail and historical context provides a foundation for interpretation, whatever critical perspectives are brought to bear on the literary works studied.

### **Writing (from The College Board):**

Writing is an integral part of the AP English Literature and Composition course and exam. Writing assignments focus on the critical analysis of literature and include expository, analytical, and argumentative essays. Although critical analysis makes up the bulk of student writing for the course, well-constructed creative writing assignments may help students see from the inside how literature is written. Such experiences sharpen their understanding of what writers have accomplished and deepen their appreciation of literary artistry. The goal of both types of writing assignments is to increase students' ability to explain clearly, cogently, even elegantly, what they understand about literary works and why they interpret them as they do.

### **Participation:**

While the heavy lifting in this class will be completed through extensive individual reading and writing, we're stronger together than we are on 30 little analytical islands. We make each other better, and we benefit from the feedback of our classmates when we are willing to bravely share our writings, opinions, and analysis. Each class period, you are surrounded by some of the best and brightest at Bentonville West. Participate in this community. Engage with your peers and with me. This class has the potential to be a positive, memorable experience for you if you take advantage of the abundant resources at your disposal.

**Grading:**

Your grade in this class will reflect your total accumulation of points possible over the course of each of the two semesters. Points will be earned through a variety of assignments evaluating your mastery of reading, writing, research, and discussion skills. Scoring for major writing assignments will align with the AP Literature writing rubrics provided by The College Board..

Earning 90-100% of possible points = A

80-89% = B

70-79% = C

60-69% = D

Below 60% = F

**Late Work and Make-up Work:**

All class information, notes, and assignments will be available on Google Classroom. If you have to miss class, it is your responsibility to check what you missed and make up any work as needed. You will have one additional class period per class missed to make up any work assigned while you were gone.

Any work submitted after the assigned due date OR after the make-up work period described above will be considered late. [See school late-work policy](#) (24/25).

**Rewriting:**

Writing is a process, and great writing is a process that takes time and effort. *In addition* to the editing and revision opportunities granted to everyone during formal (as opposed to timed) essays, **you may rewrite any essay**. In order to submit a rewrite, you must:

- Ask me via email to rewrite
- Conference with me before school, after school, during lunch, or during a flex session. At this conference, I need to be convinced that you understand why you earned your initial score. Furthermore, I need to see a revision plan that corrects the shortcomings of your initial attempt.

Rewrites for timed essays will still be timed. Rewrites for formal essays are due before the completion of the unit.

**Homework:**

You should expect to have a reasonable amount of work outside of class, and your completion of that work is directly related to your success in this course. The majority of your work will be reading assigned texts and preparing to discuss or write about those texts. You will also occasionally be assigned process (as opposed to timed) writing assignments, and you should allocate time outside of class to work on those assignments. You are expected to complete all tasks as assigned unless previous arrangements are made.

**Community Service Learning (CSL)**

Arkansas law §6-16-1901 requires students to complete 75 community service hours by the end of the senior year (some exceptions apply). This class contains 3 hours (1.5 for a semester class) of community service learning integrated into the curriculum and related to our standards and therefore it is mandatory for all students regardless of prior service hour completion. Search on [justserve.org](http://justserve.org) for a remote writing tutor opportunity. Here is an example: [LINK](#).

**Academic Integrity**

This is simple. You are expected to do your own work. Any work that is not original will result in disciplinary action as outlined in the student handbook. There may be additional consequences depending on the situation. If you plagiarize (take someone else's work or ideas and passing them off as one's own, including altering the original to appear unique), here is the process:

- 1st offense- you may complete an alternate assignment for 1/2 credit
- 2nd+ offense(s)- automatic zero and dean referral

Note: If you assist someone in plagiarizing (i.e. you let someone see and/or copy your work), you will also be held responsible.

## Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Throughout this course, the teacher will provide specific directions on allowable AI use. When in doubt, ask your teacher for clarification and refer to your course Google Classroom. *Jostad note: Unless AI usage is explicitly permitted for an assignment, the default assumption is that all assignments are AI Level 1 on the BSD Levels of AI Usage scale (AI not permitted in any stage of the assignment).*

See AI Policy on our Bentonville Schools Technology website: <https://www.bentonvillek12.org/departments/technology>

### Class Conduct:

- Show respect.
- Solve challenges.
- Make good choices.
- Procedures to note:
  - [BWHS school-wide late work procedure](#).
  - [BWHS school-wide cell phone procedure](#)\*
    - Your school-issued Chromebook will be required for digital assignments in this class. Feel free to speak with me if you feel strongly about using your a personal device.

### Disclaimer for Engaging with Sensitive Materials

A central aim of this course is to cultivate advanced critical thinking skills that enable students to approach complex subjects with maturity and insight. Throughout the semester, we will thoughtfully and purposefully delve into a range of issues that may either reinforce or challenge our preconceptions regarding art, narrative, literature, identity, privilege, power, virtue, and other potentially sensitive topics. Participation in this class constitutes your agreement to explore these matters fully, responsibly, and with an attitude of maturity. It is important to approach these discussions with respect for diverse perspectives and a willingness to engage in thoughtful, open-minded dialogue.

Should you have any concerns about engaging with sensitive materials or the nature of the topics we will explore, I am here to support and guide you through your journey in this class. Open communication is crucial, and I am committed to creating a classroom environment that values every student's voice and comfort.

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### Units of Study:

#### Unit 1: Short Fiction I (roughly two weeks)

- Introduction to reading and responding to literature, with an emphasis on short fiction
- Variety of short fiction from 16th century to present day
- Introduction to AP Multiple Choice
- Final Assessment: Analytical paragraph response to a text

#### Unit 2: Poetry I (roughly two weeks)

- Introduction to reading and responding to poetry
- Variety of poetry from 16th century to present day
- AP Multiple Choice practice
- Final Assessment: Analytical paragraph response to a text

#### Unit 3: Longer Fiction or Drama I (three to four weeks)

- *Slaughterhouse-Five*, by Kurt Vonnegut
- Final Assessment: Full essay with time for rough draft and revisions

#### Unit 4: Short Fiction II (three to four weeks)

- Deeper dive into the nuances and complexities of short fiction
- Variety of short fiction from 16th century to present day
- AP Multiple Choice Practice
- Final Assessment: Sample AP Lit Q2

#### Unit 5: Poetry II (three to four weeks)

- Deeper dive into the nuances and complexities of poetry
- Variety of poetry from 16th century to present day

- AP Multiple Choice Practice
- Final Assessment: Sample AP Lit Q1

**\*\*WINTER BREAK\*\***

Unit 6: Longer Fiction or Drama II (three to four weeks)

- Shakespearean drama - *Hamlet* or *Macbeth*
- Final Assessment: Sample AP Lit Q3

Unit 7: Short Fiction III (three to four weeks)

- Deeper dive into the nuances and complexities of short fiction
- Variety of short fiction from 16th century to present day
- AP Multiple Choice Practice
- Final Assessment: Multiple Choice + Sample AP Lit Q2

Unit 8: Poetry III (three to four weeks)

- Deeper dive into the nuances and complexities of poetry
- Variety of poetry from 16th century to present day
- AP Multiple Choice Practice
- Final Assessment: Multiple Choice + Sample AP Lit Q1

Unit 9: Longer Fiction or Poetry III (three to four weeks)

- *Wit* by Margaret Edson
- Final Assessment: Multiple Choice + Sample AP Lit Q3

**\*\*Bonus Unit - AP Lit Exam Boot Camp\*\***

In addition to reading and analyzing the type of texts named in the unit title, we will also be studying short fiction, poetry, and expository prose that is thematically relevant to the assigned text(s) of the day or week. Although the units above will emphasize one of these three types of writing, we will usually be juggling all three balls at once. All of these high-quality texts will represent a range of writers from the 16th century to the present day.

## Resources

- [Google Classroom](#)
- [AP Central for Students](#)
- [HAC \(for Checking Grades\)](#)
- [Clever](#)
- [Tech Online Help Chat](#)
- [High School Student Handbook](#)
- [Grading Explanations](#)
- [Purdue Online Writing Lab](#)