

Advanced and Honors Levels English II Syllabus

Course Description

In English II, students study varied literary works focused on the relationship between the individual and society - the pressure to conform, the desire for recognition and power, the need for compassion, and the struggle to maintain humanity in the face of injustice. As an important part of the course, students explore the power of language to influence others. They analyze how the individuals and societies portrayed in literary works use language to support, persuade, and control others; how the author chooses words to impact and move others, and how they can use language to share ideas and feelings with others. In all cases, students examine the ability of language to build a sense of community or alienate us from each other.

This course reinforces strategies for reading comprehension and annotation, emphasizes grammar and form when writing, and calls for students to construct thesis driven essays with supportive evidence from the text. Students should expect to read independently in preparation for class discussion and demonstrate their understanding through varied learning activities, such as journal writing, essays, public speaking, and projects.

The syllabus developed for this course provides an overview for both advanced and honors levels. The honors level course will include additional readings from the Reserved Reading section of each unit, more independent literary analysis, and more rigorous assessments. Honors levels students should expect to read independently and extensively in preparation for their coursework. Texts that are unique to the honors level are noted in the syllabus. In alignment with the school's *Portrait of the Crusader*, all students learn to follow a moral compass rooted in respect, integrity, hope, and kindness. Students will practice respecting the beliefs of others, learn to value the uniqueness of every human being, and learn to advocate for justice.

Essential Questions for the Course

Literature

- How does literature change us? How does it change the world?
- How do life experiences affect the writer and the reader?
- When is a character a hero? What can we learn from the hero? The antihero?
- How does literature spark social change?

Language

- Why does language have power?
- How does an author make a text come alive?
- How can we make our creative writing vivid and engaging?
- How can we make our analytical writing clear and effective?
- How can we share our opinions, ideas, and feelings effectively and respectfully?

Life

- How does one develop a sense of self? How does our sense of self and our values influence our choices?
- How does one flourish in society?
- How do we navigate the gray areas of life?
- How do our actions define who we are? What does it mean to have character?
- What does it mean to be misjudged?

Unit 1 - Dystopia and Utopian Societies: *There is no "you," only "we."*

In this unit, students read fiction and nonfiction texts that introduce them to dystopia and utopian societies and the authors who portray them. Several of the texts focus on the dystopian elements of propaganda, government control, loss of environment, and fear of the outside world. These texts are used to engage students in discussions about personal identity, freedom of thought, and challenges that arise when living in modern societies that strive to balance individual freedom with security and control. Students engage in differentiated learning activities, including projects, short written responses, and creative assignments. Learning activities are designed to hone skill development in reading, writing, speaking and listening.

Reserved Reading Options:

Novels: *Fahrenheit 451*, Ray Bradbury; *Homegoing*, Yaa Gyasi (Honors);

Non-Fiction: *Into Thin Air*, Jon Krakauer; "Multi-tasking," Annie Paul; "Cooking Time," Anita Roy

Short Stories: "The Lottery," Jackson; "Harrison Bergeron," Vonnegut; "There will Come Soft Rains," Bradbury; "The Ones Who Walk Away from the Omelas," Ursula K. Le Guin (Honors)

Poetry "The Trees are Down," Charlotte Mew (Honors)

Concepts and Skills:

- Apply literal and inferential reading strategies to varied literary works.
- Determine the setting and point of view and how these impact the plot, conflict, and characters.
- Analyze characters' motivations, interactions, and development over the course of the text.
- Determine how the interaction of conflict and character illustrates theme(s).
- Determine the authors' purpose and the political/societal concerns that motivate the author.
- Examine the characteristics and methods of control (including language) used in both utopian and dystopian societies and determine how each society results in the loss of individuality.
- Compare and contrast the societies portrayed in literature with the societies and political structures of the modern world.
- Draw conclusions about the text and support these claims with text evidence.
- Develop and write a short literary analysis focused on one claim/thesis statement with accurate, relevant supporting details (evidence).
- Structure and punctuate complete sentences; use commas accurately within sentences.
- Maintain a consistent voice when writing.
- Understand use of MLA citations to deter plagiarism

Assessment Options:

- Short-answer responses to ensure literal and inferential comprehension of texts
- Literary Analysis Response (prompts and length determined by level)
- Creative Writing: letter writing from the perspective of one character
- Student-Centered Project - multimedia project focused on dystopia or utopian societies/literature
- Grammar Review Assessment (Advanced)
- Harkness Discussion (Honors)

Unit 2 - Societal Responsibility in Times of Crisis

In Unit 2, students explore the complexities of society, including the responsibilities that the community and the larger society have to protect human rights and promote justice. Through novels, poetry, speeches, and other nonfiction works, students enter the world of war and crisis. Then, they work to compare understandings gained from their readings with broader, real-world contexts. Such exploration leads to the questioning of personal actions and responsibilities within a family, a community, and the world. Some questions that students explore are: *What are you willing to do to survive? How do your decisions affect others? Is it ever okay to break the law? What does a moral obligation look like for the individual and the community?* Learning activities are designed to hone skill development in reading, writing, speaking and listening.

Reserved Reading Options:

Novels: *Night*, Elie Wiesel; *The Book Thief*, Markus Zusak; *Mother Night*, Kurt Vonnegut (Honors)

Poetry: "The End and the Beginning," Wislawa Szymborska; "Identification," Roger McGough; "Consolation," Robert Louis Stevenson

Non Fiction: Excerpts from "Letters from a Birmingham Jail," Martin Luther King; "In Cellars Pits, and Attics," essays from varied authors.

Speech - Nobel Prize Acceptance Speech, Wiesel

Concepts and Skills:

- Apply the literary analysis skills learned in unit one to recognize and interpret literary elements.
- Recognize and analyze the impact of literary devices: symbolism, irony, foreshadowing, figurative language, vivid language to create mood, suspense.
- Make inferences and evidenced-based predictions while reading texts.
- Read nonfiction narratives and memoir; trace central ideas; examine text structure, author's style, explicit and implicit purpose. Determine what the work reveals about the time period and author.
- Understand and recognize aspects of stereotype and prejudice as portrayed in literature and as revealed through nonfiction writings.
- Read and analyze arguments and recognize common rhetorical strategies used by the author. Recognize bias and common reasoning fallacies.
- Delineate the author's argument, assessing whether reasoning is valid and evidence is sufficient.
- Identify differences and similarities in writers' styles and purposes.
- Write a well-developed argument that includes a clear claim, sufficient evidence, and sound reasoning.
- Create a clear, logical organization and use transitional words and phrases to link ideas and paragraphs.
- Incorporate text evidence to support claims using MLA formatting
- Address counterclaims accurately and effectively.
- Write and accurately punctuate compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences.

Assessment Options:

- Short-answer responses to ensure literal and inferential comprehension of texts (questions assigned based on level).
- Literary Analysis Essay (prompts and length determined by level)
- Creative Writing: character memoir or letter writing
- Argumentative Essay: Well-structured, research-based argumentative essay with accurate citations.

Unit 3 - The Struggle for Individuality: *Discovering what makes us what we are*

In Unit 3, students read and analyze literary works focused on how the individual relates to society, specifically how individuals perceive the good and bad within themselves based on internal and external value systems. Students reflect on the societal pressures that drive us and the concepts of greatness and goodness, including how these ideas are informed by culture and those in power.

Reserved Reading Options:

Novels: *Things Fall Apart*, Chinua Achebe; *Frankenstein*, Shelly (Honors); *In Cold Blood*, Capote (Honors)

Poetry: "The Second Coming," Yeats; various sestinas or villanelles

Short Story: "The Open Boat," Stephen Crane; "A Woman on the Roof," Lessing (Honors); "A Good Man is Hard to Find," O'Connor (Honors)

Speech/Video: "The Dangers of a Single Story," Adichie

Concepts and Skills:

- Apply the literary analysis skills learned in units one and two.
- Trace the narrative arc in varied literary works, identifying primary and sub plots and methods used by the author to engage the reader through flashback and parallel plots.
- Analyze works for specific literary devices and evaluate the author's ability to use language "paint a vivid picture" for the reader.
- Discuss personal values of greatness and goodness.
- Write well-developed literary analyses, each with a clear claim/thesis statement, relevant evidence, and sound reasoning; parse accurate text citations to support analyses.
- Write a well-developed personal narrative which includes a purposeful event sequence and vivid language to create a vivid picture; convey a clear/thoughtful message (theme). Use language purposefully to engage and persuade the reader.
- Use quotation marks and other marks of punctuation accurately. Write/punctuate dialogue accurately.
- Use transitional words and phrases to link ideas and transition from one idea to the next.

Assessment Options:

- Creative Writing: character "stretch" in narrative form.
- Personal Narrative: *A Moment that Shaped My Character*. Students incorporate the elements of narrative to shape their essays.
- Public Speaking: 4- 5 minutes; students summarize and share key points of the personal narrative.
- Form Poem: use the sestina or villanelle form to write a biographical/character sketch of a prominent character from the unit.
- Short-answer responses to ensure literal and inferential comprehension of texts (questions based on level).

Unit 4 - When Power Corrupts

In Unit 4, students read literary works that explore choices and consequences and the quest for power. They apply the literary analysis skills learned throughout the course, and they use the themes and characters portrayed in literature as a springboard to reflect on broader existential questions, such as: *Does fate or free will determine our lives? Are leaders born or created? How easy is it for a person to lose his way morally? Does absolute power create an individual or reveal an individual? How can power corrupt even the best of people?*

Reading Options:

Drama: "Macbeth," Shakespeare; "The Tragedy of Dr. Faustus," Marlowe (Honors); "Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf," Albee (Honors); "An Inspector Calls," Priestley

Excerpts from *The Prince*, Machiavelli (Honors)

Novel in Verse: (excerpts) *Long Way Down*, Jason Reynolds

Short Story: "The Rules of the Game" Amy Tan; "The Cask of Amontillado," or "The Mask of the Red Death," Poe
Poetry "The War Works Hard" Dunya Mikal; various sonnets, such as Rossetti and St. Vincent Millay

Concepts and Skills:

- Determine how the author's background and the historical time period influence the literary work(s).
- Explain the literary elements unique to drama and analyze the play for these elements.
- Define irony and dramatic irony and interpret both while reading the play.
- Analyze works for varied literary devices, including: similes, metaphors, personification, allusions and symbols; evaluate how they enhance the work.
- Analyze mood and tone in varied works and determine how the author uses language to create mood, mystery, and suspense.
- Interpret meaning and literary devices in contemporary and classic poetry.
- Evaluate sound devices and their impact on the reader/listener.
- Compare and contrast the form, language, and subjects of modern and classical poetry.
- Compose poetry, exploring different forms and stylistic features to convey a specific message.

Assessment Options:

- Short-answer responses to ensure literal and inferential comprehension of texts (# of questions based on level).
- Literary Analysis
- Compare and Contrast Essay: c/c Machievellian traits and philosophies to those that exist in a character studied in Unit 5, (i.e., Macbeth). (Honors)
- Discussion focused on power and corruption or fate and free will. Students prepare content in small groups to refute and defend elements of character.
- Harkness Discussion: Students prepare discussions individually based on themes explored in the play. (Honors)
- Original Poetry - Students compose an original "book of poetry" modeling Elizabethan sonnets (# of poems based on level).

Grading Practices - Percentage Breakdown of Assessments:

I - Mastery/Summative Assessments (40%)

- Essays and Original Writing
- Tests
- Projects and Presentations

II - Formative Assessments (40%)

- Reading quizzes focused on close reading and literary engagement
- Reading responses written, peer-reviewed, and presented
- Annotations, notes, and independent preparation
- In-class and homework writing assignments
- Independent, focused research assignments

III - Engagement/Participation (20%)

- In-class discussion and discussion board participation
- Active engagement in one-on-one meetings as a means of seeking additional feedback
- Displaying the engagement and awareness to ask questions
- Respectful consideration of all ideas.
- Understanding the classroom setting as a place of scholarly discourse and engagement.
- Self-advocacy.