



AP English Literature & Composition Course Syllabus

Valencia High School
2025-26

COURSE DESCRIPTION

AP English Literature and Composition is a writing-intensive course that focuses on reading, discussing, interpreting and writing about literature. Poems, short stories, novels, and plays will be analyzed for complexity with an emphasis on structure, style, and various literary strategies. Writing assignments include focused free write responses to prompts, close readings, small group presentations, and peer reviews. Students will complete process writing as well as multiple-choice assessments and free response essays in preparation for the AP Exam. The intent of this course is to not only assist students in acquiring the critical thinking and writing skills needed to successfully complete the exam but to also foster a sense of intellectual curiosity and an appreciation of complex & diverse literary texts.

INSTRUCTORS

Olivia Lytton, James Thorne and Ruoc Le

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Students who successfully complete the AP English Literature and Composition curriculum will be competent in these skills:

Skills Categories

1. Explain the function of character.
2. Explain the function of setting.
3. Explain the function of plot and structure.
4. Explain the function of the narrator or speaker.
5. Explain the function of word choice, imagery, and symbols.
6. Explain the function of comparison.
7. Develop textually substantiated arguments about interpretations of part or all of a text.

Big Ideas

1. Character
2. Setting
3. Structure
4. Narration
5. Figurative Language
6. Literary Argumentation

SKILLS AND PROFICIENCIES

Critical Area 1: Students conduct sustained analyses of details regarding intentional choice writers make regarding characters, setting, plot, and overall structure (organization, sequence) that lead to complex interpretations of meaning.

Critical Area 2: Students develop their skills in close reading (emotional experience, informed interpretation, critical evaluation) of literature.

Critical Area 3: Students develop & express complex analyses based upon viewpoints and interpretations of works from a range of genres and time periods, referencing various literary strategies.

Critical Area 4: Students make comparisons and associations that shift in meaning from the literal to the figurative.

Critical Area 5: Students present (orally and in written form) interpretations of literature via arguments supported by text evidence. Written work will adhere to the MLA Style Guidelines.

Critical Area 6: Students actively and respectfully participate in class discussions of sensitive, controversial topics.



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“Personal Progress Checks” (multiple choice & free response questions) at the end of each Unit provide student and teacher with information as to the overall level of competency in the Skill Categories & Critical Areas.

AP Classroom: As part of the requirements for this course, you will register for the AP Classroom online. When we finish a literature unit, you will complete a progress check on the website. These progress checks will provide you with valuable information about where you need to grow to pass the AP Literature and Composition Exam. You will need to have computer and internet access to complete these checks. If you are unable to access AP Classroom at home, please let me know immediately so we can make alternative arrangements.

Grading:

Grading of all assignments will be on a 5 point grading scale. Grade percentage will be determined by assignments in the weighted category (primarily tests and writing). Other assignments will be included as a way to measure progress and learning. Teachers will offer periodic opportunities for improvement (test corrections, essay revision, etc.).

ASSESSMENTS

*Personal Progress Checks will be assigned at the end of each Unit and can be completed using the AP Classroom. Students (and the instructor) will receive a report with their scores on the specified skills to evaluate their progress. This information will be used to ascertain areas in need of re-teaching.

MAIN TEXTS

Hamlet (William Shakespeare) – 17th Century

Frankenstein (Mary Shelley) – 19th Century

Wuthering Heights (Emily Bronte) – 19th Century

Literature Circles- Various (In groups students will select 2-3 works commonly used on the AP English Literature & Composition exam for question #3)

SHORT STORIES

The following is a partial list of short stories that will be read, analyzed and written about over the course of the year: “Eleven” by Sandra Cisneros; “Indian Education” by Sherman Alexie, “The Pedestrian” by Ray Bradbury; “A Clean, Well-Lighted Place” by Ernest Hemingway; “Two Kinds” by Amy Tan; “Raymond’s Run” by Toni Cade Bambara; “Araby” by James Joyce; “Marigolds” by Eugenia Collier
“American History” by Judith Ortiz Cofer; “Girl” by Jamaica Kincaid; “Light is Like Water”(Gabriel Garcia Marquez); “A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings”(Gabriel Garcia Marquez); “The Continuity of Parks” (Julio Cortazar)

POETRY

The following is a partial list of poems that will be read, analyzed and written about over the course of the year: “The Eolian Harp” (Samuel Taylor Coleridge), “I loved your first” (Christina Rossetti), “The Imaginary Iceberg” (Elizabeth Bishop), “The Dream” (John Donne), “The Landlady” (P.K. Page) “Let Me Tell You What a Poem Brings” (Juan Felipe Herrera), “I Am Offering this Poem” (Jimmy Santiago Baca), “Hysteria” (T.S. Eliot), “Aunt Helen” (T.S. Eliot), “Fame is a fickle food” (Emily Dickinson), “Fame is a bee” (Emily Dickinson) “Introduction to Poetry” & “The Effort” (Billy Collins), “Sonnet 116” (William Shakespeare), “Sonnet 43” (Elizabeth Barrett Browning), “Sonnet 10” (John Donne), “Yet Do I Marvel?” & “Heritage” (Countee Cullen), “If We Must Die” & “The White House” (Claude McKay), “Finna” (Nate Marshall), “Those Winter Sundays” by Robert Hayden, “Chicago” (Carl Sandburg), “Walking Down Park” (Nikki Giovanni), “How do I Love Thee?” (Elizabeth Barrett Browning), “Shall I Compare Thee to a Summer’s Day” (William Shakespeare), “The Sun Rising” (John Donne), “Memorizing The Sun Rising” (Billy Collins), “The Bean Eaters” (Gwendolyn Brooks), “Mr. Bleaney” (Philip Larkin)



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<u>Unit 1: Short Fiction I</u> Duration: 2-3 weeks	<i>This unit will focus on teaching/reviewing foundational literary analysis with an emphasis on plot, character, setting, structure, and narration. Students will also practice close reading strategies. Students will discuss how the elements of each text contribute to the meaning of the work as a whole, and will determine and discuss the authors' perspectives.</i>
Standards:	CHR 1.A, SET 2.A, STR 3.A; STR 3.B, NAR 4.A; NAR 4.B, LAN 7.A
Works:	"Light is Like Water"(Gabriel Garcia Marquez), "A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings"(Gabriel Garcia Marquez), "The Continuity of Parks" (Julio Cortazar)
Literary Analysis Skills and Terms:	Characterization - indirect & direct; Freytag Pyramid & associated terms: exposition, inciting incident, rising action, climax, resolution, denouement; Southern gothic; Point-of-view - 1st, 2nd, 3rd limited, 3rd omniscient; Diction level - formal, informal, neutral; Setting -time, place, social location
Writing Focus:	AP Q1 - Claim Literary Analysis Expository Essay
Essential Questions/Thematic Focus:	What similar traits, desires, problems, and goals are inherent to the human experience? How do people reconcile pain and suffering with love, kindness, and empathy? How do the authors' representations of the human struggles and sin compare to or contrast with the Biblical view? What characteristics contribute to criminal behavior?
Graded Assignments:	reading/ analysis quizzes, terminology exam, claim paragraphs, literary analysis essay.
SELECT INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES	*Focused Free Writes (FFWs) & close reading (with annotation) of the initial paragraph of "A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings" leads into a whole class reading, discussion & analysis. Focus Areas: details that illustrate the setting, sequence of events as expressed via narration, initial assessment of character's perspective & motives. *In-Class Writing Prompt: Based on your reading & analysis of "A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings", build an argument as to whether he is an angel. Be sure to include text evidence & focus on literary strategies that support your claim.



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Unit 2: Poetry I Duration: 2-3 weeks	
Standards:	CHR 1.A, STR 3.C, STR 3.D, FIG 5.B, FIG 6.A, FIG 6.B, LAN 7.A
Works:	“Introduction to Poetry” & “The Effort” (Billy Collins), “Sonnet 116” (William Shakespeare), “Sonnet 43” (Elizabeth Barrett Browning) “Sonnet 10” (John Donne) “Yet Do I Marvel?” & “Heritage” (Countee Cullen) “If We Must Die” & “The White House” (Claude McKay) “Finna” (Nate Marshall) “Those Winter Sundays” by Robert Hayden
Literary Analysis Skills and Terms:	Speaker, stanza types, poetic form (lyric, narrative, descriptive), rhyme, meter, musical devices, figurative language, contrast, juxtaposition
Writing Focus:	AP Q1 - Claim AP Q1 - Essay Explication
Essential Questions/Thematic Focus:	How do our choices influence our lives? How does where we come from influence our lives? What is the role of family and relationship in happiness? Do the authors portray a biblical view of personal choice and relationships?
Graded Assignments:	dialectical journal, claim paragraphs, Q1 essay, terms quiz, explication, one pager
SELECT INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES	*Students work in small groups on analyses (using a graphic organizer) and then brief presentations of the treatment of love in Shakespeare’s “Sonnet 116” as compared to Browning’s “Sonnet 43.” Focus areas: Structure, Shifts, Uses of Simile and/or Metaphor.



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<u>Unit 3: Longer Fiction or Drama I</u> Duration: 4 weeks	
Standards:	CHR 1.A, CHR 1.B, SET 2.A, STR 3.E, STR 3.F, LAN 7.A, LAN 7.B, LAN 7.C, LAN 7.D, LAN 7.E
Works:	<i>Frankenstein, Mary Shelley</i>
Literary Analysis Skills and Terms:	Motif, allusion, satire, dialect, ambiguity, melodrama, malapropism, pathetic fallacy, foil, symbolism, conflict types
Writing Focus:	AP Q2 - Essay AP Q3 - Essay Literary Analysis Essay
Essential Questions/Thematic Focus:	How do our choices influence our lives? How does where we come from influence our lives? What is the role of family and relationship in happiness? What are the roles of fate, Providence, and personal choice in a person's life? Are people responsible for their own tragedies? Are characters purely good or purely evil or a combination? Does the author portray a biblical view of personal choice and relationships?
Graded Assignments:	Q2 essay, Q3 essay, literary analysis essay, reading quizzes, lit terms quiz
SELECT INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES	Writing Component: Students will take material from their double-entry journals dealing with central themes in Frankenstein and use the material to develop an interpretive essay based on a central theme in the novel. Students may select a theme of their own, granted that it is approved by the teacher, or they can select one of these two themes: the tension between individualism and social acceptance; or the tension between technology and human expectations. *Students examine the various overlapping relationships in the novel in an effort to articulate the complexities of "love" vs. "desire" as they are represented in the text. By selecting two specific relationships, they will craft a well-written analysis, providing text evidence



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<u>Unit 4: Short Fiction II -</u> Duration: 2-3 weeks	
Standards:	CHR 1.A, CHR 1.C, CHR 1.D, SET 2.B, SET 2.C, STR 3.A, STR 3.D, NAR 4.A, NAR 4.B, NAR 4.C, LAN 7.B, LAN 7.C, LAN 7.D, LAN 7.E
Works:	“Two Kinds” by Amy Tan “Raymond’s Run” by Toni Cade Bambara “Araby” by James Joyce “Marigolds” by Eugenia Collier “American History” by Judith Ortiz Cofer “Girl” by Jamaica Kincaid
Literary Analysis Skills and Terms:	Review of Unit 1 terms, review of conflict terms, flashback, contrast, juxtaposition
Writing Focus:	AP Q1 - Essay AP Q3 - Essay Character Complexity Essay
Essential Questions/Thematic Focus:	How do our choices influence our lives? How does where we come from influence our ability to mature? What is the role of family and relationship in coming-of-age? Are people responsible for their own development? Are characters purely good or purely evil or a combination? Does the author portray a biblical view of personal choice and relationships?
	Q2 essay, Q3 essay, character complexity essay, reading quizzes, lit terms quiz
SELECT INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES	*In-Class Writing. Prompt: Choose one of the short stories read for this Unit. Build an argument as to whether it can be viewed as a universal text .While defending your thesis, address at least 2 of the following: diction, relationship between character & setting, narrative perspective (POV), and/or structure. Be sure to provide adequate text evidence.



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Unit 5: Poetry II - Duration: 2-3 weeks	
Standards:	STR 3.C, STR 3.D, FIG 5.A, FIG 5.B, FIG 5.D, FIG 6.B, FIG 6.C, FIG 6.D, LAN 7.B, LAN 7.C, LAN 7.D, LAN 7.E
Works:	“Let Me Tell You What a Poem Brings” by Juan Felipe Herrera & “I Am Offering this Poem” by Jimmy Santiago Baca “Hysteria” by T.S. Eliot & “Aunt Helen” by T.S. Eliot “Fame is a fickle food” by Emily Dickinson, “Fame is the one that does not stay--” by Emily Dickinson & “Fame is a bee.” by Emily Dickinson “Chicago” by Carl Sandburg & “Walking Down Park” by Nikki Giovanni “How do I Love Thee?” by Elizabeth Barrett Browning & “Shall I Compare Thee to a Summer’s Day” by William Shakespeare “The Sun Rising” by John Donne & “Memorizing The Sun Rising” by Billy Collins “The Bean Eaters” by Gwendolyn Brooks & “Mr. Bleaney” by Philip Larkin
Literary Analysis Skills and Terms:	Review of Unit 2 terms
Writing Focus:	AP Q1 - Essay Literary Analysis Essay
Essential Questions/Thematic Focus:	Can people with differing opinions find common ground? Can an individual hold conflicting opinions of a topic? What is the result of this type of internal conflict? How should Christians resolve internal conflict?
Graded Assignments:	Q1 essay, compare/contrast essay, lit terms quiz, octagon assignment
SELECT INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES	*In-Class Writing. Prompt: Explore how literal & figurative language – specifically symbols and imagery - add depth of meaning to the themes of mortality & humanity. *In small groups, students explore the relationship between two poems from the unit, focusing on shifts that occur in the poems & how they impact the character development in similar or different ways.



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<u>Unit 6: Longer Fiction or Drama II - Tragedy</u> Duration: 4 weeks	
Standards:	CHR 1. A, CHR 1.C, CHR 1.E, STR, 3.A, STR 3.B, STR 3.D, NAR 4.C, NAR 4.D, FIG 5.C, LAN 7.B, LAN 7.C, LAN 7.D, LAN 7.E
Works:	Hamlet <i>William Shakespeare</i>
Literary Analysis Skills and Terms:	Drama, dialogue, monologue, soliloquy, aside, tragedy, catharsis, antihero, black comedy, low comedy, high comedy, ancillary characters, hamartia, hubris, portent, pun, blank verse, iambic pentameter,
Writing Focus:	AP Q2 – Essay AP Q3 – Essay Literary Analysis Essay Annotated Bibliography
Essential Questions/Thematic Focus:	Why is Hamlet considered by many to be Shakespeare’s greatest achievement? How and why is the character of Hamlet depicted as the most complex in English Literature? What characteristics are essential for success? Why do people fail? What are the results of regret and missed opportunity? Is each person to blame for his own tragedy?
Graded Assignments:	Q2 essay, Q3 essay, literary analysis essay, dramatic interpretation, act quizzes
SELECT INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES	Study includes the great chain of being: Shakespeare’s language, form, and function of tragedy; and religious, scientific, and cultural beliefs of the Elizabethan age. Literary Analysis Paper- formal, persuasive essay evaluating Hamlet based on one of the two essential questions above. Direct composition instruction: format-clear thesis, incorporation of lines and quotes, pronoun usage, support paragraphs, introduction necessary for audience, thesis followed throughout, strong concluding paragraph.



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<u>Unit 7: Short Fiction III</u> <i>- The Search for Meaning</i> Duration: 3 weeks	
Standards:	CHR 1.B, CHR 1.D, SET 2.B, SET 2.C, STR 3.A, STR 3.B, NAR 4.D, FIG 5.C, FIG 5.B, FIG 5.D, FIG 6.A, LAN 7.B, LAN 7.C, LAN 7.D
Works:	“Eleven” by Sandra Cisneros “Indian Education” by Sherman Alexie “The Pedestrian” by Ray Bradbury “A Clean, Well-Lighted Place” by Ernest Hemingway
Literary Analysis Skills and Terms:	Review of Unit 1 & 4
Writing Focus:	AP Q2 – Essay AP Q3 - Essay Literary Analysis Essay
Essential Questions/Thematic Focus:	Is there meaning in human suffering? How do people find their place in a society that rejects them? What does the Bible teach about the value of humans?
Graded Assignments:	Q2 essay, Q3 essay, personal response essay, lit terms quiz, reading quizzes
SELECT INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES	Students will read & annotate “Eleven” right after reading & annotating “Indian Education” In pairs, students will grapple with analyzing details/actions, setting & narration as they impact development of the characters. Pairs will craft notes & then combine with a neighboring pair, compiling their notes before sharing out to the rest of the class.



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<u>Unit 8 : Poetry III -</u> <i>Author Focus</i> Duration: 1 week	
Standards:	STR 3.C, STR 3.D, FIG 5.B, FIG 5.C, FIG 6.B, FIG 6.D, LAN 7.B, LAN 7.B, LAN 7.C, LAN 7.D, LAN 7.E
Works:	Each student will choose a poet whom he or she finds engaging. The students will read and annotate 4-5 of that author's poems while considering the unit standards.
Literary Analysis Skills and Terms:	Review of Unit 2 terms
Writing Focus:	AP Q1 - Essay Presentation
Essential Questions/Thematic Focus:	Determined by students
Graded Assignments:	Q1 essay, presentation
SELECT INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES	Annotating poetry Writing FRQ responses Crafting stable word prompts from student selected essential questions



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<u>Unit 9: Longer Fiction or Drama III</u> Duration: 4 weeks	
Standards:	STR 3.C, STR 3.D, FIG 5.B, FIG 5.C, FIG 6.B, FIG 6.D, LAN 7.B, LAN 7.C, LAN 7.D, LAN 7.E
Works:	<i>The Kite Runner</i> , Khaled Hosseini
Literary Analysis Skills and Terms:	Review of Unit 3 terms
Writing Focus:	AP Q2 – Essay AP Q3 - Essay Literary Analysis Essay
Essential Questions/Thematic Focus:	Is redemption possible? What makes us choose to forgive someone?
Graded Assignments:	P Q2 – Essay, AP Q3 – Essay, Literary Analysis Essay
SELECT INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES	Socratic Seminar Annotations with specific focus on select literary terms Timed writing w/ peer based feedback