

English I: Foundations of Literature and Language - CP and Honors

Course Description

Literature offers us the opportunity to see the world through the eyes of many and to shape ourselves in the process. Through literature, we explore heroism, tragedy, love, and triumph. We open our minds and hearts, and we learn from the characters on the page. This course offers those experiences. In English I, students read varied and diverse literary works that explore four universal themes: *Search for Self*; *Life's Complexities*; *Love, Loss and Reconciliation*; and, *Justice and Injustice*. They learn to read deeply, moving beyond an understanding of plot into an analysis of character, theme, and the beauty of the author's craft. In addition, they learn to write effectively, sharing their ideas and insights through well-structured essays and creative works. Throughout the course, students study grammar, vocabulary, speaking, and active listening to hone their communication skills. The syllabus developed for this course provides an overview for both college preparatory and honors levels. The honors level course will include additional readings from the Reserved Reading section of each unit, including works with greater text complexity, more rigorous formative and summative assessments, and higher expectations for text analysis and independent reading.

The selected literature provides a framework for guiding each student to develop a compassionate understanding that will help guide their lives and help them positively influence the lives of others through a willingness to serve and make personal sacrifices for the betterment of their communities and families. In alignment with the school's *Portrait of the Crusader*, 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?
- What is good literature?

Language

- 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?
- Why does language have power?

Life

- How does one develop a sense of self? How does one flourish in society?
- How does our sense of self and our values influence our choices?
- How do we navigate the gray areas of life?
- How do we make a difference in the world?

Required Reading:

The Catcher in the Rye, J.D. Salinger

The Four Agreements, Don Miguel Ruiz

Lord of the Flies, William Golding

The Other Wes Moore, Wes Moore

Romeo and Juliet, William Shakespeare

To Kill a Mockingbird, Harper Lee

Please note: Each unit lists several reserved readings. Teachers will select specific readings from this list based on student interest and the course level. Students will not read all of the listed selections.

Course Curriculum

Unit One: The Search for Self - 8 weeks

In this unit, students read literature that portrays the search for self. Students reflect on the impact of cultural norms, personal values, integrity, and the meaning of heroism. Content and skills are detailed below.

Reading Prose

Reserved Reading Options: “Myth of Narcissus,” Mythology, Hamilton; The Old Man and the Sea, Hemingway; The Catcher in the Rye, Salinger; “What You Want,” O. Henry; “A & P,” Updike; “The Necklace,” de Maupassant; “The Secret Life of Walter Mitty,” Thurber. (Teachers select a novel and a variety of short texts.)

Skills:

- Discuss the essential question, “What is good literature?”
- Interpret literary elements while reading: trace the narrative arc of the text; determine how setting and point of view shape the text; analyze how characters develop as a result of conflicts and choices.
- Examine how each text explores themes of self-awareness, self-doubt, and self-development.
- Define the components of the author's style: word choice, sentence structure and arrangement, effective use of descriptive techniques and other literary devices.
- Interpret literary devices: figurative language, allusion, foreshadowing, symbolism, irony, mood, tone.

Reading Poetry

Reserved Reading Options: “I Felt a Funeral in My Brain,” Emily Dickinson; “Still I Rise,” Maya Angelou; “Remember,” Joy Harjo; “Man Cursing the Sea,” M. Holub; “The Rose That Grew From Concrete,” Tupac Shakur; “Character,” Taslima Nasrin; “Yellowjackets,” Karen Weyan. (Teachers may select other poems based on student interest.)

Skills:

- Recognize poetic form, rhythm, rhyme, and other sound devices in selected poems.
- Examine how sound creates mood and evokes emotion.
- Interpret figurative language: metaphor, simile, personification, hyperbole.
- Discern between the speaker and the poet. Recognize the tone of the poem.
- Determine the central purpose of each poem: tell a story, reveal an aspect of human character, share a vivid impression or scene, express a mood or emotion, convey an idea or attitude.

Reading and Listening For Information

Reserved Reading Options: The Four Agreements, Ruiz (excerpts); relevant articles and presentations.

Skills:

- Read current articles and view documentaries/presentations focused on related topics.
- Learn and apply reading and listening strategies: identify author's purpose; use context to determine word meaning; determine importance (identify main ideas and key supporting details); separate fact from opinion; recognize unsupported opinion.
- Practice active reading/listening: annotate, take notes, or create an outline while reading.
- Compare and contrast information across texts. Make connections between the themes of literary texts and the main ideas/message of informative texts and presentations.

Writing

Skills:

- Write responses to literature which include a clear claim, text evidence, and sound reasoning.
- Write a creative narrative with a dynamic character, clear event sequence, vivid details, and focused message.
- Maintain a consistent point of view when writing.
- Identify, write, and punctuate simple, compound, and complex sentences. Use precise conjunctions.

Summative Assessments:

- Grammar Assessment-Sentence Structure
- Creative Writing-Original Narrative
- Literary Analysis (honors level)

Unit Two: Life's Complexities - 8 weeks

In unit two, students read to explore life's complexities: those situations where there are no clear cut answers and where individuals must struggle to find meaning and resolution. As a part of this exploration, students reflect upon the often complex transition from childhood to adulthood.

Reading Fictional Prose

Reserved Reading Options: “The Odyssey;” Mythology, Hamilton; “Cathedral,” Carver; “War,” Pirandello; “The Woman Warrior,” Kingston; “A Very Old Man With Enormous Wings,” Gabriel Garcia Marques; Lord of the Flies, Golding; Of Mice and Men, Steinbeck; The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time, Haddo. (Teachers select one novel and a variety of shorter texts.)

Skills:

- Interpret and analyze literary elements: Trace the narrative arc and identify linear, episodic, parallel, and flashback plot lines. Determine how setting and point of view shape the text.
- Analyze the motivations and choices of main characters and how these characters develop over the course of the text. Recognize characters as round, flat, static or dynamic.
- Determine themes based on analysis of character, conflict, and setting.
- Interpret literary devices and evaluate how they enhance the text.
- Compare and contrast the writing styles of two or more authors.

Reading Nonfictional Prose

Reserved Reading Options: Tasting the Sky, Ibtisam Barakat; Into Thin Air, Jon Krakauer; Radium Girls, Kate Moore; The Other Wes Moore, Wes Moore

Skills:

- Determine the author's purpose and message.
- Analyze text structure; evaluate how the author uses the narrative arc to engage the reader.
- Investigate the use of dialogue to reveal character and enhance setting.
- Review the components of the author's style: word choice, sentence structure and arrangement, descriptive technique (imagery, figurative language), and tone. Evaluate the author's style.

Reading and Listening for Information

Reserved Reading Options: relevant articles, presentations or documentaries.

Skills:

- Read informative and argumentative texts focused on the themes of the unit.
- Apply reading strategies; make predictions and inferences when reading; draw conclusions and form opinions based on accurate information.
- Practice active reading; take notes and create an outline. Synthesize information across texts.
- Research a topic connected to the historical background of a literary work or author or one theme studied in the unit.
- Present well-organized, accurate information to peers. Practice eye contact, volume, and pace when speaking.

Writing

Skills:

- Write a literary analysis essay with a clear claim, relevant text evidence, and sound reasoning.
- Use varied sentence structure when writing.
- Recognize and correct fragments, comma splices, and run-on sentences in writing.

- Write accurate MLA format for document and bibliography. Avoid Plagiarism.

Summative Assessments:

- Literary Analysis
- Informative Presentation with Bibliography
- Socratic Seminar (honors level)

Unit Three - Love, Loss, and Reconciliation

In this unit, students read to explore the conflicts and joys of powerful relationships. As an integral part of this unit, students read and analyze classic plays and poetry to appreciate the writers' artistic command of the language and insightful exploration of the human experience.

Reading and Viewing the Classic Play

Reserved Reading Options: Romeo and Juliet or Midsummer's Night Dream, William Shakespeare.

Enrichment: The Summoning of Everyman; "Pyramus and Thisbe," "Gift of the Magi," O Henry; "The Pardon of Becky Day," John Fox, Jr.

Skills:

- Understand the format of the written play: act, scene headings, dialogue, directions.
- Interpret literary elements: setting, point-of-view, primary conflicts, and plot line.
- Analyze character development, including the underlying motivations; recognize foils.
- Analyze literary devices: puns, allusion, monologue, soliloquy, aside, motif, symbolism, dramatic irony.
- Interpret specific sonnets for meaning; analyze figurative language.
- Analyze themes and determine how a play reflects and transcends the time-period.
- Analyze and evaluate the choices of the director in adapting the Shakespearean play to film.
- View a contemporary film with similar themes and review literary elements.

Reading Poetry

Reserved Reading Options: "At the Window," Carl Sanburg; "If You Forget Me," Pablo Neruda; "Go Now," Edward Thomas, "Wind Water Stone," Octavio Paz; "Sonnet 43," William Shakespeare; "what love isn't," Yrsa Daley-Ward.

Skills:

- Analyze meaning and literary devices in contemporary poetry.
- 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.
- Explore modern poetry, such as slam poetry.
- Read "The Death of Allegory," Billy Collins and connect to one or more works of art: *The Allegory of War and Peace* by Jan Brueghel; *Self-Portrait as the Allegory of Painting* by Artemisia Gentileschi; *The Allegory of Faith* by Johannes Vermeer.

Reading and Listening for Information

Reserved Reading Options: relevant articles/presentations/documentaries.

Skills:

- Read information and commentary focused on historical background and literary review.
- Practice active reading/listening; take notes and create an outline.
- Synthesize information across texts. Share information with peers.

Writing

Skills:

- Write well-structured literary analysis responses with claim, evidence, reasoning.
- Write an original creative piece: a compilation of poetry, an original short play, or an adaptation from one genre to another.
- Know the form and function of verb tenses. Use appropriate and consistent verb tenses when writing. Ensure subject/verb agreement.
- Maintain a consistent point of view and voice when writing.
- Accurately use marks of punctuation: comma, semicolon, colon, exclamation point, quotation marks, apostrophes.

Summative Assessments:

- Creative Writing: Original Poetry, Drama, or Adaptation
- Grammar Assessment- Use of Verbs, Mechanics
- Socratic Seminar with Textual Support (honors level)

Unit Four: Justice and Injustice

In this unit, students read literary works that explore the realities of justice and injustice. Students reflect upon how the individual can uphold his/her personal sense of justice and contribute to a more just society.

Reading Prose

Reserved Reading Options: “The Lesson,” Bambara; “Going to Meet the Man,” James Baldwin; “Four O’Clock,” Price Day; To Kill a Mockingbird, Harper Lee.

Skills:

- Analyze the impact of setting and point of view on the reader.
- Analyze characters’ motivations, interactions, and development over the course of the text.
- Evaluate the author’s craft in portraying the underlying causes of injustice and its impact on individuals and society.
- Investigate the novel’s impact when first published.
- Analyze the film adaption of To Kill A Mockingbird: evaluate setting, point of view, casting, character development, and portrayal of theme.
- Reflect on previous works studied in the unit and make connections.

Reading Poetry

Reserved Reading Options: "Learning to Read," Frances Ellen Watkins; "Fire and Ice," Robert Frost; "We Wear the Mask," Paul Dunbar; "If We Must Die," Claude McKay; "An Obstacle," Charlotte Gilman; "Tree of Fire," Adonis (Translated by Samuel Hazo); "Because I will be Silenced," Ha Jin.

Skills:

- Determine themes and compare/contrast to themes portrayed in novels.
- Analyze literary devices that enhance the mood and emotion of the poem.

Reading and Viewing Drama

Reserved Reading Options: Antigone; 12 Angry Men, Reginald Rose

Skills:

- Analyze characters' motivations, interactions, and development over the course of the play.
- Evaluate the portrayal of character and themes in written play and in the film adaptation.
- Compare and contrast the themes in the play with current day issues.

Reading and Viewing Information

Reserved Reading Options: Barack Obama's speech-Trayvon Martin ruling; relevant articles, presentations.

Skills:

- Research a controversial topic focused on an issue of justice/injustice.
- Read information and expert opinion critically.
- Recognize the author's purpose and bias. Distinguish between supported and unsupported opinions.
- Synthesize information and expert opinion, draw conclusions, and make an informed judgment.

Writing

Skills:

- Write well-structured literary responses.
- Write a well-organized argumentative essay that: introduces a precise claim; establishes clear relationships between claim, reasons, and evidence; disputes counterclaims fairly; provides a concluding statement that follows from and supports the claim.
- Use accurate MLA citations.

Summative Assessments:

- Argumentative Essay with citations
- Socratic Seminar with Textual Evidence
- Intertextual Literary Analysis (honors level)

Grading Policy:

Mastery (summative assessments): 40%

Formative: 40%

Class Participation and Engagement: 20%