

Curriculum Development  
In the Fairfield Public Schools

**FAIRFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
FAIRFIELD, CONNECTICUT

**ENGLISH 31**

AMERICAN VOICES: PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

Board of Education Approved 05/23/2006

## **ENGLISH 31**

### **Statement of Purpose**

The purpose of this course is to develop students as learners and thinkers through the language acts of reading and writing. The content of the course is American literature. It is vital that Fairfield high school students spend a year in the study of American literature because that literature enables students to explore the American experience, the experience of their own culture.

Literature is not created in a vacuum; it is a product of the culture from which it comes. Therefore, a rich experience of American literature requires some understanding of that culture. By extension, recognizing American literature as a body, bound by more than geographic location of its authors, calls for an awareness of America's cultural evolution. Students study American literature in order to frame their understanding of the beliefs, values, fears, and images that shape their culture, which, in turn, shapes them.

Students discover how they are the product of a cultural, literary, and artistic dialogue, which is a living conversation rather than a static concept. Literature not only reflects an "American identity"; its creators also actively shape and construct that identity. In order to see the complexity of their own American Identity, somewhere in the confluence of an "individual" and an "American", students deconstruct this body of work, as well as its role in constructing national and individual identities.

By examining literature from various perspectives, students evaluate their own experiences in relation to the experiences of a wider world. Studying American literature provokes questions that bind us all, despite our individual differences. In the search for answers to those questions, students often find a sense of compassion for and responsibility to a larger society than they might otherwise identify.

### **Audience**

11<sup>th</sup> grade students – honors level

### **Prerequisites**

Successful completion of 10<sup>th</sup> grade English and teacher recommendation

### **Design and Description**

This course focuses on increasing students' personal response to texts by adding reading strategies of research about biography, history, and culture to their repertoire of reading strategies. Students explore the assumptions inherent in the texts they read as well as the assumptions of themselves as readers shaped by their culture. Students read notable works of American literature and analyze those texts in relation to one another. Students write a broad range of formal expository and inventive pieces which include a personal narrative about culture, a narrative of thought about a pervasive idea of the American experience, an argument/proposal about an issue in contemporary American society as well as a speech about that issue, an extended definition about a term related to the American frontier, a memoir about the American Dream, a debate about

disenfranchisement and the American Dream, an exploratory essay about inequities in the American society, creative writing from the perspective of a literary character, and a literary analysis of a text from a particular literary period.

### **Goals**

Students will:

- recognize, question, and articulate values, beliefs, and practices of the American experience.
- identify cultural assumptions of a text and how they reflect and/or challenge their own assumptions.
- engage in metacognition through reading, writing, collaboration, speaking and debating.
- distinguish how language functions to construct and deconstruct beliefs, meaning, and perceptions.
- construct a knowledge base of American historical and cultural influences.
- increase their ability to think in unconventional and individualistic ways as demonstrated through discourse.
- develop familiarity with literary criticism in order to challenge and qualify the literary perspectives of others through writing and discourse.
- write formal papers that go through the full steps of the writing process, including:
  - Personal Narrative
  - Narrative of Thought
  - Argument / Proposal
  - Persuasive Speech
  - Extended Definition Essay
  - Memoir
  - Literary Analysis
  - Creative Writing
- demonstrate an expanded view of economic, social, and racial factors which influence their individual assumptions and the assumptions of the national culture as well as the local culture.
- conduct research utilizing print and non-print sources.
- demonstrate narrative, deductive, and inductive thinking in expository writing and oral presentations.

### **Course Objectives**

Students will be able to:

- recognize and evaluate artifacts of American culture.
- appreciate the power of language by learning and using new vocabulary derived from each major text
- read texts that reveal a variety of perceptions about American society.
- use classroom experiences, including discussion, readings, and informal writing, to develop their own perceptions about American society.

- demonstrate use of consistent point of view in writing.
- analyze an American text that illustrates how society treats an individual with beliefs or attitudes which conflict with norms of the larger group and relate that conflict to contemporary America.
- discuss essays from the American Romantic period (including Transcendentalism) which reveal the perpetual struggle between individuals and American society.
- identify and evaluate contemporary American beliefs about what it means to be an individual, specifically including examples of how we deal with “dissenters” in our country today.
- integrate writing techniques of consistent voice, metacognition, and the weaving of references to multiple texts.
- eliminate use of vague language (including pronoun reference) in writing.
- read texts that illustrate the movement from individual thought to independent action and, through written and oral discourse, analyze what forces are influential in provoking that process.
- recognize and apply rhetorical devices including tone, organization, logos, pathos, and ethos.
- identify and discuss how specific American literary figures (authors and characters) have been instrumental in changing the course of American society.
- demonstrate elements of argumentation in order to persuade.
- develop a thesis statement or exploratory question, avoiding inflated or vague language.
- analyze texts that examine the harmful consequences potentially present in a spirit of conquest.
- through written and oral discourse, identify the causes and effects of frontier mentality in American history and/or contemporary society.
- demonstrate understanding of critical thinking strategies of exemplification, classification, analogy, and cause and effect.
- eliminate excessive wordiness and redundancy in writing.
- read and analyze texts that challenge traditional notions of the American Dream.
- develop and use a vocabulary list that can be used to cultivate sophisticated discussion of style in writing.
- demonstrate narrative strategies of consistent voice, use of dialogue, and explication of an idea.
- through discourse and informal writing assignments, trace and document the evolution of the American Dream.
- document how some groups may be disenfranchised by the expectations implicit in our society’s concept of The American Dream.
- write using varied syntax, with a focus on clauses, punctuation, sentence variety, parallelism, sentence combining and crafting.
- find and use critical sources in order to develop their own analysis of a text.
- investigate and discuss how labels such as “mainstream,” “majority,” “subculture,” and “minority” disseminate notions about “others”.
- through textual study, analyze how power structures can be oppressive to various groups in American society.

- participate in an experience-based project that fosters awareness of Fairfield’s place within local power structures.
- research a specific literary period in American history (Romantic, Realist, Modern – Harlem Renaissance / Lost Generation, Contemporary – Beat Movement / Postmodernism) and present findings to the class.
- collaborate to develop an activity or discussion about a story, poem, or essay from an assigned period in American literary history.
- through written and oral discourse, demonstrate understanding of how the literary periods covered in class are all part of an evolutionary process rather than isolated segments.
- write creative pieces (poetry, stories, creative essays, drama) in the style of specific literary periods.

### **Skill Objectives**

Students will:

- demonstrate consistent point of view in their writing (e.g. no inconsistent pronoun use).
- avoid vague language in their speaking and writing (e.g. “thing”, “got”).
- avoid inflated or vague language for thesis statements or exploratory questions in their essays.
- punctuate complex sentences correctly.
- demonstrate sentence combining and crafting by incorporating parallelism, participial phrases and clauses, gerunds and sentence variety (e.g. compound and complex) in their writing.
- avoid vague pronoun references.
- avoid excessive wordiness and redundancy.
- cite resources correctly when conducting research, utilizing MLA documentation.

### **English 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 persuade listeners about understandings and judgments of works read, written and viewed.

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

**Students explore multiple responses to literature.**

Students will develop and defend multiple responses to literature using individual connections and relevant text references.

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

Students will discuss, analyze and evaluate how characters deal with the diversity of human experience and conflict.

**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 discuss how the experiences of an author influence the text.

Students will discuss how the experiences of a reader influence the interpretation of a text.

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 and poetic modes.**

Students will use oral language with clarity, voice and fluency to communicate a message.

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

Students will write to delight in the imagination.

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

Students will apply the most effective processes to create and present a written, oral or visual piece.

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.

*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.

Students will use resources for proofreading and editing.

### **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 is American culture?
  - What is unique about American culture?
  - What are foreign perceptions of American society?
  - Is there an exclusively American identity?
- Does American society truly value individualism?
  - How can one be both an individual and a part of society?
  - How has and how does our society treat individuals who stray from American cultural norms?
  - Do we, as Americans, truly value individualism?
- What provokes the movement from individual thought to independent action?
  - Why act against conventional beliefs?
  - What positive and negative consequences could stem from independent action?
  - How have the actions of individual men and women shaped the landscape of American society?
- Is a frontier mentality (including concept of conquest, manifest Destiny, and a spirit of exploration) still essential part of the American spirit?
  - Does “conquest” inherently imply “progress”?
  - What attitudes or beliefs about America are reflected in our country’s historic desire for conquest?
  - How has our country been shaped by a spirit of pioneering and exploration?
  - Can there be a positive and healthy balance between conquest and discovery of frontiers in contemporary America?
- Is the American dream worth pursuing?

- What shape does the American Dream take in contemporary American society?
- How has the concept of the American Dream evolved and what has remained consistent?
- Is the American Dream an inclusive or exclusive ideology?
- How has the concept of the American Dream shaped our actions and beliefs as a society?
- How do dynamics between dominant and less dominant groups perpetuate or challenge existing power structures in American society?
  - Who holds power in American society and how is that power handled?
  - How do the beliefs and decisions of those who have power affect those who do not?
  - How does one gain power in American society?
  - What structures in American society perpetuate existent power dynamics?
- How have philosophical, political, and social trends in American society shaped the American literary landscape?



# UNITS OF STUDY

## Unit 1: American Culture

### English Standards

*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 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 and poetic modes.**

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

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

**Students use Standard English for composing and revising written text.**

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

Students will use resources for proofreading and editing.

### 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 is American culture?
  - What is unique about American culture?
  - What are foreign perceptions of American society?
  - Is there an exclusively American identity?

### Unit Objectives

Students will be able to:

- recognize and evaluate artifacts of American culture.
- read texts that reveal a variety of perceptions about American society.
- use classroom experiences, including discussion, readings, and informal writing, to develop their own perceptions about American society.

### **Skill Objectives**

Students will:

- avoid vague language (i.e. “thing”, “got”)
- demonstrate consistent point of view (avoid switching to “you” in writing).

### **Assessment**

- Personal narrative, incorporating an analysis of cultural artifacts

### **Pacing**

2 weeks

## Unit 2: Individualism in America Society

### English Standards

*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.

Students will discuss how the experiences of an author influence the text.

Students will discuss how the experiences of a reader influence the interpretation of a text.

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 and poetic 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 apply the most effective processes to create and present a written, oral or visual piece.

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

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

**Students use Standard English for composing and revising written text.**

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

Students will use resources for proofreading and editing.

### 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**

- Does American society truly value individualism?
  - How can one be both an individual and a part of society?
  - How has and how does our society treat individuals who stray from American cultural norms?
  - Do we, as Americans, truly value individualism?

### **Core Topics**

- Individualism in America society
- Evaluating an idea in multiple texts

### **Unit Objectives**

Students will be able to:

- analyze an American text that illustrates how society treats an individual with beliefs or attitudes which conflict with norms of the larger group and relate that conflict to contemporary America.
- discuss essays from the American Romantic period (including Transcendentalism) which reveal the perpetual struggle between individuals and American society.
- identify and evaluate contemporary American beliefs about what it means to be an individual, specifically including examples of how we deal with “dissenters” in our country today.
- integrate writing techniques of consistent voice, metacognition, and the weaving of references to multiple texts.
- record interpretive responses to each text preliminary to the assessment

### **Skill Objectives**

Students will:

- eliminate use of vague pronoun reference.

### **Assessment**

- Narrative of thought which traces the development of an idea relevant to the unit and incorporates references to multiple works studied in class

### **Pacing**

6 weeks

### Unit 3: Individual Thought and Independent Action

#### English 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 persuade listeners about understandings and judgments of works read, written and viewed.

*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.

Students will discuss how the experiences of an author influence the text.

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 and poetic modes.**

Students will use oral language with clarity, voice and fluency to communicate a message.

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 apply the most effective processes to create and present a written, oral or visual piece.

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

**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.

Students will use resources for proofreading and editing.

### **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 provokes the movement from individual thought to independent action?
  - Why act against conventional beliefs?
  - What positive and negative consequences could stem from independent action?
  - How have the actions of individual men and women shaped the landscape of American society?

### **Core Topics**

- Individual thought and independent action
- Writing persuasively

### **Unit Objectives**

Students will be able to:

- read texts that illustrate the movement from individual thought to independent action and, through written and oral discourse, analyze what forces are influential in provoking that process.
- recognize and apply rhetorical devices including tone, organization, logos, pathos, and ethos.
- identify and discuss how specific American literary figures (authors and characters) have been instrumental in changing the course of American society.
- develop a thesis statement avoiding inflated or vague language.

### **Skill Objective**

Students will:

- avoid inflated or vague language when formulating thesis statements of exploratory questions in essays.

### **Assessments**

- Argument/ Proposal, persuading in regard to an issue in contemporary American society
- Persuasive speech and written text, incorporating use of rhetorical devices

**Pacing**  
6 weeks

## Unit 4 - The American Frontier: Then and Now

### English Standards

*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 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 and poetic 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 apply the most effective processes to create and present a written, oral or visual piece.

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

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

**Students use Standard English for composing and revising written text.**

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

Students will use resources for proofreading and editing.

### 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

- Is a frontier mentality (including concept of conquest, manifest Destiny, and a spirit of exploration) still essential part of the American spirit?
  - Does “conquest” inherently imply “progress”?
  - What attitudes or beliefs about America are reflected in our country’s historic desire for conquest?
  - How has our country been shaped by a spirit of pioneering and exploration?



- Can there be a positive and healthy balance between conquest and discovery of frontiers in contemporary America?

### **Core Topics**

- The American Frontier
- Analyzing a concept

### **Unit Objectives**

Students will be able to:

- analyze texts that examine the harmful consequences potentially present in a spirit of conquest.
- through written and oral discourse, identify the causes and effects of frontier mentality in American history and/or contemporary society.
- demonstrate an understanding of critical thinking strategies of cause and effect, analogy, classification, and exemplification.

### **Skill Objectives**

Students will:

- eliminate excessive wordiness and redundancy in writing.

### **Assessment**

- Extended definition essay, demonstrating deductive thinking, which examines a term related a concept from the unit

### **Pacing**

5 weeks

## Unit 5 - The American Dream

### English 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 persuade listeners about understandings and judgments of works read, written and viewed.

*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.

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 and poetic modes.**

Students will use oral language with clarity, voice and fluency to communicate a message.

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 apply the most effective processes to create and present a written, oral or visual piece.

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

**Students use Standard English for composing and revising written text.**

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

Students will use resources for proofreading and editing.

### **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**

- Is the American dream worth pursuing?
  - What shape does the American Dream take in contemporary American society?
  - How has the concept of the American Dream evolved and what has remained consistent?
  - Is the American Dream an inclusive or exclusive ideology?
  - How has the concept of the American Dream shaped our actions and beliefs as a society?

### **Core Topics**

- The American Dream
- Personal narrative
- Format debate

### **Unit Objectives**

Students will:

- read and analyze texts that challenge traditional notions of the American Dream.
- develop and use a vocabulary list that can be used to cultivate sophisticated discussion of style in writing.
- demonstrate understanding of the writing strategies of developing a consistent voice and using dialogue.
- through discourse and informal writing assignments, trace and document the evolution of the American Dream.
- document how some groups may be disenfranchised by the expectations implicit in our society's concept of The American Dream.

### **Skill Objectives**

Students will:

- develop and use a glossary of terms which can be used to cultivate sophisticated discussion of style in writing.
- punctuate complex sentences correctly.

### **Assessments**

- Memoir, demonstrating narrative thinking, exploring the question: Is the American Dream worth pursuing?
- Formal debate about disenfranchisement and the American Dream

### **Pacing**

6 weeks

## **Unit 6 – Inequities in American Society**

### **English Standards**

*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 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 apply the most effective processes to create and present a written, oral or visual piece.

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.

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

**Students use Standard English for composing and revising written text.**

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

Students will use resources for proofreading and editing.

### **Essential Questions**

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

### **Focus Questions**

- How do dynamics between dominant and less dominant groups perpetuate or challenge existing power structures in American society?
  - Who holds power in American society and how is that power handled?
  - How do the beliefs and decisions of those who have power affect those who do not?
  - How does one gain power in American society?
  - What structures in American society perpetuate existent power dynamics?

### **Core Topic**

- Power structures in American society

## **Unit Objectives**

Students will:

- demonstrate an expanded view of economic, social and racial factors which influence their individual assumptions and the assumptions of the national culture.
- find and use critical sources in order to develop their own analysis of a text.
- investigate and discuss how labels such as “mainstream,” “majority,” “subculture,” and “minority” disseminate notions about “others”.
- read texts that reflect the existence of power structures and analyze how those structures can be oppressive to various groups in American society.
- participate in an experience-based project that fosters awareness of local power structures.

## **Skill Objective**

Students will:

- demonstrate sentence combining and crafting by incorporating parallelism, participial phrases and clauses, gerunds and sentence variety (e.g. compound and complex) in their writing.

## **Assessments**

- Exploratory essay, demonstrating inductive thinking and addressing a question which arises from an experience-based project
- Creative writing from a lens/perspective of a literary character

## **Pacing**

6 weeks

## Unit 7 - American Literary Periods

### English Standards

*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.

Students will discuss how the experiences of an author influence the text.

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 and poetic modes.**

Students will use oral language with clarity, voice and fluency to communicate a message.

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

Students will write to delight in the imagination.

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

Students will apply the most effective processes to create and present a written, oral or visual piece.

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.

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

**Students use Standard English for composing and revising written text.**

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

Students will use resources for proofreading and editing.

### **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 Question**

- How have philosophical, political, and social trends in American society shaped the American literary landscape?

### **Core Topics**

- Individual research and presentation
- American literary periods

### **Unit Objectives**

Students will:

- investigate a specific literary period in American history (Romantic, Realist, Modern – Harlem Renaissance / Lost Generation, Contemporary – Beat Movement / Postmodernism) and present findings to the class.
- collaborate to develop an activity or discussion about a story, poem, or essay from an assigned period in American literary history.
- write creative pieces (poetry, stories, creative essays, drama) in the style of specific literary periods.

### **Skill Objectives**

Students will:

- cite resources correctly when conducting research, utilizing MLA documentation.

### **Assessments**

- Research based group presentation of assigned literary period
- Literary analysis of a text from a specific time period

### **Pacing**

2 weeks

## English 31- Books

### Unit 1-

Choose a sampling of readings

### Unit 2-

- Required: The Scarlet Letter  
The Awakening OR The Heart is a Lonely Hunter  
Transcendentalist readings
- Suggested: *Mona Lisa Smile* (film)  
“Much Madness is Divinest Sense”  
“Story of an Hour”  
“The Yellow Wallpaper”  
“Young Goodman Brown”

### Unit 3-

- Required: The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn  
The Catcher in the Rye  
(excerpts from) Narrative of the Life of Fredrick Douglass OR The Autobiography of Ben Franklin
- Suggested: The Crucible  
PBS’s *Born to Trouble* (film)  
excerpts from the *Declaration of Independence*

### Unit 4-

- Required: *The Significance of the Frontier in American History*  
Reservation Blues
- Suggested: “Three Thousand Dollar Death Song”  
segments of *Into the West*  
Shane

### Unit 5-

- Required: Death of a Salesman AND The Great Gatsby OR The Grapes of Wrath  
*City on a Hill*  
*Smoke Signals* OR *In America* (films)
- Suggested: Of Mice and Men

### Unit 6-

- Required: Native Son  
A Streetcar Named Desire  
selections of poetry
- Suggested: Black Like Me  
“Mother Tongue”  
“Desiree’s Baby”



## **ELEVENTH GRADE LOOK AT THE LEARNER**

Although eleventh grade is a year in which students often seem to focus on academic studies more intently, it is important to remember that many new social pressures emerge with the magic age of sixteen. The rite of passage that comes with a driver's license, social experiences and after school employment allows for a new freedom. However, this new freedom carries with it the weight of added responsibilities. Most eleventh graders have busy lives filled with making adult decisions. It is important to remember that these sixteen-year-olds are in a difficult stage of adolescence and need adult direction even though they are acting out what they perceive to be the role of an adult in many cases. The English classroom can be a place to further develop students' ability to reconcile freedom and responsibility as they mature as learners.

It is important for the teacher to continue to develop the eleventh grader's sense of responsibility in the community of learners. Eleventh graders still feel the need for resolution, yet it is the teacher's task to encourage the students to question. The student needs to ponder, research, evaluate, and conclude. By the end of the year, the students should be comfortable with ambiguity because of their exploration of questions which have no easy answers.

The eleventh grader often perceives the junior year as the year of greatest academic pressure because they are aware of SAT scores, class rank, and the decisions that await them. Whether or not this perception is accurate, it offers one explanation for the eleventh grader's attitude towards school. Eleventh graders look for greater independence, are more confident about interpersonal relationships, and want to have their voice heard within the group. They have greater confidence in their individual perspectives and desire challenges which expand their thinking. Eleventh graders enjoy the freedom to explore and are often welcoming of classes which demand high academic standards.