

AP[®] English Literature & Composition

Syllabus

Introduction

The AP[®] English Literature & Composition course is a college-level class that engages students in a careful and critical analysis of complex literary texts. Readings in the course provide a chronological survey of British and American literature, as well as an in-depth thematic unit on Romanticism that crosses geographic, temporal and cultural boundaries. As students develop their close reading skills, they will learn to identify the ways in which writers use language to create both meaning and pleasure. Through the use of weekly AP[®]-style multiple-choice literary analysis questions, students also develop mastery of the specialized vocabulary of literary analysis and the conventions of standard written expression.

At the core of the AP[®] English Literature & Composition course is a comprehensive writing workshop, which helps students develop the necessary skills to compose literary analyses of sophisticated works. Students must complete formal, extended analyses of the following works of fiction and drama: *The Once and Future King*, *Macbeth*, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, *The Crucible*, *The Grapes of Wrath* and *Slaughterhouse-Five*. For each of these compositions, students will respond to an AP-style prompt that requires students to analyze the work's structure, style and theme as revealed through the author's use of numerous literary elements, including figurative language, characterization, symbolism, and tone. In addition, students will compose two formal literary essays that involve research: for each of the two literary circles, students will compose a literary analysis that interprets a novel or drama in terms of the historical, social and cultural values it contains, again focusing on the literary elements used by the author or playwright.

In addition to the formal, extended analyses described above, the writing process is further developed through the use of both informal, exploratory writing activities and timed in-class essays. Each week, students submit a written response to a literature-based prompt on an online bulletin board, as well as respond to other students' postings. At least three times in every ten week quarter, students also write timed papers in class to duplicate the AP[®] testing experience. These expository, analytical essays are written in response to previously released AP[®] essay prompts for fiction and poetry, again requiring students to focus on textual details and the use literary elements to create meaning and pleasure. Early in the year, these in-class essays will focus on a thematic interpretation of the work. Later in the year, students will write expository, analytical essays that require students to use textual details to make judgments about the work's artistry, quality, and cultural values.

Instruction is provided to students to help them craft more polished compositions and demonstrate the depth of analysis of their literary criticism. In-class analysis of the literature being studied, as well as weekly AP[®]-style multiple-choice literary analysis questions will offer students regular opportunities to examine and appreciate superior forms of lexical and logical structures. Areas of specific interest will include complex sentence structures, logical organization, creating a balance between generalized

statements and specific details and an effective use of rhetorical strategies. In addition, students will be provided specific instruction on the writing requirements for the three AP[®] English Literature & Composition essays – poetry prompt, prose prompt and free response. Each of these essays will be the focus of a special mini-lesson presented in each of the first three ten-week quarters and will include examination and assessment of sample student essays.

A variety of feedback is provided students on both formal and in-class essays. All essays are assessed using a nine-point AP-style rubric (attached). Students learn to assess essays using this rubric through in-class assessment of sample student essays with teacher guidance. Written teacher feedback is provided on both formal and in-class essays. Teacher feedback includes commentary on the use of tone, diction, consistent voice, subordinate clauses, compound sentences with coordinated main clauses, as well as repetitions, transitions and emphasis to enhance coherence. Student writing instruction is individualized through the use of regular conferencing. Finally, peer feedback is used to help students revise formal writing assignments and develop an effective use of rhetorical devices.

A program of intensive vocabulary development is also an integral part of the AP[®] English Literature & Composition course. Through weekly exercises and SAT[®]-style sentence-completion drills, students develop a wide-ranging vocabulary. Students also work cooperatively on two small-group independent reading projects and produce two experiential events, “Medieval Night” and “Down Home Night.”

Grading

Grades reflect assessment of student work in three areas: Literary analysis and Compositions and projects, Vocabulary and Class participation.

Course Work	% of Quarter Grade
Literary analysis	30 %
Composition and Projects	40 %
Vocabulary	20 %
Class participation	10 %

A complete, 3-hour AP[®] exam is given to students as a Midterm exam and counts as 20% of the first semester grade. Students are exempt from a final exam if they complete the AP[®] English Literature & Composition exam in May.

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Unit Outline

Unit 1 – Introduction to Literary Analysis

- What is literature?
 - Literary Terminology
- Mini-Lesson – Writing the Free Response Essay
 - Sample Student Essays
- Summer Reading/Free Response Essays
 - *The Once and Future King*
 - Free Choice

Unit 2 – Foundations of British Literature

- Anglo-Saxon Literature
 - *Beowulf*
 - Development of the English Language
- Medieval Literature
 - *The Canterbury Tales*
 - *Mort d'Arthur*
 - Life in Medieval Britain
 - Development of the English Language
 - Medieval Drama
 - “Medieval Night”
- Renaissance Literature
 - *Macbeth*
 - Composition – Free response
- Mini-Lesson – Writing the Poetry Essay
 - Sample Student Essays
- 17th and 18th Century Literature
 - Metaphysical Poets

Unit 3 – The Tragic Figure in Literature

- Literary Circles – Small, cooperative groups choose from one of the following titles:
 - *The Mayor of Casterbridge*
 - *Jane Eyre*
 - *Great Expectations*
 - *Light in August*
 - *Othello*
 - *Death of a Salesman*
- Composition – Free response prompts

Unit 4 – Foundations of American Literature

- Colonial Literature
 - Representative poetry
 - *The Crucible*
- Voices of Freedom
 - Political writings and speeches
 - *The Declaration of Independence*
- Slavery and the Civil War
 - Video - *Amistad*
 - *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*
- Mini-Lesson – Writing the Prose Essay
 - Sample Student Essays

Unit 5 – Celebrations of the Self: Romanticism and Transcendentalism

- Characteristics of Romanticism
 - British Romanticism
 - Representative British poetry
 - *Rime of the Ancient Mariner*
 - *Frankenstein*
 - *Wuthering Heights*
- American Romanticism and Transcendentalism
 - Readings from Emerson
 - Readings from Thoreau
 - Representative American poetry
 - Video: *Moby Dick*
 - *The Scarlet Letter*
- Composition: Comparative Analysis

Unit 6 – Characters in Search of Identity

- Literary Circles – Small, cooperative groups choose from one of the following titles:
 - *Invisible Man*
 - *The Awakening*
 - *The Hobbit*
 - *Their Eyes Were Watching God*
 - *Pride & Prejudice*
 - *Siddhartha*
- Composition – Free response prompts

Unit 7 – Twentieth Century Literature

- *The Great Gatsby*
- *The Grapes of Wrath*
 - Down Home Night
- War Abroad and Conflict at Home
 - *Slaughterhouse-Five*
 - Beat Poetry
 - Literature of the 1960s Counterculture

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Texts

Required Texts

- Arp, Thomas R. and Greg Johnson. *Perrine's Literature: Structure, Sound, and Sense*. 8th ed. Boston: Heinle & Heinle, 2002.
- Casson, Allan. *Cliffs AP English Literature and Composition*. 2nd ed. Hoboken: Wiley, 2001.
- Chaucer, Geoffrey. *The Canterbury Tales*. Lumiansky, R.M., trans. New York: Washington Square Press, 1990.
- Early, James, ed. *Adventures in American Literature*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1973.
- Fitzgerald, F. Scott. *The Great Gatsby*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953.
- Hawthorne, Nathaniel. *The Scarlet Letter*. New York: Dell, 1979.
- Griffith, Kelley. *Writing Essays about Literature*. 6th ed. Boston: Thomson, 2002.
- McCormick, Paul, ed. *Adventures in English Literature*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1979.
- Miller, Arthur. *The Crucible*. New York: Penguin Books, 1981.
- Murfin, Ross and Supryia M. Ray. *The Bedford Glossary of Critical and Literary Terms*. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 1998.
- Shakespeare, William. *Macbeth*. Mowatt, Barbara A. and Westine, Paul., eds. New York: Washington Square Press, 1992.
- . *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Mowatt, Barbara A. and Westine, Paul., eds. New York: Washington Square Press, 1992.
- Steinbeck, John. *The Grapes of Wrath*. New York: Penguin, 1985.
- Twain, Mark. *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. New York: New American Library, 1959.
- Vonnegut, Kurt. *Slaughter-House Five*. New York: Dial Press. 1999.

Supplemental readings - Students read at least two of the following:

- Brontë, Charlotte. *Jane Eyre*.
- Dickens, Charles. *Great Expectations*.
- Faulkner, William. *Light in August*.
- Hardy, Thomas. *The Mayor of Casterbridge*.
- Hesse, Herman. *Siddhartha*.
- Miller, Arthur. *Death of a Salesman*.
- Shakespeare, William. *Othello*.
- Ellison, Ralph. *Invisible Man*
- Chopin, Kate. *The Awakening*.
- Tolkien, J.R.R. *The Hobbit*.
- Hurston, Zora Neale. *Their Eyes Were Watching God*.
- Austen, Jane. *Pride & Prejudice*.

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Essay Scoring Rubric

- 9-8 Essay is well organized, addresses topic directly, proposes and supports an interesting thesis, does not oversimplify answer, offers an original and insightful interpretation, demonstrates a comprehensive knowledge of the text(s), draws on several distinct lines of support, makes apt and specific references to the text(s), and demonstrates a facility with language. Generally, the 9 essays reveal a more sophisticated analysis and a more effective control of language than do essays scored an 8.
- 7-6 Essay is well organized, addresses topic, and displays sound knowledge of the text(s). The thesis is solid and is moderately original and/or insightful. The support is strong and not repetitive and makes direct references to the text(s). Neither substance nor style is as impressive as in 9-8 essays. Generally, the 7 essays present a more developed analysis and a more consistent command of the elements of effective composition than do essays scored a 6.
- 5 Essay presents a plausible but simplistic argument, contains some unsupported generalizations, and relies on limited and/or overly obvious support. The thesis is not ambitious, and the style and organization is awkward at times. The essay may rely overly much on summaries and paraphrases, but it does provide competent analysis. The essay may contain surface errors, which may be distracting but do not create confusion for the reader.
- 4-3 Essay demonstrates a less than thorough understanding of the text(s) or writing task. The analysis may be only partial, unconvincing, or irrelevant, and/or rely primarily on summary or paraphrase. The thesis may be ambiguous, and the support may be weak. Paraphrasing and summarizing replace analysis. Essay may demonstrate a lack of control over the conventions of composition, including style and organization. Essay may demonstrate misunderstanding of some aspect of the text(s). Essays scored a 3 may contain significant misreadings.
- 2-1 Essay contains incoherent arguments, weak use of language, and no real support for assertions. Essays may contain pervasive errors that interfere with understanding. Essays scored a 1 are especially inept, vacuous, or unsound.
- 0 Essay makes no more than a reference to the text(s), and/or is only a restatement of the writing prompt or a summary of the text(s).

Grade Conversion

9 = 95	7 = 85	5 = 75	3 = 65	1 = 55
8 = 90	6 = 80	4 = 70	2 = 60	0 = 0