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English 9 Syllabus 2025-2026

Overview:

English 9 students will master skills that will improve their reading, writing and critical thinking to give them the tools to be lifelong learners and independent thinkers. Using a variety of literary and informational texts students will practice close reading and critical thinking. Writing focuses on informative, argumentative and narrative styles and is scaffolded to support students' organizational and analytical skills. Vocabulary and grammar will be introduced, practiced and assessed. Units include the study of literature as an allegory, persuasion and rhetoric, poetry and the hero's journey.

Grading:

This course will include a range of homework, classwork, essays and assessments designed to challenge students and gauge their progress throughout the year. Assignment grades and quarter grades are determined by total points earned. The number of points associated with an assignment is based on the task's complexity. Areas of grading include writing, assessments, classwork/homework, and participation. In general, the following point values apply: essays and assessments are worth 50-100 points. Quizzes are worth 20-50 points. Class participation is worth 25-50 points. Homework is worth 10-20 points. Each quarter will represent 25% of the final grade. Assignments are expected to be on time. Late work will result in grade reduction. *One point will be deducted from homework assignments for each school day it is turned in late.* Three points will be deducted from any project or essay for each school day it is turned in late. Failure to hand in work results in a 0. Students are responsible for emailing the teacher regarding any homework submitted to Google Classroom *after* the grades were returned.

Google Classroom:

Assignments, assessment notifications, and important information will be posted on Google Classroom. Students can access this information with their school Google account.

Attendance:

Please refer to the [Family Handbook](#) for attendance policy.

- **Unexcused Tardies** - If a student has three unexcused tardies to class they will be written up and serve a detention. If a student is over ten minutes late (unexcused) they will be written up and serve a detention. When students are late, it is a disruption to the class, as well as to the individual student. Students must make sure to be at class on time, or have a valid note that excuses them.

Daily Required Materials:

- ☐ Charged iPads
- ☐ Pens/Pencils
- ☐ Highlighters
- ☐ 2-Pocket Folder
- ☐ Three-Ringed Binder (1-1 ½ inches) with dividers

Extra Help:

Questions and conversation are always encouraged and welcome! Mrs. Gasparini is available in H207 during her posted Academic Assistance. Students can make appointments to meet during lunch or other common free periods.

English 9 Curriculum

Anchor Texts:

We will read anchor texts throughout the year to serve as a focus for our learning. Additionally, supplemental shorter texts, including speeches, articles, poetry and short stories will complement our whole class texts. Through our studies we will be focusing on **a theme of voice and how individuals have the power to change the world when we speak up for ourselves and for what is right.**

- ❖ *The Other Wes Moore* by Wes Moore
- ❖ *Animal Farm* by George Orwell
- ❖ *Julius Caesar* by William Shakespeare
- ❖ *A Raisin in the Sun* by Lorraine Hansberry
- ❖ *Lord of the Flies*, by William Golding
- ❖ *The Odyssey* by Homer
- ❖ *Speak* by Laurie Halse Anderson

Writing Goals:

Students will develop their writing skills as we work our way through each unit. Emphasis will be on organization and analysis setting a foundation for writing throughout high school. Assignments are reflective of the [Common Core Standards of Writing](#)

- ❖ Write **informative/explanatory texts** to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.
- ❖ Write **narratives** to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.
- ❖ Write **arguments** to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

Language Standards:

[Conventions of Standard English](#)

Throughout the year we will integrate lessons based on the Common Core ELA Language standards for 9th grade. These include demonstrating command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, spelling, and grammar when writing or speaking.

[Vocabulary Acquisition and Use](#)

Sadlier Vocabulary Workshop will be used as a tool for vocabulary growth and the development of vocabulary skills. Words will be introduced and practiced within reading passages, definitions, choosing the right word, synonyms, antonyms, completing the sentence and vocabulary in context. Periodic assessments will reflect the units in the Sadlier Vocabulary Workbook.

Units of Study

The Allegory of *Animal Farm*

What is the connection between knowledge and power? What is the role of an individual in society? What are the dangers of blind obedience? What are the qualities of a good leader?

Through our study of the novella *Animal Farm* by George Orwell, students will explore how satire and allegory can enhance understanding of historical events. Students will recognize rhetorical strategies in persuasive speeches. As they read, students will come to recognize and analyze the author's use of figurative language and literary devices to convey powerful themes including the power of language, education, and civil participation.

Students will write a comparative paper identifying similarities between a historical speech and a fictional speech in the text. The culminating writing assignment will be based on the [text-analysis response from the New York State ELA Regent exam](#). Students will be able to identify a central idea in the text, analyze how the author's use of one writing strategy develops the central idea and use strong and thorough evidence from the text to support their analysis.

Supplemental Reading: "How the Working People Can be Saved" by Vladimir Lenin, "Napoleon" by Miroslav Holub, "Stalin: A Brutal Legacy Uncovered" Mike

An Introduction to Argument in *Julius Caesar*

How can a speaker use rhetorical strategies to persuade an audience? How can citizens use their voice to make change? When (if ever) is it acceptable to betray a friend?

Students will be reading, performing and studying William Shakespeare's tragedy *Julius Caesar*. They will understand the "tragic hero", identify major themes in the play, explore the strength and weaknesses of the characters and appreciate and understand Shakespearean language.

Additionally, students will learn various rhetorical devices and appeals in their understanding of the power of persuasion and public speaking. Students will come to understand the verse, structure, and language of Shakespearean writing while simultaneously recognizing how a writer introduces and develops claims through reasoning and rhetoric. Students will write [an argumentative essay](#) in which they make original claims, based on the play, and provide analysis using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

Supplemental Reading: "The Gettysburg Address" by Abraham Lincoln, Malala Yousafzai's Nobel Peace Prize Lecture, "HeforShe: Gender Equality is Your Issue, Too" by Emma Watson at the United Nations

An Exploration of Poetry

How does the use of poetic devices enhance the meaning and impact of a poem? How does the historical and cultural context of a poem impact its meaning and interpretation? How can writing our own poems help us better communicate our own thoughts and feelings?

This unit will introduce students to the world of poetry, exploring various poetic forms, poetic devices and themes. Students will analyze classic and contemporary poems and learn to pull textual evidence from the poem to develop an understanding of a poem's theme. Writing objectives will focus on analysis of poetry based on sound devices, poetic devices and diction. Students will also develop their own creative expression by writing original poems, engaging in discussions about the significance of poems gaining a deeper appreciation for the power of language. Students will see how poetry is a tool of expression, a mirror to society, and a key to a community .

Supplemental Reading: "Still I Rise" by Maya Angelou, "Life is Fine" by Langston Hughes, "Instants" by Jorge Luis Borges

Complexities of Human Nature in *Lord of the Flies*

Are people inherently good or evil? What is necessary to uphold civilization? What does it mean to be civilized?

Through our study of *Lord of the Flies*, students will come to understand William Golding's story as a microcosm that explores the delicate balance between civilization and savagery. Close reading will allow students to identify characters and symbols that develop the author's themes that speak to the human condition.

Meanwhile, supplemental reading will address psychological theories of human nature, biblical references, and historical events. The culminating writing assignment will have students applying their research to *Lord of the Flies*, as they cite from Golding's literary work as well as informational text to create a cohesive thesis and essay.

Supplemental Reading: Stanford Prison Experiment, Sigmund Freud, The Milgram Experiment, Mob Mentality, Cold War , Tribalism, WWII, John Locke vs Thomas Hobbs

The Journey of *The Odyssey*

How can an ancient story be a timeless tale of what it means to be human? What is the danger of a storyteller who silences the voices of others?

Tackling *The Odyssey*, by Homer, will be a challenge, but with support from a graphic novel, and focus on the hero's journey and the adventures of Odysseus, students will come to love the epic poem. Students will analyze how Homer's choices in the structure of his texts and manipulating time create tension, suspense, and excitement. They will study the hero's journey and learn to recognize these stages in all of their literature they read. Students will continue to explore [literary elements and devices](#). Students will practice close reading skills and making [evidence-based claims](#) in both writing and speech that display critical thinking and analysis of the text.

Supplemental Reading: "Ithaka" by Constantine Cavafy, "Siren Song" by Margaret Atwood, *Ulysses and the Sirens* by John William Waterhouse

Dreams Deferred in *A Raisin in the Sun*

How does personal experience affect one's perception of oneself and their observations of the world? What constitutes The American Dream and in whose interest does this concept exist? What dangers lie in the inability to share one's voice?

In our critical reading and analysis of *A Raisin in the Sun* students will recognize the historical setting of the play and consider the complexities of The American Dream. To build context for the play, students will study Langston Hughes' poems, excerpts from Hansberry's autobiography and articles on the American Dream, the Civil Rights movement, and modern day accounts of individuals who struggle to achieve the perceived American Dream. Our literary analysis will include charting the dynamic changes of the characters and Hansberry's use of symbolism throughout the play. Students will have the thrilling opportunity to perform segments of the play and delve into their character with a character analysis essay.

Supplemental Reading: "Harlem" by Langston Hughes, excerpts of *To Be Young Gifted and Black* by Lorraine Hansberry, artwork by Jacob Lawrence

Coming of Age: *Speak*

How do our personal experiences shape our identity? How can an individual find their voice in order to engage in healthy self expression?

Speak by Laurie Halse Anderson is a high interest novel in which the protagonist navigates the challenges of high school and adolescence, while carrying a terrible secret. Students will explore [literary elements and devices](#), with a focus on symbolism. While reading, students will add to their close reading skills and move onto making [evidence-based claims](#) that display critical thinking and analysis of the text. Supplemental sources including poetry and articles pulled from the headlines to support the serious, relevant topics presented by Laurie Halse Anderson. Students will work in literary circles in which they will practice initiating and participating in a range of [collaborative](#) discussions building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

Supplemental Reading: "I'm Nobody! Who are you?" Emily Dickinson, "Caged Bird" Maya Angelou, Various artwork by Pablo Picasso

*Elements of units are subject to change.

Code of Conduct

Definition of Academic Integrity

Integrity exists when students exhibit honest behaviors which do not result in unfair advantages for themselves or others in educational pursuits or endeavors. Academic integrity is defined by honest academic work. Behaviors that violate academic integrity include but are not limited to: failing to attribute sufficient credit to other sources; unauthorized collaboration on any assignment; use of unauthorized materials/technology for assigned work or assessments. The responsibility for achieving and maintaining an environment of academic integrity is shared by all constituents of the academic community, including students, their parents, teachers and administrators.

[More information here.](#)

Dignity Act

The Dignity for All Students Act (Dignity Act) seeks to provide the State's public elementary and secondary school students with a safe and supportive environment free from discrimination, intimidation, taunting, harassment, and bullying on school property, a school bus and/or at a school function. School employees who witness harassment, bullying, and/or discrimination or receive an oral or written report of harassment, bullying, and/or discrimination shall promptly orally notify the principal, the Dignity Act Coordinator, the superintendent, or their designee not later than one (1) school day after such employee witnesses or receives a report of harassment, bullying, and/or discrimination.

[More information here.](#)

Artificial Intelligence

Our class is an opportunity for you to challenge yourself and develop skills. The work you submit must be your own so that your learning is authentic. Submitting your own work allows me, your teacher, to provide accurate and meaningful feedback to inform your progress in this class. Any attempt to take credit for skills that you do not possess is an act of academic dishonesty. It is acceptable and expected to not know something or how to do something. Use class resources, seek extra help and dedicate more time to learning to find the answers to your questions. Artificial intelligence to produce work of this course is not allowed. If a student is found to have used AI-generated content for an assignment, disciplinary action will be taken.