

Ninth Grade English ACP 2022-2023



Welcome to Wellesley High School!

This year will require all of us to be able to be empathetic, flexible, and gracious as we continue to grow and learn together.

We will be taking a textual and metaphorical (hero's) journey through both modern and classic novels, as well as poetry, mythology, and short stories. We will make the transition from middle school to high school by working on collaboration, reflection, and resilience in the classroom.

Together we will read, write, and analyze literature as well as tackle the grammar and vocabulary that will strengthen our skills as readers, writers, and thinkers. Inside and outside of the classroom you will complete written pieces that will range from informal, narrative, creative works, to formal, informative, and analytical essays. You can expect nightly reading of about twenty-five pages, often accompanied by a written assignment that is meant to improve your reading comprehension and prepare you for class discussion. As a class we will explore many genres of literature and learn how to analyze and appreciate these texts by writing our own reflections, engaging in class discussions, and making thoughtful connections to today's world.

I would also like to emphasize the importance of communication in your education. If you have questions, you can visit my office hours. Otherwise, please feel free to send me an email, and I will do my best to respond as soon as possible.

I am looking forward to working with all of you this year and getting to know all of you through your writing, as well as in-class and online discussions. With a growth mindset, a good night's rest, and an open mind, you will have the necessary tools to be successful in this class.

Thank you,

Jacqueline Maxwell (she/they)

Email: maxwellj@wellesleyyps.org

Office hours: Mondays after school

Yellow block on Day 4 & by appointment

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"Everyone has a moment in history which belongs particularly to [them]."

- John Knowles, *A Separate Peace*

All of our texts are centered around these essential questions:

- o Who and what determine who I am? What does it mean to be 'from' a place? How does where we are from influence who we are?
- o How do we understand ourselves not only as individuals but also as parts of diverse communities? How are decisions made about who belongs and who does not?
- o What constitutes right and wrong in a changing world?

(Community contract to come)

Discussion norms of the course

- Take an inquiry stance
- Share the air time
- Ground events in personal experience, using "I" statements
- What's said stays, and what's learned leaves
- Share stories/omit names
- Be willing to try stuff on (Take an inquiry stance.)
- Respect confidentiality, no attributions
- Use "and" instead of "but"
- Be aware of Impact vs. Intent
- Use "could" instead of "should"
- Accept discomfort and nonclosure
- Practice staying engaged and active listening

Course Expectations

Our classroom is inclusive and centered on the core values of the Wellesley Public Schools:

- ❖ Academic Excellence
- ❖ Commitment to Community
- ❖ Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, & Belonging
- ❖ Respect for Human Differences
- ❖ Cooperative and Caring Relationships

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Expectations & key practices for success in this course:

Timeliness: If you have to arrive late, or submit something late, please be proactive about communication whenever possible. I will follow up with you, your guidance counselor, and those at home when necessary.

Preparedness: Come with the necessary materials listed and a growth mindset.

Empathy: We will practice this through reading, discussion, and active listening.

Open mindedness: You will undoubtedly be challenged to think about something differently in this course, and I encourage you to actively listen and reflect when you hear a new perspective. I guide you in teaching how to think, not what to think. It is up to you to ask questions, interrogate the texts, and evaluate context & biases.

Self awareness: We will practice this through mindfulness, as well as self and group reflections.

Integrity: Show yourself and others the respect of acting with our core values in mind.

Inclusivity: Everyone belongs in our classroom, and it is our job to make people feel that way through our words and actions.

The Hero's Journey & Proposed Texts: Below is a small sampling of the texts we'll read this year, and the whole year will be a "hero's journey" of sorts!

Clap When You Land by Elizabeth Acevedo

The House on Mango Street by Sandra Cisneros

Lord of the Flies by William Golding

Romeo and Juliet by William Shakespeare

A Raisin in the Sun by Lorraine Hansberry

Mindfulness in the Classroom:

We will practice mindful practices at least once a week. Mindfulness helps us to lead more healthy lives, which will help us to cope with stress, learn about ourselves, and stay focused in class, for starters. Also, we need to be present in order to really listen to each other and take in information. In general, practicing mindfulness will help us to learn better, read and write intentionally, as well as show up for each other.

Class Work/Participation: I will ask you to be an active member of our class discussions by asking questions, responding to questions, listening to and respecting others, and arriving on time. Your citizenship grade in PowerSchool includes your ability to respond to other students with respect, as well as help to strengthen our class community. Many of the texts we cover will inspire provocative discussion that will be greatly improved with positive class participation and mutual respect for one another.

Skills & Assessments: This year, we will focus on feedback, reflection, and your growth on the central skills over time. You will receive feedback based on the progress you have made on those skills through written feedback and conferencing, and your grade will be updated on a monthly basis based on the assignments you have completed. You will be assessed based on essays, quizzes, projects, discussions, presentations, reflections, and vocabulary assessments.

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You can expect to receive feedback in the following areas:
1. Communication (Speaking, Writing & Language) 2. Comprehension (Reading & Listening to Understand) 3. Purpose (Central skill for the course) 4. Citizenship (P/Not yet) (Preparation, engagement, collaboration & commitment to community)

Homework: Most of your homework in this class will consist of reading for the next day. You can expect about 25 pages of reading per class period, and there will often be guided reading questions to answer or a writing assignment related to the reading. Homework is usually due at the start of class because we will often relate the classwork to the last night's reading. Not all homework will be collected. If a homework assignment is not collected, then you will be held accountable by being prepared for class discussions/activities.

OTHER IMPORTANT NOTES:

Attendance and Make-up work: If you know you are going to be absent, please let me know beforehand. Obviously there can be unforeseen circumstances, but please do your best to provide notice, if possible. If you are absent, it is your responsibility to check Canvas, check with a classmate regarding missed work, and then email me with any questions.

Academic Integrity:

Integrity: Cheating shows a lack of respect for self and for others. Taking shortcuts—such as reading SparkNotes or asking a friend for a synopsis of reading—is cheating. Plagiarism is cheating. If you are unprepared for a quiz, or if you are about to miss the deadline for a paper, accept your responsibility by speaking to me honestly and accepting the consequences. Do not be tempted by the great pressures on you to look for another way out. I take all forms of cheating very seriously and follow school policy. **Please review the student handbook for the academic integrity and plagiarism policies:**

[WHS Student Handbook 2022-2023](#)

The Wellesley High School Student Handbook defines plagiarism as “copying or adopting literary, musical or artistic composition, a computer program, any electronically retrieved data, or the work of another and publishing it as one’s own original composition or work.” Such a definition will apply straightforwardly if you ever complete outside research for your formal essays: to avoid plagiarism, cite your source parenthetically with a page number, reserving the bibliographic entry for the end of the essay. The spoken words and ideas of our class discussions and small-group work should be considered a shared text for the purposes of the course, and they need not be cited parenthetically. Please consult me when you have questions about proper citation before submitting any written work. **I am here to help you understand the severity of plagiarism and help you avoid it.**

Please note that you **may not use an artificial intelligence program to aid your work on an assignment unless I explicitly directed you to do so. We will be discussing how to navigate AI as a class.**

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Writing Conferences/Extra Help: I am available to meet with you to review past work, current concerns, or upcoming assignments. I encourage you to set up a time with me during office hours or conference times to discuss questions you have on your assignments. You can also send me an email with questions, but please make sure to use formal language in these emails, and note that I will do my best to respond in a timely manner. I cannot always respond to emails sent in the evening, so try to check with me during the school day, or plan to bring your questions to class. I expect you to be proactive about long term assessments.

Phones and Other Electronic Devices: Unless otherwise stated, all cell phones and electronic devices should be put away during the class period. We will use your laptops frequently in class this year, so please make sure to charge them at night or bring a charger.

Required Materials:

- ❖ A writing utensil
- ❖ A fully charged laptop/device
- ❖ Your book (if applicable)
- ❖ A binder & paper or a notebook
- ❖ Highlighters (Blue, green, yellow, orange & pink)

Your Google Drive/Binder:

The following sections should be found in your class binder:

- o Class Expectations/Syllabus
- o Language (Grammar & vocabulary)
- o Reading
- o Writing
- o Listening