

American High School English Department

9th Grade Course Selection Guidelines

Making the decision to take English 9 or English 9 Honors

Upon entering high school, many students (and parents/guardians) wonder which English class will be the best fit for them. English 9 Honors covers the same curriculum and the same core works of literature as English 9, but with greater complexity and higher expectations. Both courses are year-long classes that fulfill entrance requirements for four-year colleges and universities. The main differences are in the amount of writing and the pacing of the courses. In honors classes students write much more frequently and are expected to do more work independently.

*The ultimate goal is for your child to be happy, healthy, and **appropriately** challenged.*

All English courses have the following attributes:

- Follow a rigorous curriculum
- Require students to work toward mastery of the California Common Core State Standards
- Develop critical thinking skills
- Require students to go beyond the surface of the text to discover deeper meanings rather than to simply summarize
- Require students to write argumentative essays, narratives, responses to literature, and summaries and to proofread their reading actively to enhance and improve it
- Provide opportunities for students to improve listening and speaking skills
- Use technology to improve reading and writing skills
- Advance and refine knowledge and usage of vocabulary and grammar

Honors classes differentiate in the following ways:

- Offer greater depth and complexity of study
- Move beyond current grade level standards to advance skills
- Required course reading is more often done as homework outside of class
- More sophisticated and more frequent writing (more complex and varied sentence structure, greater depth of thought and analysis)
- Homework requires students to think critically and synthesize the material learned in class
- Grammar applications are more sophisticated and complex

A student who demonstrates the following skills is typically most successful in English 9H:

- English is one of their gifts or passions
- Has an exceptional work ethic; highly self-motivated, and works well independently
- Masters concepts quickly in a fast-paced, rigorous curriculum without the need for much repetition
- Values the challenges of complex, critical thinking opportunities and often takes ideas to a higher level
- Actively and productively contributes to small and large group discussion
- Enjoys reading higher level, complex texts in a variety of genres
- Enjoys the writing process and understands the need for multiple revisions
- Is receptive to constructive academic criticism and actively works to improve based on feedback
- Thinks critically about social issues related to assigned reading to make connections and inferences
- Manages time well and is able to balance schoolwork, family obligations, and extracurricular activities

Frequently Asked Questions

- **Are there specific requirements to get into Honors English?** There are not any specific requirements for entry into Honors English. However, prior to signing up for this course, parents/guardians and students should carefully consider if the student is prepared for the challenges of this course (in addition to the standard challenges of adapting to high school).
- **Are students' grades for Honors English weighted on their transcripts?** No. American High School does not weight any grades on student transcripts. In addition, Honors English is not a weighted course for CSU/UC admissions.
- **Is it possible to transfer out of an Honors English class mid-year?** No. Students should not expect to be able to "try the course out" and drop if they find it to be too difficult.
- **If my child earns an unsatisfactory grade in Honors English, can they make it up in summer school?** Honors classes are not offered for credit recovery in summer school. Therefore, a student who earns a D or F would need to make up the credits during summer school, but in a college prep English class. The D or F in the Honors class will remain on their transcript and not be replaced by the summer school course.