



2020-2021 Advanced Placement Literature and Composition Introduction
Mountain Range High School
Mr. Johnson
jeff.johnson@adams12.org

Course Description

AP English Literature and Composition is an introductory college-level literary analysis course. Students cultivate their understanding of literature through reading and analyzing texts as they explore concepts like character, setting, structure, perspective, figurative language, and literary analysis in the context of literary works.

Course Overview The AP® English Literature and Composition course is designed and taught thematically with an emphasis on core readings along with modern and contemporary selections that illuminate and expand upon a variety of themes. AP English Literature and Composition closely follows the requirements described in the AP English Literature and Composition Course and Exam Description (CED), including the fundamentals of literary analysis and introductory college composition. Each week students discuss and engage in a variety of writing activities focusing on argumentation, interpretation, analysis, rhetorical strategies, exposition, structure, and style. Students read and study a variety of novels, plays, poems, and short stories from the 16th century to the present. In addition to district approved novels, students read shorter works and drama from Prentice Hall Literature: The British Tradition Perrine's Literature: Structure, Sound, & Sense. The course focuses on the experience of literature, the interpretation of literature, the evaluation of literature, and writing to develop stylistic maturity and sophistication. Students practice their writing via numerous timed essays, which are revised several times, as well as longer essays that require outside research and MLA formatting. Students also practice oral communication skills, through poetry presentations, regular classroom discussions and acting as discussion facilitators.

Advanced Placement (AP) English offers our students an opportunity to become mature, skilled, critical readers through close, analytical reading of imaginative literature. Further, students in AP Literature will become aware of the structural components, literary elements, and the effects of these concepts on the works as a whole. Students will read and demonstrate comprehension of the following genres: drama, novels, short stories, essays, and non-fiction. These texts will range from the sixteenth century to the present. The texts chosen for this class will reflect the literary tradition, as well as contemporary fiction worthy of consideration. Poetry will focus on the Romantic Poets, but will include other time periods and authors as well.

Writing is also a major component of the of the AP Literature and Composition course. Students will practice the critical analysis of literature by writing various papers, including expository, analytical, and argumentative essays. The majority of the essays will be focused on critical analysis; students will also practice their craft through creative writing, approaching the texts from various perspectives. This way, students can learn to appreciate the writer's craft and the difficult challenge of creating great literature. College Board agrees that experiences such as these "sharpen students' understanding of what writers have accomplished and deepen their appreciation of literary artistry" (*AP English Course Description*). The primary focus for all writing will be the illustration of the students' understanding of the literature itself and their ability to tie the themes, styles, characters, and other literary elements to other works and the world in which they live. Essays will be used to demonstrate their ability to think creatively and effectively, bringing new insights to the literature. Furthermore, students' writing should not only be profound in thought, but poetic in nature, effectively using the appropriate literary elements learned from our greatest writers.

Students must shoulder additional workload to be successful in AP Literature and Composition.

Student Learning Outcomes (SLO)

Reading 40%

The reading assignments for this course are difficult and require close-reading strategies. Please annotate your texts, pace your reading, take notes, and be diligent. You will be assessed over reading comprehension, analytical thinking, vocabulary, context, literary terms, etc.

Writing 40%

Your writing is the way in which your thoughts are communicated. Please make sure your thesis is sound. If you do not have an exceptional thesis for your essay, the essay itself can never truly shine. Please take time to brainstorm and think about this thesis, making it specific, debatable, insightful. Thesis statements should not simply explain something the reader already knows about the literature. By no means should it be a summary of the plot. Essays of this nature will not receive a passing grade. The thesis should be a view of the literature we have not considered before, a deeper insight into the themes, characters, literary elements, etc. If you are unsure of the strength of your thesis, or would like to show it off, please stop by and we'll talk it over.

Expository, Analytical, and Argumentative Writing

We will analyze the writing in terms of content and ideas, organization structure, voice and style, syntax and diction, and conventions. Many papers can be re-written (highly encouraged) if the student has met with the teacher prior to the paper's due date and after the student has had the paper returned. These rewrites will be due a week (usually) after the post-writing conference. This eliminates rewriting papers that have not been thoughtfully, diligently planned. I encourage all students to conference before and after essays. There will be at least five formal essays and seven to ten in-class essays in this course.

Creative Writing

In order to balance student writing and encourage style and voice in formal essays, creative writing must be a part of the curriculum. Specific creative writing assignments will be used at different times during the year and for different readings. Samples of creative writing include interpretations of style and content with Virginia Woolf's "Death of the Moth" and Annie Dillard's "Living Like Weasels" satirical writings on *Hamlet* and *Othello*, and persuasive writing with *Death of a Salesman*. However, numerous times during the year we will work on the incorporation of creative writing through exercises done in class, focusing on syntax, diction, figurative language, imagery, tone, audience, and other rhetorical devices.

Free-writing

Free-writing encourages you to take risks with your writing and to explore new approaches to the literature.

In-class Writing, Quizzes, Exams

In-class essays pulled from old AP tests and reworked for our specific needs will be used at least twice a quarter. These essays strengthen your ability to perform well on the AP Exam, heighten your critical thinking skills and on-the-spot writing.

Speaking and Listening 10%

Discussion of literature is an essential part of this class. The ability to discuss literature effectively utilizing clear, sophisticated observations is paramount. Speaking may also include memorization of texts and oral interpretation and the addition of a modified and abbreviated Senior Capstone presentation.

Practice 10%

Practice for reading, writing, and speaking and listening may take many forms and will be assessed in this category. Quizzes, in class observations, classroom discussions, participation are all potential practice grades. Quizzes cover concepts you should have gleaned from your homework. You will be graded on comprehension, analysis, literary concepts, vocabulary, and thematic elements, and sophistication of thought. Quizzes are usually not announced.

Past and Possible Texts

<i>Literature: An Introduction to Fiction, Poetry, and Drama</i>	
<i>East of Eden</i>	John Steinbeck
<i>Their Eyes Were Watching God</i>	Zora Neale Hurston
<i>Taming of the Shrew</i>	
<i>Hamlet</i>	
<i>Othello</i>	
<i>King Lear</i>	William Shakespeare
<i>Catcher in the Rye</i>	J.D. Salinger
<i>Song of Solomon</i>	Toni Morrison
<i>Waiting for Godot</i>	Samuel Beckett
<i>The Color Purple</i>	Alice Walker
<i>One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest</i>	Ken Kesey
<i>A Confederacy of Dunces</i>	John Kennedy Toole

The Awakening
Frankenstein
The Great Gatsby
Medea

Kate Chopin
Mary Shelley
F. Scott Fitzgerald
Euripides

The Importance of Being Earnest

The Picture of Dorian Gray

Oscar Wilde

Various Short Stories, Essays, and poetry

Possible Third Quarter Project novels: *The Joy Luck Club* by Amy Tan, *Invisible Man* by Ralph Ellison, *Native Son* by Richard Wright, *Crime and Punishment* by Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Bronte, *Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens