

AP ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION

Liberty Common High School

Course Syllabus

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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

The AP English Literature and Composition course extends Liberty Common High School's already exceptional commitment to serious literary study through keen textual analysis, close reading, and reflective moral evaluation. The AP designation indicates that this course has been designed in keeping with the formal curricular requirements created by the College Board and that it entails an advanced level of academic rigor. Students should expect to read important works that span various literary periods and genres, a process during which each will develop the knowledge and vocabulary necessary for meaningful engagement with profound and difficult texts.

SUMMER READING:

Students are accountable for completing Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and George MacDonald's *The Princess And The Goblin* through discussion and written responses.

POETRY:

We will cover a wide range of suitable selections from British and American poets writing from the 16th century to the 20th century. The poems will reflect superb examples of the traditional forms and techniques; and the students will master the terminology and conventions that have dominated this discipline for centuries. The poets you should expect to read include Shakespeare, Marlowe, Pope, Donne, Jonson, Herrick, Byron, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Browning, Arnold, Carroll, Poe, Whitman, Eliot, Roethke, Frost, and Wilbur, among others.

DRAMA:

Shakespeare's *King Lear* occupies a place of great significance, even within the scope of the Bard's many other impressive plays. Our study of this great tragedy will allow us to discuss the conventions of dramatic and poetical works as well as enjoy the important social and philosophical themes within the narrative.

SHORT FICTION:

We will cover some exemplary shorter works in order to explore a variety of narrative styles and techniques, yet without sacrificing the depth of understanding. On occasion students will attempt to imitate distinctive syntax and diction. The short story is often overlooked as a unique and important art form. This course intends to do it justice. We will do close readings of selections listed below, and we will consider additional works as time permits.

“The Withered Arm” – Thomas Hardy
“The Celestial Rail-road” – Nathaniel Hawthorne
“The Ambitious Guest” – Nathaniel Hawthorne
“The Pit And The Pendulum” – Edgar Allan Poe
“Hills like White Elephants” – Ernest Hemingway
“The Offshore Pirate” – F. Scott Fitzgerald
“Eveline” – James Joyce
“Daisy Miller” – Henry James
“Parker’s Back” – Flannery O’Connor

NOVELS:

The novel became a “new” form of literature as imaginative prose began to increase in the 18th century (with writers such as Henry Fielding). Longer prose works allow for detailed character and plot development and rich, sustained description. We will focus on four superb and diverse examples of this genre.

Silas Marner (George Eliot)
A Brave New World (Aldous Huxley)
Crime and Punishment (Fyodor Dostoevsky)
Till We Have Faces (C. S. Lewis)

WRITING EXPECTATIONS AND OBJECTIVES:

Good composition reflects good thinking. Training in the former necessarily entails training in the latter. Students are expected to enter the course with above-average proficiency in clear, standard English, free of major mechanical errors. During the year students should progress in their grammatical and rhetorical skills through the production of multiple drafts and paper revisions.

JOURNALS:

All students must keep a journal or notebook. The primary purpose of this journal is to provide an organized place for written responses to assigned reflection questions. Parameters for these questions will be provided for each of the major works we study, and students should expect to write a full page or more every day. On occasion students must create their own questions and/or do short exegeses on key passages. The journals will also serve to keep a record of our ongoing vocabulary development.

SHORT PAPERS:

1. The Poetry Paper: Students will choose a sonnet and analyze the chief image or metaphor in each quatrain (Elizabethan) or octave (Italian) as they lead into the shift (or “volta”) generally present within the sextet or final couplet. Students must also account for the way in which the structure contributes the culmination of the poem’s primary message.

2. Short Story Paper: Students will write an original short story in the style of one of the authors we cover, demonstrating a clear knowledge of the conventions, diction, and syntax that characterize that style. *Alternative assignment:* Students must choose two relevant passages from two separate and stylistically distinct short stories that we covered in class. The paper must contrast the styles of the prose in each quotation, noting how the different qualities help to produce the writer's desired effect.
3. Exegesis: Students will do explicit verbal analysis on a key passage from *King Lear*. This short paper will be a preliminary assignment for the full-length paper.

FULL-LENGTH PAPERS:

Every paper must develop a thesis clearly established by the words of the text.

1. Students must analyze three or four important passages in order to reveal a significant theme in *King Lear*, such as filial love, nature, or self-knowledge.
2. Students must analyze three or four important passages in order to reveal a significant theme in *Silas Marner*, such as hypocrisy or redemption
3. Students must provide a careful explication of passages in *A Brave New World* in order to determine the text's view of cultural assumptions regarding pleasure and happiness.
4. Students must examine specific textual details in *Crime and Punishment* in order to illuminate the nature and causes of Raskolnikov's divided soul, and analyze the themes of guilt, sacrifice, compassion, existential despair, or other relevant topics.

In response to each corrected draft, students must write a summary of the primary mechanical, organizational, and stylistic errors in their papers. Students always have the option of revising each paper assignment, but must do so if the instructor requires it. We will have several individual conferences throughout the year in order to develop strategies for improving each student's capacity to write effective, eloquent prose.

PRESENTATIONS:

Students will orally present partial drafts of two of the four full-length papers for their peers. The other students will be accountable for providing valuable feedback on the rhetorical and analytical components of their classmates' papers. The instructor will also provide comments and recommendations before the final draft is due, including specific feedback on grammar, sentence structure, organization, and style.

MEMORIZATION:

When students are not scheduled to present, they will memorize poems from among those we have studied in class. Every student is required to memorize at least one sizable poem per semester.

PREPARATORY MEASURES:

Throughout the year we will complete several practice exams, including in-class, timed essay prompts from previous AP exams. Some of these exams may be held during times other than our usual class period.

RECOMMENDED SUPPLEMENTARY TEXTS:

A Glossary of Literary Terms (M. H. Abrams)

Rhyme's Reason (John Hollander)

How to Write A Sentence (Stanley Fish)

The Handbook of Good English (Edward D. Johnson)

GRADING:

Full-length Papers:	35%
Short Papers:	20%
Journal entries:	20%
Poem Analyses:	10%
Presentations:	10%
Exam Preparation:	5%

All specific course requirements will fit under these categories. For example, memorization falls under the presentation category, while poetry composition and vocabulary count as journal entries. The exact organization may be subject to change.

NOTE ON PLAGIARISM:

Plagiarism of any kind or degree will not be tolerated in this class. Plagiarism means presenting the work (ideas, words, graphs, tables, images, etc.) of someone else as one's own. Ignorance or simple human error will not dismiss or mitigate the consequences for an instance of plagiarism. It is entirely the student's responsibility to have a thorough knowledge of what constitutes plagiarism and to avoid it like the plague. *Anyone who is caught plagiarizing will automatically fail the assignment as well as face disciplinary action.*