
AP English Literature and Composition Syllabus

This syllabus should be printed and kept in a convenient location in your binder at all times.

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to AP English Literature and Composition. I am looking forward to the coming semester with you. This course places an emphasis on the development and use of critical thinking skills. You should be aware that AP Literature and Composition is intended to simulate the rigor of a college English course in both pace and curriculum according to the guidelines set forth in the AP English Literature course description; therefore, you will be reading a number of texts at an accelerated pace and will be writing on a weekly basis. In order to succeed, you must be willing to sacrifice several hours a week for class preparation.

Course Information

AP English is a sophomore college-level English course that focuses on close, critical reading of poetry, drama, prose fiction, and expository literature from the sixteenth century to the present that is either written in or translated into English. Classical works are also read as background and enrichment. Critical discussion and writing about these works center on each writer's technique, theme, style, and tone. Students will learn not only to understand and interpret these various texts, but also will be expected to justify those interpretations, compare them with the ideas of fellow students, and be prepared to modify those interpretations as they become more knowledgeable. Students will learn to apply these strategies to writing analytical and argumentative essays in which they explain their judgments and interpretations of various texts. A literature-based, documented research paper written in MLA format is required.

While the instructor or school will provide as many of the texts used in this course as is feasible, students are responsible for getting the supplementary texts any way possible—by purchasing from local bookstores or by patronizing the school library or any of the public libraries. If any student who is fee-exempt cannot obtain a copy of a text that is not available in the school's stock or library, the instructor will supply a copy.

The Advanced Placement Literature and Composition Examination

The AP Literature Exam in English Literature and Composition consists of two parts: multiple choice (approximately 60 questions answered in 60 minutes) and essay (3 essays written in 120 minutes). Many *highly competitive* colleges and universities will award college credit for successful completion of the exam (a score of 3, 4 or 5 on the 1-5 scale of evaluation is considered successful completion). The *most competitive* schools require a score of 4 or 5.

Materials

Binder with dividers (at least 1")

Loose-leaf paper, college ruled
Black or blue ink pens
Pencils
Highlighters
Access to a public library card
1 pocket folder with brackets
Post-it notes
Post-it flags
*Collegiate dictionary/thesaurus (paperback)
Thumb Drive or iGoogle account with access to Google Docs.

Course-Related Texts

Students are responsible for having each text in class when assigned!

Issued Text:

Roberts, Edgar V, and Henry E. Jacobs, eds. *Literature: An Introduction to Reading and Writing*. 8th ed. New York: Prentice Hall, 2007.

Optional Text:

Hacker, Diana. *A Pocket Style Manual*. New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000.

Tentative Reading List: (Selections used from the list below may vary from year to year, but will always represent a variety of both British and American works and several genres from the sixteenth century to contemporary times)¹

Dramas:

***Hamlet*, William Shakespeare
***Macbeth*, William Shakespeare
***Othello*, William Shakespeare
***Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, Tom Stoddard
***The Importance of Being Ernest*, Oscar Wilde
***The Glass Menagerie*, Tennessee Williams
***A Doll House*, Henrik Ibsen
***Dr. Faustus*, Christopher Marlowe
***Oedipus Rex*, Sophocles
***Antigone*, Sophocles

Novels/Novellas:

***Heart of Darkness*, Joseph Conrad
Invisible Man, Ralph Ellison (Summer Reading)
***The Turn of the Screw*, Henry James
***The Metamorphosis*, Franz Kafka
***The Stranger*, Albert Camus (Summer Reading)

¹ Provided by teacher or available in school library (Many are included in the class textbook.)

Things Fall Apart: Chinua Achebe
Wuthering Heights, Emily Brontë (Summer Reading)

Other Texts:

Selections from the Old and New Testaments

Independent reading novel (any text from the Question 3 list)

**Various short stories

**Various Poems

Course Goals and Objectives

Please note that the following goals have been adapted from the College Board's description for AP English Literature and Composition.

Upon completing AP English Literature and Composition, the student will

- achieve at least 80% on all assessed activities;
- apply critical theory to the study of literature;
- understand and apply writing conventions in formal and informal compositions;
 - Students will learn through modeling, peer sharing, and feedback to understand texts through exploratory informal writing activities.
 - Students will write to explain their ideas and interpretations of various texts in expository essays. Through modeling, peer review, teacher conferences and feedback, and revision, students will learn to write effective expository essays.
 - Students will write to evaluate in analytical, argumentative essays in which they will both make judgments about texts and defend and explain those judgments. Through modeling, peer review, teacher conferences and feedback and opportunities for revision, students will learn to write effective argumentative essays.
 - Students will learn through modeling, peer sharing, teacher examples, conferences and feedback to effectively use a variety of sentence structures in their writing and through this variety to create a desired tone or place a desired emphasis on specific details.
 - Students will learn through modeling, peer review, teacher examples, conferences and feedback to write with a balance of generalizations and specific details.
 - Students will incorporate a wide range of vocabulary into their writing, and through teacher feedback and modeling, students will learn to make effective and appropriate use of that vocabulary in their writing.
 - Students will learn through samples, modeling, peer review, teacher examples, conferences and feedback to effectively use careful diction, vary tone, and deftly apply other rhetorical strategies to their writing.
 - Students will learn through teacher conferences and feedback and effective examples to develop their own written voice.
- be introduced to the format, rhetorical strategies, and style of the AP Exam and practice it;
- write and speak clearly, concisely, and effectively for a variety of audiences;
- recognize texts by their genre and apply skills for reading, comprehending, and evaluating both in group discussions and in written responses;
- use multiple formats for narrative, descriptive, expository, and persuasive writing;

- utilize technology to facilitate and/or understand communication;
- write an explication of a text to show understanding of it;
- write using textual support for and in analysis of a text;
- identify the conflict, crisis, and resolution for characters in a narrative;
- speculate how literature reflects cultural, social, political, historical, or economic values;
- read verse, according to its form, with greater fluency;
- connect works thematically through comparison and contrast;
- identify the tone, mood, and/or perspective of a particular text by looking at stylistic choices;
- support tone identifications with specific examples from the text;
- clearly explain the logical connections made in reaching an interpretation;
- practice completing a style analysis essay in forty minutes or less;
- recognize and correctly use MLA documentation.

GENERAL ASSIGNMENTS

Vocabulary

Students receive a vocabulary list and are responsible for the definition(s), part(s) of speech, spelling, and usage(s). Quizzes will be given for each list, and a comprehensive vocabulary test will be given at the end of each grading period.

Vocabulary words come from lists the instructor has compiled from various reading assignments and/or recommended SAT vocabulary.

Students will also be responsible for recognizing and demonstrating an understanding of literary terms/devices in the context of literary analyses.

Class Participation

Class participation is necessary to the AP English experience. The instructor expects all students to be actively engaged in the lesson, participating when called on and offering meaningful insight to the discussions.

When assigning the grade each quarter, the instructor takes into account each student's performance—discussion, homework, etc.

Exams

Exams are intended to evaluate a student's knowledge of the information and/or his/her ability to analyze critically. Assessments may consist of fill-in-the-blank, matching, short answer, multiple-choice, and discussion. Students will also write in-class essays on the literary selections.

Final Exam

Students are required to take a course final in addition to taking the AP English Literature exam. The final for AP Literature will consist of a combination of a written explication of a literary work that incorporates all the rhetorical and analytical strategies they have developed throughout the course and a presentation.

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

General Information on AP Literature Essays

In addition to style-analysis essays (prompt-based essays written in a forty-minute timed block), students also write formal, out-of-class essays on short stories, novels, plays, and poetry. Over the course of the semester, students will complete the following types of essays: **argument, cause/effect, comparison and contrast, critical analysis (character, theme, setting, etc.), critical theory, definition/illustration, documented research essay, exposition, poetry explication, reader response, and rhetorical analysis.** Students frequently have the option of rewriting graded essays for a higher grade.

Prompt Writings

Nearly each week (and sometimes twice a week) students will complete either an out-of class essay or an in-class writing based on a given prompt. Prompts are primarily taken from released AP exam prompts that are listed for educators' use on the College Board's website, though some are impromptu responses to the text at hand. Prompts will relate to the analysis of prose, poetry, or be open-ended questions meant to evaluate a student's understanding of a longer work.

Students traditionally complete prompt writings in class. However, from time to time, students will complete these assignments at home and submit them the following day. Students are to treat prompt writings as formally as possible, and should adhere to the conventions of Standard Written English, as well as follow all English department guidelines for written assignments. **All prompt writings must be at least one and one half full pages, single-spaced, and written in blue or black ink on one side of the paper only.**

Some prompt responses will be evaluated by peers and/or self-evaluated. Students will also revise/rewrite their lowest-scoring prompt essay after receiving peer and instructor feedback.

Out-of-class Essays

Students receive detailed assignment sheets for each out-of-class essay. Essays will exhibit students' ability to interpret literature and support a thesis with textual details.

All outside essays will be a *minimum* of three typed pages (unless a longer paper is mandated in the assignment sheet) and will strictly adhere to MLA formatting guidelines.

Students will workshop and peer-edit all out-of-class essays. In order to partake in this learning experience, students must have their rough drafts in class.

For *some*, but not all out-of class essays, students will be expected to revise and rewrite after receiving the instructor's comments and constructive criticism.

MLA Heading for Essays (double-spaced heading)

Student's Name

Teacher's Name

AP English

Date (Day, Month, Year)

An essay that does not conform to the requirements outlined for the assignment receives a failing grade and may not be graded, including papers that do not

- meet the minimum length requirement;
- make use of the minimum number of sources required for the paper; and/or
- cite from sources to support the paper when the assignment demands such.

The following difficulties do not constitute an excuse for late work:

- hardware, software, or printer problems of any kind;
- power outages;
- improper file formats; and/or
- Internet outages.

Major Editing Errors

Prior to any graded writing assignment, the teacher reviews the following major editing errors with the students and models how to avoid/correct them. Thereafter, students will receive grade reductions for **each incidence** of the following major editing errors:

- Person shift;
- Tense shift;
- Contractions;
- Comma splice, run-on, and fragment;
- Expletive openers;
- Format errors; and
- Passive voice.

Editing is the last part of the writing process—the most time-consuming task in the writing process, but also the easiest to do because it is a step-by-step process. Obviously, a good paper is more than just technical correctness, so scoring an A on a paper just because no technical or surface errors exist cannot be assured.

To assure their papers are free of these editing errors, students should use the following checklist, which the instructor will provide and review. If these errors occur within a scored or work-shopped paper, the errors will be noted, and cumulative points will be deducted from the score for less serious errors not included in the previous “major editing errors” list. Student will frequently be given the opportunity to edit or revise their papers and submit them for a second time.

- Missing comma after an introductory element
- Vague pronoun reference
- Wrong word
- Wrong or missing verb ending
- Wrong or missing preposition
- Comma splice
- Missing or misplaced possessive apostrophe
- Unnecessary shift in verb tense
- Unnecessary shift in pronoun
- Sentence fragment
- Wrong tense or verb form

- Lack of subject-verb agreement
- Missing comma in a series
- Lack of agreement between pronoun and antecedent
- Fused or run-on sentence
- Misplaced or dangling modifier
- Its/It's confusion
- Wrong use of a semicolon or colon
- Spelling error
- Split infinitive
- Awkward or confusing sentence structure
- Apostrophe errors
- MLA citation or bibliography errors
- One inch margins—top, bottom, left, and right?
- Double-spaced document (including blocked quotations)
- Header (last name and page number inserted), top right corner
- Works Cited page, double-spaced and alphabetized
- Title of essay

Guidelines for Written Assignments

- All deadlines are non-negotiable.
- Students lose points for not following directions.
- Out-of-class essays must be word-processed in 12 pt. Times New Roman/Arial or 11 pt. Courier New.
- All work to be turned in and quizzes/tests must be written in blue or black ink.
- Written assignments are not to be ripped from a notebook.
- Students should use 1" margins and only the front side of paper. (Notice: Word has a default setting of 1.25" margins, so students must manually change the document to a 1" margin).
- All essays should have the MLA heading, and all take-home essays should have a title.
- Plagiarism is a serious offense that results in the grade of zero (0).
- All assignments are due at the beginning of class. Any late formal assignment loses one (1) letter grade per day. Any late homework assignment loses 50% once it is late. Any incomplete assignment receives a zero (0).

AP English Literature and Composition Take-Home Essay Rubric

The letter grade on an essay reflects the following criteria:

The **A essay** is superior and virtually flawless. It treats its subject in an original, stimulating, and unpredictable manner. The perceptions, logic, and insight are fresh and mature. The thesis and its development are clear and present adequate specificity. Sentences are varied. The diction is sensitive and selective, as expected of the educated student. The voice and tone of the author are in keeping with the subject. This essay provides enjoyable reading.

The **B essay** demonstrates overall competence and is even outstanding in some areas. Although flaws appear, they are limited. The thesis is clear and well developed. The ideas are appropriately unified and coherent and include sufficient detail. Sentences and diction demonstrate maturity and skill. B essays

still represent fine, above average writing, but lack that ultimate superior impact.

The **C essay** is characterized by average competence. The material demonstrates able organization with adequate generalizations, as well as specific detail, but lacks fresh insights. Sentences are often choppy, repetitive, and lack proper transitions, and diction reveals a limited competence and noticeable reliance on clichés. Mechanics are acceptable, but lapses crop up. C essays are acceptable, but leave the reader with a neutral reaction.

The **D essay** displays deficiencies in organization, development, and language use, as well as in proofreading. The thesis may be fuzzy or unclear and lacks direction. Paragraphs are poorly developed, sentence structure is repetitive and lacks control, and mechanics errors are disturbing. D essays barely meet minimal expectations of advanced high school writing.

In order for an essay to be passing, it must have a discernible thesis.

The **F essay** is difficult, frustrating, and confusing to read. The essay lacks a thesis or fails to develop one if it is present. Organization is minimal, and idea development lacks logic and coherence. Syntax, grammar, and diction are immature and fraught with errors. F essays fall below expectations for advanced high school writing.

AP In-class Timed Writing Rubric

9: A Excellent thesis; excellent illustrations (support); effective imagination, sees and makes connections; excellent organization; particularly persuasive or carefully reasoned

8: A- Excellent thesis; excellent illustrations (support); less imagination or speculations; effective organization; cohesive; a few mechanical flaws that do not reduce the impact of the analysis

7: B+ Intelligent, yet less concise, effective thesis; effective illustrations, sound organization; somewhat imaginative; adequate mechanics; a “safe” paper, beautifully done

6: B Good, safe thesis; completely adequate in every way; some illustrations, significantly less imagination and risk taking; the prose conveys the writer’s ideas clearly; a beginning, middle, and end

5: C Adequate thesis, yet unnecessarily general; predictable illustrations; general analysis; a few definite mechanical flaws; intelligent observations and conclusions; limited or superficial evidence and illustration

4: C- Thesis too large or too vague; some illustrations, but surface analysis; definite mechanical flaws or carelessness; the writing has “moments” when it is an essay

3: D An adequate report; thesis too large or vague; an intelligent summary; few illustrations; punctuation flaws; might reflect a simple lack of effort or hurried, last-minute preparation

2: D- Thesis, if it exists, is hiding; it is up to the reader to find it; assortment of rambling generalizations; amidst all the generalization, there are enough intelligent observations to justify a passing grade; many grammatical errors

1: F Lack of effort; no discernible thesis; nothing to illustrate; no interest in topic; usually rather brief, undeveloped

MAJOR ASSIGNMENTS

Major Works Data Sheets

Students *must* complete a MWDS for at least six plays or novels studied during the year. The sheets will help students understand the salient areas of each work and serve study aids for the AP Exam in May.

Major Works Data Sheets/Dialectical Journals

Students *should* complete a Major Works Data Sheet journal for each play and novel studied during the year. The various journals will serve as guides for in-class discussion as well as study aids for the AP Exam in May.

Poetry Analysis: TP CASTT and DIDLS

Students are expected to keep up with completed TP-CASTT and/or DIDLS exercises for selected poems studied in class. Students will receive a handout explaining the two mnemonic techniques and the instructor will model their use prior to study poetry.

College Research Project

Students choose a college or university and complete research (print and non-print sources) on the school, a major, campus life, academics, etc. They also make a functional resume, learn to fill out college applications, and compose a college admissions essay.

Independent Reading Assignment

Students will be required to complete a Major Works Data Sheet for an independent novel chosen from the list of novels suggested on previous AP “Question 3” prompts. The journals and an analytical essay based on the chosen work will be the basis of assessment.

Research Assignments

All students complete at least one research project. Each assignment involves print and/or non-print resources and the successful completion of a bibliography. Students will compose a both Works Cited and a Works Consulted.

Research Paper

The research paper process emphasizes research skills, MLA style, deadlines, and maintenance of a complex written argument. The research paper process begins at the onset of the second semester. The AP research paper (8 to 10 pages) is an extended biographical analysis of a writer’s life and his/her work. Students show how texts reflect events in the writer’s life. Students will participate in peer evaluation sessions after completion of a preliminary draft. Students will be given individual conference time with the instructor after completing a second draft. After conferences, students will be allowed to revise before submitting their final drafts.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Absences and Make-up Work

When students are absent, they are to consult the instructor's web page to determine what they have missed. It is imperative that all work be made up! It is a student's responsibility to see the instructor about make-up work. For a one-day absence, students have up to two days to complete the work missed. If not completed by the deadline, the permanent grade for the work becomes a zero (0).

Students who miss more than five (5) unexcused days per semester risk the loss of academic credit for the course. **Students receive zeros (0) for assignments and assessments missed during unexcused absences.**

Required Assignments

All assignments are important, and failure to turn in any assignment will adversely affect a student's grade. All major written assignments are requirements for students to receive credit for AP English. A senior may not graduate if he/she does not complete the research paper.

Grading

The assigned grade for each grading period is determined by points system, meaning that the number of points earned divided is by the total number of points possible. Students and parents may view up-to-date averages online. **Students in AP English do not receive extra credit.**

Grading Scale

A	100	90
B	89	80
C	79	70
D	69	60
F	59	0

Classroom Rules

Students are responsible for their own actions and should be prepared to

- commit themselves to the study of college-level material;
- discuss literature and other issues with maturity and decorum;
- conduct their studies independently, responsibly, and with integrity;
- treat their fellow classmates and teacher with the utmost respect and kindness; and
- approach class with humility and an open mind.

Philosophy of Teaching

Essentially, every child can learn; therefore, I attempt to provide real challenges for all my students—each learning activity has intrinsic meaning. My instructional activities and assessments are designed to construct knowledge, rather than simply to reproduce facts and ideas. Therefore, I choose “enduring” facts, vocabulary, concepts, theories, and skills that will help my students become responsible and informed citizens, as well as self-directed, lifelong learners.

I believe that inquiry and exploration foster thinking. In planning the scope and sequence of my instruction and assessment, I attempt to address as many of the “multiple intelligences” as possible, thereby providing challenges for all students no matter what their strengths or weaknesses. I enjoy giving students as many opportunities as possible to make decisions and reflect on their learning.

As your teacher, I am much more concerned with attitude than I am aptitude. I expect you to get the most out of yourself this year, and I want you to succeed. Remember, the only real competition is with yourself, not with your classmates. As long as you are growing as a person and learning something every day, then you are a true winner.

Realize that I have a method to my madness and that my required assignments are intended to reflect college-level English classrooms.

For the most part, my assignments are meant to make you think! While they may be involved, they are definitely doable. To some extent, my grading of your work will reflect my “this will help you succeed” mentality. **If you are working, you will survive; if you do not, your talent can only partly rescue you from academic oblivion.** In closing, I will make every effort to be available to you. Do not wallow in confusion and despair—*ask for help!*
