



La Costa Canyon High School



English Class Placement Guide for Parents and Students: College Prep vs. Honors

At La Costa Canyon High School, each teacher wants every child to achieve their personal best, and this is more likely to happen if the child is placed into classes appropriate to the child's needs, abilities, and interests.

We offer two levels of English classes in both the ninth and tenth grades.

1) **College Prep:** College Prep classes provide a *rigorous* curriculum that meets the needs of the majority of students.

2) **Honors Classes:** Honors English classes are designed for students who *excel* in English language arts and require a *faster-paced*, more *in-depth*, and *challenging* course of study.

BOTH college prep and honors classes have the following attributes:

- Follow a rigorous curriculum
- Require students to work toward mastery of the California Common Core State Standards
- Prepare students for high school English
- Develop critical thinking skills
- Require students to write argumentative essays, narratives, responses to literature, and summaries
- Provide opportunities for students to improve listening and speaking skills through Socratic Seminar and speech delivery
- Select novels from the same board-approved list of titles
- Use the same textbook
- Utilize technology to help improve reading and writing skills

Honors classes differ from CP in the following ways:

- Greater depth and complexity of study
- Advance and work on skills beyond current grade-level standards
- Students more often work independently of teacher assistance
- Pacing is quicker
- Required course reading is often done as homework outside of class rather than during class
- Writing expectations are more sophisticated (stronger vocabulary, more complex and varied sentence structure, greater depth of thought, and analysis) and more extensively researched.
- Assigned readings may be at a higher level of difficulty
- Homework typically requires students to think critically and synthesize the material they learned in class that day. As a result, homework generally takes longer.
- Grammar techniques are more sophisticated and complex.

When making a choice, please consider the following:

- Students can move classes from Honors to College Prep or College Prep to Honors **within the first four weeks** of the school year.
- **After the four-week deadline**, students must remain in their course of choice.
- **At the end of the semester**, an Honors student may move to a College Prep course; however, we **do not** move from College Prep to Honors mid-year. In order to complete the expectations of the second semester in an Honors course, students need the foundational knowledge and skills presented in the first semester. Therefore, students will need to wait until the following year to take Honors.
- We have open access. Students **may** take College Prep English in 9th grade and move to Honors in 10th grade.
- The ultimate goal is for your child to be happy, healthy, and **appropriately** challenged.

Checklist of General Expectations for Students ENTERING 9th Grade Honors Classes

Please use the following charts to determine which level of English class is most suitable for your child.

Skills and Knowledge: When students **enter** a 9th-grade Honors class, they are **already expected** to be able to demonstrate three or more of the following skills. **Please note:** This is where students currently **ARE**, not where they hope to be.

- How to synthesize multiple texts in a multi-paragraph, claims/thesis-based essay.
- How to identify and state the function of the eight parts of speech in sentences.
- How to identify and state the function of a subject and a predicate in a sentence.
- Describe the impact literary devices have in a work of literature.
- Able to advance beyond summary and analyze the deeper meaning of a passage by making connections between a passage and historical events, current events, and personal experiences.
- Discover common and recurring themes across texts.
- Recognize the elements that contribute to an author's style.

Academic Qualities: In addition to demonstrating many of the skills listed in the category above, an Honors English student will be most successful if they also demonstrate **at least five** or more of the "Honors English Student" qualities.

College Prep English Student:	Honors English Student:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is strong academically in English Language Arts.• Is hard-working and self-motivated.• Learns best with thorough instruction and practice of new concepts.• Appreciates challenges but also benefits from assistance and practice with complex, critical-thinking, and non-routine strategies.• Thrives with structured guidance when learning, applying, and extending new concepts.• Actively participates in the learning process.• Independently reads various genres. <p>Disclaimer: Do not be concerned if your student does not exhibit some of the qualities above. The College Prep English class aims to get all students to these levels.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Has one of their gifts or passions in English Language Arts.• Has an exceptional work ethic, is highly self-motivated, and successfully works independently.• Masters concepts quickly without requiring many repetitions; thrives with a faster-paced, rigorous curriculum.• Values the challenges of complex, critical-thinking opportunities; can achieve this with minimal assistance and often takes ideas to a higher level.• Seeks out and actively contributes to classroom discussions.• Independently reads reading assignments outside the classroom environment• Enjoys reading higher-level, complex texts in various genres.• Enjoys the writing process and understands the need for multiple revisions.• Is inquiry-driven, demonstrated by thinking critically about world issues related to the assigned reading and writings (going beyond surface meanings, making connections and inferences).• Manages time well (is able to juggle school work, family obligations, and extracurricular activities) while maintaining success.

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Proposed Update: ELA College Prep is a course that is designed to guide students to mastery of the Grade California Standards for English Language Arts in reading, writing, listening and speaking, and English language conventions. Students are required to read grade-level texts, with guidance and support, and identify their structural and literary components. They will be guided to interpret themes and arguments in these and make inferences and support them with solid textual references. An emphasis on 21st Century Learning Skills, the Four Cs: critical thinking, collaboration, creativity, and communication, will be incorporated through whole class and group discussions, activities, and projects. This course also requires students to write explanatory (analytical and informational), argumentative, and narrative pieces that demonstrate critical thinking, cohesive ideas, and a command of the English language.

Proposed Update: English Honors is a course intended for students who are at or above reading level, have demonstrated mastery of the previous grade Standards, love the challenge of complex thinking opportunities, and can master concepts quickly with minimal assistance. It moves at an accelerated pace and is designed to challenge students to master and surpass the Grade Level Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts in reading, writing, listening and speaking, and English language conventions. In addition, students are being prepared for the rigorous standards of other/future high school honors and AP courses. They are required to read and analyze at and above grade level texts independently, both in class and at home, at an accelerated pace. They are expected to delve more deeply into this literature, searching for complex themes and relationships and to support their assertions with textual references, as well as to make text-to-world, text-to-text, and text-to-self connections, using 21st Century Learning Skills, the Four Cs: critical thinking, collaboration, creativity, and communication. This course also requires students to write complex explanatory (analytical and informational), argumentative, and narrative pieces that demonstrate critical thinking, inquiry, synthesis of texts, cohesion, deliberate style, and a strong command of English language conventions. Students are expected to show a high level of independence and motivation in this honors class.