

Curriculum Development
In the Fairfield Public Schools

FAIRFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
FAIRFIELD, CONNECTICUT

**ADVANCED PLACEMENT
LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION**

Board of Education Approved 01/22/2008

Advanced Placement Language and Composition

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of the AP Language and Composition course is to provide students with a college-level writing course which develops their skills with the English language, especially in regard to rhetoric and expository writing. As stated in the *Advanced Placement Course Description*, the purpose of this course is “to enable students to read complex texts with understanding and to write prose of sufficient richness and complexity to communicate effectively with mature readers.” The AP Language and Composition course provides students with an exploration of American ideas through a study of American texts and prepares students for the AP Language and Composition exam.

Audience

Juniors taking a college level course

Prerequisites

Completion of 10th grade English, teacher recommendation and successful completion of the AP Language and Composition summer reading assignments

Design and Description

The course provides students with a comprehensive experience in studying American literature and prepares them for the Advanced Placement Language and Composition exam. Students will read a wide variety of American prose styles from many disciplines and historical periods and consider how selections of American fiction and non-fiction highlight stylistic decisions. Students learn to understand and appreciate the diverse ways that American authors make meaning in oral, written, and visual texts. Students also identify elements of literary and rhetorical style and use them in their own writing. Through the process of reading, writing, and discussing texts, students become skilled in composing for different audiences and purposes. The course is designed to enable students to analyze complex American texts and to write highly effective and stylistically sophisticated expository writing. AP Language and Composition emphasizes the teaching of writing strategies and requires student to write essays that proceed through several stages or drafts, with revision aided by teacher and peers. Students write in forms such as narrative, exploratory, expository, and argumentative and on a variety of subjects such as personal experiences, public policies, imaginative literature, and pop culture. As the course progresses, students become aware of their own composition process through self-assessment and evaluations by peers and the teacher. It is anticipated that all students will take the AP Language and Composition exam in the spring. Completion of assigned summer reading and writing is a course requirement.

Course Goals

Students will learn to:

- identify and analyze stylistic and rhetorical elements in notable American texts to understand how meaning is shaped and articulated.
- apply stylistic and rhetorical elements in their own expository and inventive

writing.

- participate in and lead academically rigorous seminars.
- analyze a variety of texts, both classical and contemporary (fiction, non-fiction, and visual), as products of the American culture.
- analyze and evaluate the relationship of readers, raised with the assumptions of the American culture, interacting with texts produced by that same culture.
- choose voice, tone, and content of writing to suit a variety of audiences and purposes.
- learn conventions and methods of research and MLA citation.
- develop their own “voice” in response to the ideas of major American thinkers.
- prepare for the AP Language and Composition exam.
- write formal papers that go through the full steps of the writing process.

Course Objectives

Students will be able to:

Reading

- read and discuss a variety of nonfiction texts that address aspects of American culture.
- identify and analyze a cultural artifact.
- independently read book-length text and apply reading strategies developed in Grade 9 and 10 English classes as they read (e.g. asking interpretive and evaluative questions, making personal connections and connections to other texts, analyzing key lines, analyzing the use of literary conventions to construct meaning).
- respond in their journals to non-fiction texts by either demonstrating a analysis of style and structure through a close reading of the text or by imitating the style and structure of non-fiction texts.
- correctly identify and demonstrate understanding of specified rhetorical and stylistic elements.
- complete and discuss sample multiple-choice portions of the AP Language and Composition exam (with a focus on stylistic, rhetorical, and literary devices).
- identify and analyze rhetorical and stylistic devices in texts read as a class and in a text read independently.
- analyze theme and style of film in order to make connections in discussions and in their writing.
- read, analyze, and discuss texts that model effective documentary styles.
- recognize and analyze the characteristics that motivate us to act independently through a close reading of major texts of the unit.
- identify and model the stylistic and polemical elements present in different types of writing and media.
- recognize and evaluate the effective features of argument development in a selected *New Yorker*-style article.
- interact with texts through written responses, seminars, and finalized written response work.

- read and analyze supplementary poems, excerpts of literary criticism, essays, and short fiction to deepen examination of the two unit novels.

Writing

- conduct an interview to collect material for a descriptive essay.
- write in a narrative voice to engage in metacognition.
- demonstrate innovation with rhetorical and stylistic devices in their own writing.
- demonstrate “voice” in their writing.
- read and analyze an exemplary book review in order to create an assessment list for the book review assignment.
- use a variety of stylistic devices to craft an effective memoir.
- analyze unit texts for effectiveness in crafting a personal story that has an impact beyond the self.
- actively participate in writers’ workshop sessions by submitting a memoir for peer review and by offering constructive written and oral criticism to peers.
- write and assess a timed essay in response to an AP style prompt by analyzing anchor sets, and completing self and peer assessments.
- collect a variety of types of information about their community from sources such as interviews, observation, local media, and their own reading.
- write an annotated bibliography, documenting research in MLA format.
- synthesize class findings to support a written argument about some aspect of their community’s cultural foundations.
- demonstrate an understanding of the features of effective argumentation by taking a position on a social issue and experimenting with making the same argument in varied genres.
- write persuasively for different audiences.
- analyze sample argument prompts from the AP Lang and Comp exam.
- write a timed essay in response to an AP argument prompt.
- write, in order to emulate an argument style, a *New Yorker*-style piece of social commentary.
- write with voice and conviction about personal ideology in relation to American culture.
- respond in their journals to non-fiction texts by either demonstrating a analysis of style and structure through a close reading of the text or by imitating the style and structure of non-fiction texts.
- correctly identify and demonstrate understanding of specified rhetorical and stylistic elements.
- interact with texts through written responses, seminars, and finalized written response work.
- conduct insightful analysis of two novels, one from the traditional literary canon and one contemporary text.
- make connections between the novels and cultural trends discussed previously in the year.

Collaboration

- actively participate in seminar discussions.
- set writing goals for the first quarter based on the summer reading work.

- acquire and use a sophisticated vocabulary for discussion of rhetorical elements.
- participate in class discussion, either in class or online, discussing affordances of texts, in terms of the questions they pose and the themes they address, as well as the style of texts and the craft of authors.
- present research findings to the class, using visual and/ or audio technology.
- discuss unit texts in relation to concepts and characteristics of American culture and American literature.
- conduct insightful analysis of two novels, one from the traditional literary canon and one contemporary text.
- make connections between the novels and cultural trends discussed previously in the year.
- interact with texts through written responses, seminars, and finalized written response work.

Skills Objectives

Students will:

- identify individual grammar and usage problems, based on their writing about summer reading.
- review grammar and usage conventions as needed.
- revise writing to address identified grammar and usage concerns.
- review sentence structure (simple, compound, complex, compound-complex).
- revise for sentence variety.
- avoid sentence sprawl.
- correctly punctuate compound and complex sentences.
- recognize and effectively use participles and gerunds to enliven their writing.
- use parallel structure with participles, phrases, and clauses to diversify their writing style.
- correctly punctuate introductory participial phrases.
- use MLA citations and guidelines accurately.
- recognize and avoid exaggeration, hyperbolically empty language, over-generalizations, platitudes, clichés, jargon, slang, and colloquialisms.
- use adverbial connectives for emphasis and transition.
- punctuate adverbial connectives, using semi-colon and comma with transitions such as therefore, for example, and however.
- consider stylistic choices which challenge the conventions such as beginning a sentence with a conjunction and using sentence fragments for emphasis.

State of Connecticut English Language Arts Standards

Reading and Responding - Students read, comprehend and respond in individual, literal, critical and evaluative ways to literary, informational and persuasive texts in both print and multimedia formats.

Students interpret, analyze and evaluate text in order to extend understanding and appreciation.

Students will interpret information that is implied in a text.

Students communicate with others to create interpretations of written, oral and visual texts.

Students will respond to the ideas of others and recognize the validity of differing views.

Exploring and Responding to Literature - Students read and respond to classical and contemporary texts from many cultures and literary periods.

Students recognize how literary devices and conventions engage the reader.

Students will identify and analyze the differences between the structures of fiction and nonfiction.

Students will analyze literary conventions and devices an author uses and how they contribute meaning and appeal.

Students recognize and appreciate that contemporary and classical literature has shaped human thought.

Students will compare/contrast and evaluate ideas, themes and/or issues across classical and contemporary texts.

Students recognize that readers and authors are influenced by individual, social, cultural and historical contexts.

Students will analyze and evaluate the basic beliefs, perspectives and assumptions underlying an author's work.

Students will interpret, analyze and evaluate the influence of culture, history and ethnicity on themes and issues in literature.

Students will evaluate the effectiveness of the choices that authors, illustrators and film makers make to express political and social issues.

Communicating with Others - Students produce written, oral and visual texts to express, develop and substantiate ideas and experiences.

Students use descriptive, narrative, expository, persuasive and poetic modes.

Students will listen to or read a variety of genres to use as models for writing in different modes.

Students will use the appropriate features of persuasive, narrative, expository or poetic writing.

Students prepare, publish and/or present work appropriate to audience, purpose and task.

Students will revise texts for organization, elaboration, fluency and clarity.

Students will research information from multiple sources for a specific purpose.

Students will evaluate the validity of primary and secondary sources of information to authenticate research.

Applying English Language Conventions - Students apply the conventions of Standard English in oral and written communication.

Students speak and write using standard language structures and diction appropriate to audience and task.

Students will evaluate the impact of language as related to audience and purpose.

Students use Standard English for composing and revising written text.

Students will demonstrate proficient use of proper mechanics, usage and spelling skills.

Information and Technology Standards (to be added)

Essential Questions

- How do we understand what we read?
- How does literature enrich our lives?
- How do we write, speak, and present effectively?
- How do we use the English language appropriately to speak and write?

Focus Questions

- What assumptions do I hold about American culture?
- How do cultural assumptions shape my reading and writing?
- How can writing be used to analyze and explore the origins of my cultural assumptions?
- How can published texts challenge or reinforce my assumptions?
- What makes my voice in writing unique and effective?
- How has the American essay evolved in style and function over time?
- How does critical reading and response to traditional and contemporary non-fiction texts contribute to our sophistication as readers and writers?
- How do authors use style to develop important ideas in their work?
- How are rhetorical devices used to shape meaning within American texts and within student-generated texts?
- How can one write and speak about intellectual ideas using a distinct voice?
- How are philosophical, political, and social trends in American society evident in

- the American literary landscape?
- How do context, audience, and purpose influence style?
 - How can the study of model essays inform my awareness and development of my own writing?
 - How is personal identity shaped in relation to awareness of "others"?
 - What is the value (academic, emotional, historical) in writing a memoir?
 - In what ways do personal stories reveal elements of American culture and thinking?
 - What stylistic and organizational techniques create the greatest impact when writing a memoir?
 - How, in reference to content and style, is self-analysis used most effectively in memoir writing?
 - What are the cultural assumptions and beliefs underlying my community in Fairfield?
 - How can critical examination of data and physical surroundings reveal the cultural foundations of the community?
 - To what extent does my own ideology match the beliefs of others in my community?
 - What can be gained by a greater awareness of cultural assumptions?
 - How do authors use different types of data and research effectively?
 - What past social conditions provoked polemical speech, writing, and organized action?
 - What current social conditions provoke polemical speech, writing, and organized action?
 - To what extent are people obligated to act in the interest of bettering society?
 - What personal characteristics are required to spur movement from independent thought to individual action even in the face of personal risk?
 - How can literature and varied media be used as tools for social change?
 - What makes an effective argument?
 - What genres lend themselves to argumentation? What rhetorical and stylistic elements and devices do these varied genres rely on or share?
 - How do authors craft rhetoric and style to cater to specific audiences?
 - What social issues do I care about and how can I write to alter or improve them?
 - How do critical reading and responding to fiction and non-fiction contribute to our sophistication as readers and writers?
 - How have philosophical, political, and social trends in American society shaped the American literary landscape?
 - What aspects of past literary traditions are still evident in contemporary American literature?
 - What effect does social environment play in shaping a piece of literature?
 - How are contemporary texts a vehicle for rich examinations of literary, philosophical, and cultural trends in American past and present?
 - What do members of the current generation have to say about America today?

UNITS of STUDY

Unit 1: Writing to Explore Assumptions: Locating Ourselves as Americans

English Language Arts Standards

Reading and Responding – Students read, comprehend and respond in individual, literal, critical and evaluative ways to literary, informational and persuasive texts in both print and multimedia formats.

Students interpret, analyze, and evaluate text in order to extend understanding and appreciation.

Students will interpret information that is implied in texts

Students communicate with others to create interpretations of written, oral, and visual texts.

Students will respond to the ideas of others and recognize the validity of differing views.

Exploring and Responding to Literature – Students read and respond to classical and contemporary texts from many cultures and literary periods.

Students recognize that readers and authors are influenced by individual, social, cultural, and historical contexts.

Students will analyze and evaluate the basic beliefs, perspectives, and assumptions underlying an author's work.

Communicating with Others – Students produce written, oral, and visual texts to express, develop, and substantiate ideas and experiences.

Students use descriptive, narrative, expository, persuasive, and poetic modes.

Students will use appropriate features of persuasive, narrative, expository, and poetic writing.

Students prepare, publish, and/or present work appropriate to audience, purpose, and task.

Students will research information from multiple sources for a specific purpose.

Applying English Language Conventions – Students apply the conventions of standard English in oral and written communication.

Students use Standard English for composing and revising written texts.

Students will demonstrate proficient use of proper mechanics, usage, and spelling skills.

Essential Questions

- How do we understand what we read?

- How does literature enrich our lives?
- How do we write, speak, and present effectively?
- How do we use the English language appropriately to speak and write?

Focus Questions

- What assumptions do I hold about American culture?
- How do cultural assumptions shape my reading and writing?
- How can writing be used to analyze and explore the origins of my cultural assumptions?
- How can published texts challenge or reinforce my assumptions?
- What makes my voice in writing unique and effective?

Core Topics

- Recognizing personal and cultural assumptions
- Analyzing style in non-fiction texts
- Collaboration in seminars

Unit Objectives

Students will be able to:

- read and discuss a variety of nonfiction texts that address aspects of American culture.
- conduct an interview to collect material for a descriptive essay.
- actively participate in seminar discussions.
- write in a narrative voice to engage in metacognition.
- identify and analyze a cultural artifact.
- set writing goals for the first quarter based on the summer reading work.
- independently read book-length text and apply reading strategies developed in Grade 9 and 10 English classes as they read (e.g. asking interpretive and evaluative questions, making personal connections and connections to other texts, analyzing key lines, analyzing the use of literary conventions to construct meaning).
- respond in their journals to non-fiction texts by either demonstrating a analysis of style and structure through a close reading of the text or by imitating the style and structure of non-fiction texts.

Skills Objectives

Students will:

- identify individual grammar and usage problems, based on their writing about summer reading.
- review grammar and usage conventions as needed.
- revise writing to address identified grammar and usage concerns.

Assessments

- Graded seminar discussions based on the summer reading texts

- Profile essay – descriptive and analytical essay in which students interview a person who has been influential in shaping his/her own view of American society; final product will profile an individual and implicitly or explicitly reveal the author’s view of American society
- Metacognitive/ Narrative of Thought essay – Students will identify a cultural assumption that they hold. Through discussion and analysis of American cultural artifacts, students will write the story of how they came to hold these assumptions in the form of a narrative essay. Additionally, students will weave in analysis of a cultural artifact to support or question the validity of what they have assumed to be true about American culture.
- Minimum of four 1/1/2-2 page journal responses to non-fiction texts

Pacing

4 weeks

Unit 2: Voices from the Past: Locating Ourselves as Writers

English Language Arts Standards

Exploring and Responding to Literature – Students read and respond to classical and contemporary texts from many cultures and literary periods.

Students will recognize how literary devices and conventions engage the reader.

Students will identify and analyze the differences between structures of fiction and nonfiction.

Students will analyze literary conventions and devices an author uses and how they contribute to meaning and appeal.

Students will compare/contrast and evaluate ideas, themes, and/or issues across classical and contemporary texts.

Students recognize that readers and authors are influenced by individual, social, cultural, and historical contexts.

Students will evaluate the effectiveness of the choices of authors, illustrators, and film makers make to express political and social issues.

Communicating with Others – Students produce written, oral, and visual texts to express, develop, and substantiate ideas and experiences.

Students use descriptive, narrative, expository, persuasive, or poetic modes.

Students will listen to or read a variety of genres to use as models for writing in different modes.

Students will use appropriate features of persuasive, narrative, expository, or poetic writing.

Students prepare, publish, and/or present work appropriate to audience, purpose, and task.

Students will revise texts for organization, elaboration, fluency, and clarity.

Applying English Language Conventions – Students apply the conventions of standard English in oral and written communication.

Students speak and write using standard language structures and diction appropriate to audience and task.

Students evaluate the impact of language as related to audience and purpose.

Students use Standard English for composing and revising written texts.

Students will demonstrate proficient use of proper mechanics, usage, and spelling skills.

Essential Questions

- How does literature enrich our lives?
- How do we write, speak, and present effectively?
- How do we use the English language appropriately to speak and write?

Focus Questions

- How has the American essay evolved in style and function over time?
- How does critical reading and response to traditional and contemporary non-fiction texts contribute to our sophistication as readers and writers?
- How do authors use style to develop important ideas in their work?
- How are rhetorical devices used to shape meaning within American texts and within student-generated texts?
- How can one write and speak about intellectual ideas using a distinct voice?
- How are philosophical, political, and social trends in American society evident in the American literary landscape?
- How do context, audience, and purpose influence style?
- How can the study of model essays inform my awareness and development of my own writing?

Core Topics

- Rhetorical and stylistic devices
- Style and structure of non-fiction texts

Unit Objectives

Students will be able to:

- correctly identify and demonstrate understanding of specified rhetorical and stylistic elements.
- complete and discuss sample multiple-choice portions of the AP Language and Composition exam (with a focus on stylistic, rhetorical, and literary devices).
- identify and analyze rhetorical and stylistic devices in texts read as a class and in a text read independently.
- demonstrate innovation with rhetorical and stylistic devices in their own writing.
- demonstrate “voice” in their writing.
- acquire and use a sophisticated vocabulary for discussion of rhetorical elements.
- read and analyze an exemplary book review in order to create an assessment list for the book review assignment.
- participate in class discussion, either in class or online, discussing affordances of texts, in terms of the questions they pose and the themes they address, as well as the style of texts and the craft of authors.
- respond in their journals to non-fiction texts by either demonstrating a analysis of style and structure through a close reading of the text or by imitating the style and structure of non-fiction texts.

- analyze theme and style of film in order to make connections in discussions and in their writing.

Skills Objectives

Students will:

- review sentence structure (simple, compound, complex, compound-complex).
- revise for sentence variety.
- avoid sentence sprawl.
- correctly punctuate compound and complex sentences.

Assessments

- “Cloud of Dust” model book review
Students will critique the book they read for the Summer Reading Book Chat in the form of a *New Yorker*-style book review for which they have collaboratively determined the assessment criteria.
- AP Lang. and Comp. multiple choice questions on style and rhetorical devices
- Innovative Style Essay: From the chronological survey of texts studied in the unit, students will each select, analyze, and imitate the features of a particular essay. The essay which a student selects should be written in a style dissimilar from the student’s own writing and should encourage the student to broaden his or her stylistic techniques.
- Book review of independent reading text
- Minimum of four 1/1/2-2 page journal responses to non-fiction texts

Pacing

4 weeks

Unit 3: Ourselves Among Others: Writing the Memoir

English Language Arts Standards

Reading and Responding – Students read, comprehend and respond in individual, literal, critical and evaluative ways to literary, informational and persuasive texts in both print and multimedia formats.

Students communicate with others to create interpretations of written, oral, and visual texts.

Students will respond to the ideas of others and recognize the validity of differing views.

Exploring and Responding to Literature – Students read and respond to classical and contemporary texts from many cultures and literary periods.

Students recognize how literary devices and conventions engage the reader.

Students will analyze literary conventions and devices an author uses and how they contribute to meaning and appeal.

Students recognize that readers and authors are influenced by individual, social, cultural, and historical contexts.

Students will interpret, analyze, and evaluate the influence of culture, history and ethnicity on themes and issues in literature.

Communicating with Others – Students produce written, oral, and visual texts to express, develop, and substantiate ideas and experiences.

Students use descriptive, narrative, expository, persuasive, or poetic modes.

Students will use appropriate features of persuasive, narrative, expository, or poetic writing.

Students prepare, publish, and/or present work appropriate to audience, purpose, and task.

Students will revise texts for organization, elaboration, fluency, and clarity.

Applying English Language Conventions – Students apply the conventions of standard English in oral and written communication.

Students speak and write using standard language structures and diction appropriate to audience and task.

Students evaluate the impact of language as related to audience and purpose.

Students use Standard English for composing and revising written texts.

Students will demonstrate proficient use of proper mechanics, usage, and spelling skills

Essential Questions

- How do we understand what we read?
- How does literature enrich our lives?
- How do we write, speak, and present effectively?
- How do we use the English language appropriately to speak and write?

Focus Questions

- How is personal identity shaped in relation to awareness of "others"?
- What is the value (academic, emotional, historical) in writing a memoir?
- In what ways do personal stories reveal elements of American culture and thinking?
- What stylistic and organizational techniques create the greatest impact when writing a memoir?
- How, in reference to content and style, is self-analysis used most effectively in memoir writing?

Core Topics

- Writing memoirs
- Reading strategies: Posing questions, Analyzing themes, Evaluating style

Unit Objectives

Students will be able to:

- use a variety of stylistic devices to craft an effective memoir.
- analyze unit texts for effectiveness in crafting a personal story that has an impact beyond the self.
- actively participate in writers' workshop sessions by submitting a memoir for peer review and by offering constructive written and oral criticism to peers.
- write and assess a timed essay in response to an AP style prompt by analyzing anchor sets, and completing self and peer assessments.
- independently read book-length text and apply reading strategies developed in Grade 9 and 10 English classes as they read (e.g. asking interpretive and evaluative questions, making personal connections and connections to other texts, analyzing key lines, analyzing the use of literary conventions to construct meaning).
- participate in class discussion, either in class or online, discussing affordances of texts, in terms of the questions they pose and the themes they address, as well as the style of texts and the craft of authors.

Skills Objectives

Students will:

- recognize and effectively use participles and gerunds to enliven their writing.
- use parallel structure with participles, phrases, and clauses to diversify their writing style.
- correctly punctuate introductory participial phrases.

Assessments

- Memoir:
Students will craft a memoir using an innovative and effective organizational technique. The memoir should be an exploration of how personal identity is shaped by membership in or exclusion from parts of American culture. For example, students may write about feeling marginalized or the significance of recognizing that they are part of "the mainstream."
- Timed AP prompt
- Book review of independent reading

Pacing

5 weeks

Unit 4: Synthesis/Research

English Language Arts Standards

Reading and Responding-Students read, comprehend, and respond in individual, literal, critical, and evaluative ways to literary, informational, and persuasive texts in both print and multimedia formats.

Students communicate with others to create interpretations of written, oral, and visual texts.

Students will respond to the ideas of others and recognize the validity of differing views.

Communicating with Others – Students produce written, oral, and visual texts to express, develop, and substantiate ideas and experiences.

Students prepare, publish, and/or present work appropriate to audience, purpose, and task.

Students will revise texts for organization, elaboration, fluency, and clarity.

Students will research information from multiple sources for a specific purpose.

Students will evaluate the validity of primary and secondary sources of information to authenticate research.

Applying English Language Conventions – Students apply the conventions of standard English in oral and written communication.

Students speak and write using standard language structures and diction appropriate to audience and task.

Students will demonstrate proficient use of proper mechanics, usage, and spelling skills.

Essential Questions

- How do we understand what we read?
- How do we write, speak, and present effectively?
- How do we use the English language appropriately to speak and write?

Focus Questions

- What are the cultural assumptions and beliefs underlying my community in Fairfield?
- How can critical examination of data and physical surroundings reveal the cultural foundations of the community?
- To what extent does my own ideology match the beliefs of others in my community?
- What can be gained by a greater awareness of cultural assumptions?
- How do authors use different types of data and research effectively?

Core Topics

- Research project
- Writing the synthesis essay

Unit Objectives

Students will be able to:

- collect a variety of types of information about their community from sources such as interviews, observation, local media, and their own reading.
- write an annotated bibliography, documenting research in MLA format.
- present research findings to the class, using visual and/ or audio technology.
- read, analyze, and discuss texts that model effective documentary styles.
- synthesize class findings to support a written argument about some aspect of their community's cultural foundations.
- analyze theme and style of film in order to make connections in discussions and in their writing.

Skills Objective

Students will:

- use MLA citations and guidelines accurately.

Assessments

- Annotated bibliography of research findings in which students offer critical analysis of no fewer than five sources. Sources come from a variety of types of research, including interviews, reading, observation, and local media.
- Presentation in which students share their research findings with the class
- Synthesis essay in which students use both their own research and the research of their peers to support a written argument about some aspect of the culture of their community

Pacing

4 weeks

Unit 5: Writing to Promote Social Change

English Language Arts Standards

Exploring and Responding to Literature – Students read and respond to classical and contemporary texts from many cultures and literary periods.

Students will recognize how literary devices and conventions engage the reader.

Students will analyze literary conventions and devices an author uses and how they contribute meaning and appeal.

Students recognize that readers and authors are influenced by individual, social, cultural, and historical contexts.

Students will analyze and evaluate the basic beliefs, perspectives, and assumptions underlying an author’s work.

Students will interpret, analyze, and evaluate the influence of culture, history, and ethnicity on themes and issued in literature.

Students will evaluate the effectiveness of the choices of authors, illustrators, and film makers make to express political and social issues.

Communicating with Others – Students produce written, oral, and visual texts to express, develop, and substantiate ideas and experiences.

Students use descriptive, narrative, expository, persuasive, or poetic modes.

Students will listen to or read a variety of genres to use as models for writing in different modes.

Students will use appropriate features of persuasive, narrative, expository, or poetic writing.

Students prepare, publish, and/or present work appropriate to audience, purpose, and task.

Applying English Language Conventions – Students apply the conventions of standard English in oral and written communication.

Students speak and write using standard language structures and diction appropriate to audience and task.

Students evaluate the impact of language as related to audience and purpose.

Students use Standard English for composing and revising written texts.

Students will demonstrate proficient use of proper mechanics, usage, and spelling skills

Essential Questions

- How does literature enrich our lives?
- How do we write, speak, and present effectively?
- How do we use the English language appropriately to speak and write?

Focus Questions

- What past social conditions provoked polemical speech, writing, and organized action?
- What current social conditions provoke polemical speech, writing, and organized action?
- To what extent are people obligated to act in the interest of bettering society?
- What personal characteristics are required to spur movement from independent thought to individual action even in the face of personal risk?
- How can literature and varied media be used as tools for social change?
- What makes an effective argument?
- What genres lend themselves to argumentation? What rhetorical and stylistic elements and devices do these varied genres rely on or share?
- How do authors craft rhetoric and style to cater to specific audiences?
- What social issues do I care about and how can I write to alter or improve them?

Core Topics

- Social commentary
- Writing arguments

Unit Objectives

Students will be able to:

- recognize and analyze the characteristics that motivate us to act independently through a close reading of major texts of the unit.
- identify and model the stylistic and polemical elements present in different types of writing and media.
- demonstrate an understanding of the features of effective argumentation by taking a position on a social issue and experimenting with making the same argument in varied genres.
- write persuasively for different audiences.
- analyze sample argument prompts from the AP Lang and Comp exam.
- write a timed essay in response to an AP argument prompt.
- recognize and evaluate the effective features of argument development in a selected *New Yorker*-style article.
- write, in order to emulate an argument style, a *New Yorker*-style piece of social commentary.
- independently read book-length text and apply reading strategies developed in Grade 9 and 10 English classes as they read (e.g. asking interpretive and evaluative questions, making personal connections and connections to other texts, analyzing key lines, analyzing the use of literary conventions to construct meaning)

- participate in class discussion, either in class or online, discussing affordances of texts, in terms of the questions they pose and the themes they address, as well as the style of texts and the craft of authors.
- analyze theme and style of film in order to make connections in discussions and in their writing.
- analyze theme and style of film in order to make connections in discussions and in their writing.

Skills Objectives

Students will:

- recognize and avoid exaggeration, hyperbolically empty language, over-generalizations, platitudes, clichés, jargon, slang, and colloquialisms.
- use adverbial connectives for emphasis and transition.
- punctuate adverbial connectives, using semi-colon and comma with transitions such as therefore, for example, and however.

Assessments

- Arguments in various genres
 - Students will select a contemporary American social issue (local, regional, or national) and present an argument about that issue, writing in at least two distinct genres (satire, letters, poetry, slogans, etc.) in order to experiment with rhetoric, style, and audience
- Timed AP Argument Question – Support, refute, or qualify prompt
- Original piece of social commentary modeled on *New Yorker*-style article
- Book review of independent reading text

Pacing

8 weeks

Unit 6: Writing to Investigate Culture: Voices in Works of Fiction

English Language Arts Standards

Reading and Responding – Students read, comprehend and respond in individual, literal, critical and evaluative ways to literary, informational and persuasive texts in both print and multimedia formats.

Students communicate with others to create interpretations of written, oral, and visual texts.

Students will respond to the ideas of others and recognize the validity of differing views.

Exploring and Responding to Literature – Students read and respond to classical and contemporary texts from many cultures and literary periods.

Students will recognize and appreciate that contemporary and classical literature has shaped human thought.

Students will compare / contrast and evaluate ideas, themes, and/or issues across classical and contemporary texts.

Students recognize that readers and authors are influenced by individual, social, cultural, and historical contexts.

Students will analyze and evaluate the basic beliefs, perspectives, and assumptions underlying an author's work.

Students will evaluate the effectiveness of the choices of authors, illustrators, and film makers make to express political and social issues.

Communicating with Others – Students produce written, oral, and visual texts to express, develop, and substantiate ideas and experiences.

Students use descriptive, narrative, expository, persuasive, or poetic modes.

Students will use appropriate features of persuasive, narrative, expository, or poetic writing.

Students prepare, publish and/or present work appropriate to audience, purpose and task.

Students will revise texts for organization, elaboration, fluency, and clarity.

Applying English Language Conventions – Students apply the conventions of standard English in oral and written communication.

Students use Standard English for composing and revising written texts.

Students will demonstrate proficient use of proper mechanics, usage, and spelling skills.

Essential Questions

- How do we understand what we read?
- How does literature enrich our lives?
- How do we write, speak, and present effectively?
- How do we use the English language appropriately to speak and write?

Focus Questions

- How do critical reading and responding to fiction and non-fiction contribute to our sophistication as readers and writers?
- How have philosophical, political, and social trends in American society shaped the American literary landscape?
- What aspects of past literary traditions are still evident in contemporary American literature?
- What effect does social environment play in shaping a piece of literature?
- How are contemporary texts a vehicle for rich examinations of literary, philosophical, and cultural trends in American past and present?
- What do members of the current generation have to say about America today?

Core Topics

- Writing the literary analysis
- Seminar discussions
- Writing personal manifesto

Unit Objectives

Students will be able to:

- discuss unit texts in relation to concepts and characteristics of American culture and American literature.
- interact with texts through written responses, seminars, and finalized written response work.
- conduct insightful analysis of two novels, one from the traditional literary canon and one contemporary text.
- read and analyze supplementary poems, excerpts of literary criticism, essays, and short fiction to deepen examination of the two unit novels.
- make connections between the novels and cultural trends discussed previously in the year.
- write with voice and conviction about personal ideology in relation to American culture.
- independently read book-length text and apply reading strategies developed in Grade 9 and 10 English classes as they read (e.g. asking interpretive and evaluative questions, making personal connections and connections to other texts, analyzing key lines, analyzing the use of literary conventions to construct meaning).
- participate in class discussion, either in class or online, discussing affordances of texts, in terms of the questions they pose and the themes they address, as well as the style of texts and the craft of authors.

- analyze theme and style of film in order to make connections in discussions and in their writing.

Skills Objective

Students will:

- consider stylistic choices which challenge the conventions such as beginning a sentence with a conjunction and using sentence fragments for emphasis.

Assessments

- Literary analysis paper: This paper should be 4-5 pages in length. Students should engage in close analysis of a novel to support some larger interpretation about how ideas or themes in the novel are relevant in contemporary American thought. MLA conventions should be used.
- Graded seminar discussions: Students should lead seminar discussions about the texts studied. Students will write a 2-3 paragraph abstract to introduce and propose the particular focus for the discussion they lead.
- Personal Manifesto: Students will write a 5-10 page statement of belief in which they speak from their own experience to take a stand about some aspect of American culture. The manifesto should be an honest attempt to “speak for their generation.” Stylistic experimentation should be encouraged. Teachers may choose to incorporate this assignment into the final exam.
- Book review of independent reading

Pacing

6 weeks

Texts such as:

Unit 1

Excerpts from *Travels with Charlie* by John Steinbeck

Excerpts from *Habits of the Heart* by Robert M. Bellah and *Working* by Studs Terkel

“Spirit...” (model for the profile essay)

Summer Reading Texts:

The Grapes of Wrath

Nickel and Dimed

Bowling for Columbine

Unit 2

18th century works such as:

Declaration of Independence

Common Sense, Thomas Paine

Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin (excerpts)

19th century work such as:

Walden(excerpts) and *Civil Disobedience*, Thoreau

Self-Reliance, Emerson

Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass (excerpts)

20th century works such as:

“How it Feels to be Colored Me,” Hurston

Assorted essays by Annie Dillard (“This is the Life,” “Death of a Moth,” et al)

Assorted essays by Gloria Anzaldua (from *Borderlands*)

“Cloud of Dust,” John Updike (Sept. 12, 2005 *New Yorker*)

Independent Viewing Film Suggestions:

Modern Times (1936)

Citizen Cane (1941)

Unit 3

A Moveable Feast by Ernest Hemingway

Prologue to *The Invisible Man*

excerpts from *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* by Gertrude Stein

excerpts from *The Enormous Room* by e.e. cummings

excerpts from the documentary film *The Lost Generation* (A&E Biography series)

“Dark Symphony,” Melvin Tolson

"Fathers, Sons, Blood" by Harry Crews

Toni Morrison's 1993 Nobel Lecture Speech

Essays by N. Scott Momaday

Essays by Malcolm X

“Our Time” by John Edgar Wideman (in Bartholomae and Petrosky. *Ways of Reading: An Anthology for Writers*. 6th edition)

“The Achievement of Desire” by Richard Rodriguez (in Bartholomae and Petrosky. *Ways of Reading: An Anthology for Writers*. 6th edition)

Unit 4

Excerpts from:

Bowling for Columbine

Nickel and Dimed

Fast Food Nation. Eric Schlosser

How the Other Half Lives. Jacob Riis

Essays:

“Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight” by Clifford Geertz (in Bartholomae and Petrosky. *Ways of Reading: An Anthology for Writers*. 6th edition.)

“The Tradition: Fact and Fiction” by Robert Coles. (in Bartholomae and Petrosky. *Ways of Reading: An Anthology for Writers*. 6th edition.)

“Hunger as Ideology” by Susan Bordo (in Bartholomae and Petrosky. *Ways of Reading: An Anthology for Writers*. 6th edition.)

Independent Viewing Film Suggestions:

The Fog of War (2003)

An Inconvenient Truth (2006)

Unit 5

Puddn’head Wilson. Mark Twain

Assorted polemical texts in the following mediums: satire, letters, poetry, slogans, propaganda, speeches, journalistic writing, film and drama, children’s fiction, songs, internet sources.

Speeches:

“What is the Fourth of July to a Slave?” Frederick Douglass

2004 Democratic National Convention Keynote Address, Barack Obama

other speeches can be found at: www.americanrhetoric.com

Essays:

“Sticks and Stones”

Poetry:

e.e. cummings

Claude McKay

contemporary authors

Short Stories:

Leroi Jones

Children’s Fiction:

The Lorax. Dr. Seuss

Songs:

“The Message”. Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five

“Blowin’ in the Wind.” Bob Dylan

“Ballad of the Kingsmen,” Todd Snider

Satire:

Excerpts from *The Onion: America’s Finest News Source*

Journalistic Writing:

current newspaper or magazine articles

Independent Viewing Film Suggestions:

Thank You For Smoking (2006)

Unit 6

The Scarlet Letter

Reservation Blues

Selected poetry, essays, and short fiction thematically, historically, or stylistically linked to the novels

Examples:

“Song of Myself” by Walt Whitman

Excerpts of literary criticism about *The Scarlet Letter* and/or *Reservation Blues*

Quarterly Course Requirements

Independent Reading

Each quarter, students will read one selection from this list, participate in an in-class or on-line discussion about the text, and complete a book review. The texts are arranged loosely by unit in order to promote thematic discussions about the texts. However, students are **not** required to read one text for each unit; they are required to read one text per quarter. By the end of the year, students should have read 4 complete texts from this list. For each text read, students will, after discussing themes and craft with classmates and the teacher, complete a book review in the style discussed in Unit 2.

As long as teachers provide students with opportunities to discuss the texts, teachers may modify the list as they see fit, by expanding, limiting, or rearranging the list (for example, teachers may opt to assign the entire class the same text per quarter, or require students to pick a text that corresponds with a particular unit). Teachers will make these decisions based on their own familiarity with texts since the teacher will facilitate the discussions and evaluate the students' analyses of the texts. Teachers, of course, will have read the texts students select or the text or texts that the teacher assigns. However the teacher sees fit to modify this list, texts must be written by American authors and an emphasis should be placed on long fiction.

“Locating Ourselves as Americans”

Invisible Man. Ralph Ellison
Love Medicine. Louise Erdrich
The Great Gatsby. F. Scott Fitzgerald
On the Road. Jack Kerouac
Death of a Salesman. Arthur Miller
The Bluest Eye. Toni Morrison
Catcher in the Rye. J.D. Salinger
The Intuitionist. Colson Whitehead

“Locating Ourselves as Writers”

In Cold Blood. Truman Capote
The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass. Frederick Douglass
The Things They Carried. Tim O'Brien
Galatea 2.2 Richard Powers
Song of Myself. Walt Whitman
Black Boy. Richard Wright

“Memoir/Autobiographical Writing”

Go Tell it on the Mountain. James Baldwin
The Enormous Room. e.e.cummings
Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl. Harriet Jacobs
A Long Day's Journey Into Night. Eugene O'Neill
Native Son. Richard Wright

“Otherness”

My Antonia. Willa Cather

A Yellow Raft in Blue Water. Michael Dorris

Daisy Miller. Henry James

The Poisonwood Bible. Barbara Kingsolver

Goodbye, Columbus. Philip Roth

“Synthesis/Research: Writing to Examine Cultural Foundations”

The Souls of Black Folk. W.E.B. DuBois

“Writing to Promote Social Change”

The Awakening. Kate Chopin

Red Badge of Courage. Stephen Crane

Angels in America. Tony Kushner

Uncle Tom’s Cabin. Harriet Beecher Stowe

The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn. Mark Twain

Pudd’nhead Wilson. Mark Twain

Slaughterhouse-Five. Kurt Vonnegut

The Heidi Chronicles. Wendy Wasserstein

“Writing to Investigate Culture: Voices in Fiction”

The New York Trilogy. Paul Auster

The Adventures of Augie March. Saul Bellow

White Noise. Don DeLillo

As I Lay Dying. William Faulkner

The Sun Also Rises. Ernest Hemingway

Their Eyes Were Watching God. Zora Neale Hurston

Moby Dick. Herman Melville

The Chosen. Chaim Potok

The Crying of Lot 49. Thomas Pynchon

Mumbo Jumbo. Ishmael Reed

Ceremony. Leslie Marmon Silko

A Streetcar Named Desire. Tennessee Williams

Independent Film Viewing Requirements

Each quarter, students will be required to watch one film independently. Suggestions for independent films have been included in many of the units; however, students are required to only watch one a quarter, not one film per unit. Additionally, teachers may decide to require all students to watch the same film or allow students to select a film from a teacher-approved list. Each film must match the standards and focus questions of the unit. Assessment of students’ understanding of the film can be through class discussion and collaboration; when appropriate, existing unit assessments can require students to incorporate their writing about a film.

Journals

Journal Assignments

Over the course of the year, students will be required to complete sixteen 1.5-2 page long journal assignments. There are two types of journals: 1) a close reading analysis of style and structure of a nonfiction article, and 2) a creative imitation of the style and structure of a nonfiction article. Teachers may use their discretion in determining how many of each type of journal are assigned throughout the year.

Near the beginning of the year, students should be assigned a date (perhaps with a partner, depending on class size) to have selected an article from a current magazine or journal that reflects sophisticated writing techniques and that connects to the current class topic.

Once students select an article, the entire class reads and responds. The article should then become part of the core curriculum for the class. Emphasis should be placed on analyzing the author's craft, specifically her purpose, audience, and style.

Teachers may decide how they wish to ensure students select an article of appropriate quality. Some teachers may restrict choices to particular journals such as *The New Yorker*, *Harper's*, *The Atlantic Monthly* and so on. Others may encourage students to seek out quality articles in surprising places.