

## AP English Literature and Composition Syllabus

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### Course Overview:

Students in this college-level course will read and carefully analyze world literature written in a variety of time periods, from the 10<sup>th</sup> century through the postmodern era. This course will provide students with the intellectual challenges and workload consistent with a typical level 200 undergraduate English Literature class at any college or university. At the culmination of the course, the students **will** take the AP English Literature and Composition Exam given in May. Based on their scores, they may be granted advanced placement, college credit, or both at colleges and universities throughout the United States. In the course, you must read deliberately and thoroughly, taking time to understand a work's complexity, to absorb its richness of meaning, and to analyze how that meaning is embodied in literary form. In addition to considering a work's literary artistry, students reflect on the social and historical values it reflects and embodies. Careful attention to both textual detail and historical context provides a foundation for interpretation, whatever critical perspectives are brought to bear on the literary works studied.

### Writing Assignments:

Throughout the year students will write, demonstrating an understanding and mastery of standard, written English. They should have a broad vocabulary, which will indicate that they can use words appropriately to show denotative accuracy and connotative resourcefulness. AP Literature students write for a variety of reasons: 1) Students will write creatively to indicate knowledge of the organization, structure, and style techniques of poetry and prose. 2) Students will write to inform their reader that they understand passages from poetry, and longer works like novels and plays. 3) Students will write to explain complex ideas and issues that require research and development. 4) Students will write to analyze various pieces interpreting the author's meanings based on careful observation, use of extensive textual support, and an understanding of historical and social values. 5) Students will write under time constraints, producing papers that show both complexity and sophistication.

### Reading Assignments:

This course includes an intensive study of rich and representative works such as those authors cited in the *AP English Course Description*. The works selected require a careful, deliberative reading that yields multiple meanings. (Note: The College Board does not mandate any particular authors or reading list).

**However**, because this is a college-level course, expectations are appropriately high, and the reading workload is challenging. Students are expected to come to class with the works read and annotated. Because of the length of some pieces, careful planning and time management is essential to success in the class. Careful reading leads to in-class discussion, which reveals a student's in-depth understanding and evaluation of the piece and contributes towards the strengthening of his/her own composition ability.

## Primary Course Literature:

<i>Beowulf</i>	Unknown
<i>The Inferno</i>	Dante Alighieri
<i>Hamlet</i>	William Shakespeare
<i>Alice's Adventures in Wonderland</i> and <i>Through the Looking Glass and What Alice Found There</i>	Lewis Carroll

### **September-October: Close reading and annotation of text, evaluation of summer reading assignment, introduction to AP Literature and Composition exam, definition and expository essays. Introduction to first work of British Literature. The Dark Ages.**

**Text:** *Beowulf*, Translated by Seamus Heaney

The course opens with an evaluation of the summer reading assignment as well as an introduction to Britain in the Dark Ages and what is regarded to be the most important work of epic poetry to come from that era. Students will perform a close reading for stylistic elements and theme. Students will also be introduced to the genesis of the English language that we currently speak and write today.

**Essential Question:** Epics provide a narrative demonstration of the most important values of the societies in which they were written. How does *Beowulf* promote the values of the Germanic Heroic Code of Honor? What determines our definitions of the nature of good and evil? Why is evil so compelling?

**Suggested Further Reading:** *The Issue of Feminine Monstrosity: A Reevaluation of Grendel's Mother* by Christine Alfano

*Warriors, Wyrms, and Wyrd: The Paradoxical Tale of the Germanic Hero/King in Beowulf* by Kevin J. Wanner

### **November - December: Continued close reading and annotating. The Middle Ages.**

**Text:** *The Inferno* by Dante Alighieri

As we move on from the Dark Ages, we will travel to Florence, Italy in the height of the Middle Ages. We will examine the first part of Dante's Divine Comedy, *The Inferno*, and follow Dante and his guide Virgil through the depths of Hell to learn of the sins of man and the punishments they will receive. It is truly a sublime journey through the heart and soul.

**Essential Question:** As *Beowulf* reveals something about the culture in which it was written, Dante's *Inferno* reveals information about the culture of its origin. What can be deduced about society in Dante's Italy from this epic poem? What can reading Dante's *Inferno* teach us about how we should lead our own lives, regardless of religious denomination?

**Suggested Further Reading:** *Dante's Inferno: Critical Reception and Influence* by David Lummus

*Darkness Visible: Dante's Clarification of Hell* by Joseph Kameen

**January - February: Continued close reading and annotating. Drama Unit continued. Re - Introduction to William Shakespeare. The Renaissance.**

**Text:** *Hamlet*, by William Shakespeare

This unit will focus on reading and responding to Drama. The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark is a tragedy by William Shakespeare. Set in the Kingdom of Denmark, the play dramatizes the revenge Prince Hamlet exacts on his uncle Claudius for murdering King Hamlet, Claudius's brother and Prince Hamlet's father, and then succeeding to the throne and taking as his wife Gertrude, the old king's widow and Prince Hamlet's mother. The play vividly portrays both true and feigned madness – from overwhelming grief to seething rage – and explores themes of treachery, revenge, incest, and moral corruption.

**Essential Question:** How does fate and destiny play a role in the outcome of the tragic Prince Hamlet? Why do we take our frustration out on those we love the most?

**Suggested Further Reading:** *Resituating Freud's Hamlet* – by David J. Gordon

*Hamlet and Amleth Princes of Denmark: Shakespeare and Saxo Grammaticus as Historians and Kingly Actions in the Hamlet/Amleth Narrative* - by Megan Arnott

**March- May: Continued close reading and annotating. Introduction to the Victorian Era and essentially the first YA novel. The Bildungsroman.**

**Text:** *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking Glass and What Alice Found There.*

This unit will take us back to our youth as we revisit a childhood classic. However, we will also examine the much darker side to these two novels and the authors himself, who, in recent times has had a bit of a negative stigma attached to him. I mean, why else would there be an *Alice* section in Hot Topic if not for the novel's nefarious side?

**Essential Question:** How can reading a traditional children's novel as a young adult alter our perspective and interpretation of it all those years later? Does an author's past affect the way we perceive their writing?

**Suggested Further Reading:** *Alice's Vacillation between Childhood and Adolescence in Lewis Carroll's Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* by Jenny Karlsson  
*Playing Around in Lewis Carroll's Alice Books* by Jan Susina

**May - June: AP Test Review, the exam, and Post AP Test activities.**

During the final days before the exam, students work on quality AP works to review various aspects of literature. We are still expected to be students AFTER the test. Our final unit deserves just as much attention as the ones before it.

### **Grading Policy**

**Formal Essays** - 35% of your grade - These are M.L.A. formatted research papers that will require most of your time and effort.

**Practice Free Response A.P. Literature Prompts** - 25 % of your grade - These are much shorter, but no less challenging. These practice F.R.Q.'s will be assigned monthly, and you will have less than an hour to do them.

**Annotations of Scholarly Sources** - 10% of your grade - Occasionally, you will be asked to read an article on a work of literature we've read and annotate for diction and content, offering insightful observations of the article as a whole.

**Oral Presentations** - 15% of your grade - In pairs, or small groups, you will read an article on a work of literature we have just completed and create a Prezi, Google Slides, or similar software, and analyze and interpret the article to be presented to the class. A rubric with further instructions will be provided once assigned.

**Class Participation and Engagement** - 15% of your grade - I cannot stress enough the importance of this portion of your grade. You may not like everything we do on any given day. That is not a license to disengage and watch videos on your phone or put your head down to sleep. Sleep at home. This is an A.P. class, your focus and undivided attention is on what we are doing that day, whether it be reading the next section of the text, watching a film clip, researching for a presentation, or preparing for the A.P. test, you are to be involved every day with questions, comments, and interpretation.

### F.A.Q.'s

**Q: Do you accept late work?**

**A: It is the school's policy to accept work that is handed in beyond the due date; however, the teacher may decide how much the work will be penalized for tardiness. Typically, essays handed in late, regardless of absence, will incur a deduction of at least 30% Annotated articles and presentations that are late will be penalized 50%**

**Q: Is there any extra credit I can do?**

**A: No. All work on the course outline must be completed first before any extra credit is even considered.**

**Q: Is there any way I can boost my grade at all; I really need this class to graduate?**

**A: Sure. Invent, then build a Time Machine, travel back in time to September, then do everything you were supposed to do the first time. Then, since you can travel through time, rescue Abraham Lincoln.**

**Please note that there will be several occasions where we pause a work of literature for a day or two and turn our attention to AP multiple choice questions and AP Free Response prompts.**

**Mr. Lorenzo reserves the right to alter or modify this course outline at any time during the year and at his discretion.**

## AP English Literature and Composition Summer Reading Assignment (2023)

The College Board requires very specific genres and time periods to be covered before they deem a student ready to take the A.P. test in May their senior year. You have covered a number of these genres in the three years leading up to this class, and we will cover several more before May.

Please read and annotate **ONE** title from the following list:

**The Postmodern Period:** *Brooklyn*, by Colm Toibin

**The Romantic Period:** *Frankenstein*, by Mary Shelley

**The Horror Novel:** *Dracula*, by Bram Stoker

**The Renaissance:** *Twelfth Night*, by William Shakespeare

Once read, consider the following prompt from the 2018 AP English Literature and Composition Exam:

**Many works of Literature feature characters who have been given a literal or figurative gift. The gift may be an object, or it may be a quality such as uncommon beauty, significant social position, great mental or imaginative faculties, or extraordinary physical powers. Yet this gift is often also a burden or a handicap. Select a character from [your summer reading] who has been given a gift that is both an advantage and a problem. Then write a well - developed essay analyzing the complex nature of the gift and how the gift contributes to the meaning of the work as a whole.**

This response WILL NOT be due the day we get back and meet each other for the first time, you will get time in class in September to compose your response. Essentially, all you need to do is read and annotate over the summer and be prepared to write when we meet in person. To those that have the confidence to write your response before we meet, I commend you and say, “go for it!” I only ask that you time yourself and don’t spend more than 45 minutes writing your response, as that is essentially the amount of time you’ll have in May. You may handwrite the essay, snap a clear picture and turn it in through Google Classroom, or type it up on a Google doc and submit the same way. Although I encourage typed responses, it really expedites the grading process, it’s up to you.

Also – This is not a research paper; you DO NOT have to include quotes or citations from the work into your response. Save all the quoting and citing for the M.L.A. papers that are indeed coming later in the school year.

Additionally, at some point over the summer, you must email me and tell me which work of literature you read. I will then direct you to an online scholarly article on the novel that must be printed, read, and annotated. Acceptable annotations include several notes in the margins focusing on vocabulary, author’s purpose, and general observations that prove you can engage in scholarly discussion with your academic peers. Failure to contact me will result in a zero for this part of the summer assignment. A grade of 100 will be earned in September when you are able to discuss the content of your article.