

ENGLISH CURRICULUM

ENGLISH COURSE OUTLINE

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Course</u>
7	Introduction to Literature and Language Arts Part 1
8	Introduction to Literature and Language Arts Part 2
9	World and American Literature
10	American Literature from 1840
11/12	British Literature
11/12	Rhetoric and World Literature

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Grade 7

Course:

Introduction to Literature and Language Arts

Text(s):

Mosdos Press Literature – Jade Edition

Grammar and Composition – Heath, Second Course

Wordly Wise 4

Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry- by Mildred Taylor

Outside Readings from Current Year Yeshiva Reading List

Major Topics:

This course covers a variety of literary genres, focusing on the elements of fiction through the short story, the novel, and poetry. The course is designed to give students an understanding of how the elements of fiction are used. Grammar, vocabulary and writing instruction will concentrate on developing an understanding of the relationships between words and sentences and how they combine to create meaning.

Key Unit Objectives:

- Understanding the elements of fiction
- Using strategies for reading for meaning
- Understanding the structure of the five basic sentence patterns in standard English
- Understanding sentence variety including simple, compound, and complex sentences
- Understanding the structure of a coherent paragraph to inform, describe, narrate and persuade
- Using journal responses and creative writing prompts for self-expression

Skills Taught:

- Elements of fiction: plot structure (exposition, rising and falling action, climax, resolution), conflict, point of view, setting, theme and characterization (protagonist, antagonist, developed/round and undeveloped/flat characters, stereotype characters)
- Reading for meaning: think-aloud; predicting, visualizing, clarifying; main idea
- Grammar: subject, verb, direct object, modifiers, indirect object, object complement, subject complement through diagramming of five basic sentence patterns; simple, complex, and compound sentences
- Paragraph development: topic sentence, detail sentences, concluding sentence and use of logical order and logical transitions
- Character and theme analysis: five paragraph essays with good transitions from books read outside of class
- Literary analysis including conventions of poetry
- Vocabulary development

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History Tie-In:

- The Golden Goblet by Eloise McGraw could be a second quarter mandatory outside reading
- The English Teacher will assist the history department with a second quarter research paper (for grammar, transitions, and format purposes)
- A Great Wall short story should be taught in the second quarter or the students can write about one of the Titans from Edith Hamilton's Mythology in the third quarter

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Grade 8

Course:

Introduction to Literature and Language Arts

Text(s):

Implications of Literature – Explorer Level

Grammar and Composition – Heath, Complete Course

Wordly Wise 5

Lord of the Flies- William Golding

To Kill a Mockingbird- Harper Lee (Girls School)

Macbeth- William Shakespeare (Boys School)

Outside Readings from Current Year Yeshiva High School Reading List

Major Topics:

This course covers a variety of literary genres, focusing on the elements of fiction through the short story, the novel, drama and poetry. The course is designed to give students an understanding of how the elements of fiction are used. This course will also focus on literary analysis of poetry and Shakespearean tragedy. Grammar, vocabulary and writing instruction will concentrate on developing an understanding of the relationships between words and sentences and how they combine to create meaning. This course is a continuation and expansion of the grade seven curriculum.

Key Unit Objectives:

- Expanding understanding of the elements of fiction
- Reinforcing use of strategies for reading for meaning
- Expanding understanding of the structure of the five basic sentence patterns in standard English and expanding understanding of sentence variety
- Expanding understanding of the structure of a coherent paragraph to inform, describe, narrate and persuade, including using logic strategies and writing multi-paragraph compositions
- Using journal responses and creative writing prompts for self-expression
- Using poetic devices to write original and imitative poetry
- Expanding usable vocabulary

Skills Taught:

- Elements of fiction: plot structure (exposition, rising and falling action, climax, resolution), conflict, point of view, setting, theme and characterization (protagonist, antagonist, developed/round and undeveloped/flat characters, stereotype characters); discuss/explore use of elements of fiction and literary devices
- Reading for meaning: predicting, visualizing, clarifying

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- Grammar: subject, verb, direct object, modifiers, indirect object, object complement, subject complement through diagramming of five basic sentence patterns including more complex modifiers
- Paragraph development: topic sentence, detail sentences, concluding sentence and use of logical order and logic strategies in single paragraph and multi-paragraph compositions
- Character, theme, and setting five paragraph essays from books read outside of class, demonstrating increasingly sophisticated transitions and supporting detail
- Poetry writing: poetry imitation; using figurative language; literary analysis using poetry terminology
- Literary analysis
- Vocabulary development

History Tie-In:

- The Samurai's Tale by Erik Christian Haugaard (third quarter) or The Midwife's Apprentice by Karen Cushman (fourth quarter) could be mandatory outside reading
- The English teachers will assist the history department with the third or fourth quarter research paper (medieval Europe or Native Americans) for grammar transitions and format purposes

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Grade 9

Course:

Introduction to World Literature and American Literature

Text(s):

Implications of Literature – Pioneer Level

Julius Caesar by William Shakespeare (Boys School) or

The Tempest by William Shakespeare (Boys School)

Macbeth by William Shakespeare (Girls School)

The Adventures of Tom Sawyer- Mark Twain (or work chosen by teacher)

Excerpts from The Iliad of Homer

Wordly Wise 6

Outside Readings from Current Year Yeshiva High School Reading List

Major Topics:

This course begins with the human condition as demonstrated in the epic poems of Homer (guest/host relationship, honor, beauty, craftsmanship, war, wrath, and reconciliation). Writing in response to these excerpts, students will focus on thesis statements, supporting analysis, and effective exposition. Subsequently, students will explore American Literature with units on poetry, the short story, and a novel. MLA style conventions will be taught to enable students to produce a properly formatted research paper coordinated with the history department.

Key Unit Objectives:

- Understanding the elements of and producing a well-constructed five-paragraph essay
- Reinforcing understanding of the structure of the five basic sentence patterns in standard English, along with proper use of complex modifiers
- Reinforcing understanding of the structure of a coherent paragraph to inform, describe, narrate and persuade
- Using journal responses for exploration and analysis of literature and personal experience
- Producing MLA style research paper; understanding plagiarism and its consequences
- Understanding the purposes of Shakespearean tragedy
- Expanding usable vocabulary

Skills Taught:

- Grammar: subject, verb, direct object, modifiers, indirect object, object complement, subject complement, verbals and verbal phrases through diagramming of five basic sentence patterns
- Paragraph development: topic sentence, detail sentences, concluding sentence and use of logical order and logic strategies

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- Five-paragraph essay format: thesis statement, thesis idea and controls, parallel structure, logical organization, use of logic strategies
- MLA research skills: use of source cards; use of MLA style to create cards from primary sources; creation of MLA style Works Cited page; note taking; parenthetical documentation; use of quotations, including punctuation of quotations
- Critical evaluation: use of the writing process, including peer evaluation and revision recommendations
- Literary analysis through journal responses, class discussions and written essays
- Vocabulary development
- Targeted outside reading from revised book list to reinforce themes employed by world and American authors.

History Tie-In:

- April Morning by Howard Fast or an Ann Rinaldi book like A Ride into Morning, Finishing Becca, or The Fifth of March could be second quarter mandatory outside reading
- The English teacher will assist with the organization and rubric for the John Brown research paper during the fourth quarter

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Grade 10

Course:

American Literature from 1840

Text(s):

Adventures in American Literature – Pegasus Level

The American Reader by Diane Ravitch, ed.

The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn by Mark Twain

To Kill A Mockingbird by Harper Lee

Othello by William Shakespeare

The Glass Menagerie by Tennessee Williams

Wordly Wise 7

Outside Readings from Current Year Yeshiva High School Reading List

Major Topics:

This course covers American literature chronologically from 1840, including the American Renaissance, transcendentalism, anti-transcendentalism, Romanticism, local-colorists and regionalism, realism, naturalism, modernism, the American novel, the Harlem Renaissance and pluralism. Grammar instruction will concentrate on developing an understanding of the relationships between words and sentences and how they combine to create meaning. Vocabulary will focus on preparation for college entrance examinations. The tenth grade writing program continues the exploration of expository writing while emphasizing writing as a tool for literary analysis. MLA style conventions will be reviewed in connection with writing a required research paper.

Key Unit Objectives:

- Understanding the elements of and producing a well-constructed five-paragraph essay
- Reinforcing understanding of the structure of the five basic sentence patterns in standard English, along with proper use of complex modifiers and subordinate clauses
- Reinforcing understanding of the structure of a coherent essay to inform, describe, narrate and persuade
- Using journal responses for exploration and analysis of literature and personal experience
- Producing MLA style research paper about a poet and one of his/her works; understanding plagiarism and its consequences
- Literary analysis through discussion of texts
- Expanding usable vocabulary
- Use outside reading in a targeted fashion to reinforce theme, genre, and tone analysis from class by identifying appropriate American authors to review

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Skills Taught:

- Grammar: subject, verb, direct object, modifiers, indirect object, object complement, subject complement, verbal phrases, subordinate clauses, passive voice through diagramming of five basic sentence patterns
- Five-paragraph essay format: thesis statement, thesis idea and controls, parallel structure, logical organization, use of logic strategies
- MLA research skills: use of source cards; use of MLA style to create cards from primary sources; creation of MLA style Works Cited page; note taking; parenthetical documentation; use of quotations, including punctuation of quotations
- Critical evaluation: use of the writing process, including peer evaluation and revision recommendations
- Literary analysis
- Vocabulary using Wordly Wise and SAT style sentence completions
- Practice SAT essay writing under test conditions using SAT prompts and grading rubric

History Tie-In:

- The Red Badge of Courage by Stephen Crane could be a mandatory first quarter reading
- A Harlem Renaissance poetry research paper could be assigned in the third quarter or a more comprehensive poetry research paper covering 150 years of American poets could be assigned after the AP in the fourth quarter

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Grade 11/12

Course:

British Literature-Standard Course

Text(s):

Harcourt Brace Adventures in English Literature – Pegasus Edition

Hamlet by William Shakespeare

Frankenstein by Mary Shelley

Heart of Darkness by Joseph Conrad

Wordly Wise 8

AP Glossary of Literary Terminology

Outside Readings from Current Year Yeshiva High School Reading List

Major Topics:

This course covers the chronological history of British literature from ancient to modern texts, including epic poetry, lyric poetry, philosophical exposition, the short story and the novel. The writing component of this course continues to emphasize and develop expository competence. Grammar and vocabulary emphasize competencies needed for success on college entrance examinations as well as style and usage issues.

Key Units:

- History of the English language
- Old English period including Anglo-Saxon folk tradition
- Medieval period including Chaucer's Canterbury Tales
- Renaissance period including sonnets, lyric poetry and Shakespearean tragedy
- Seventeenth and eighteenth centuries including the age of reason and the impact of the industrial revolution
- Nineteenth century including the Romantic period and the Victorian age
- Literature of the twentieth century
- MLA style conventions

Skills Taught:

- Literary analysis through discussion of texts
- Literary analysis through journal responses, class discussions, and written essays
- Compositional style: parallel structure, number agreement, pronoun/antecedent agreement, dangling modifiers, misplaced modifiers; correct usage
- Oral presentation skills
- Review of research paper skills using MLA style and produce major Hamlet related paper
- Literary terminology for AP language test
- Vocabulary development for PSAT/SAT
- SAT essay writing under test conditions using SAT prompts and grading rubric

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- College essay writing for 12th graders in fall
- Targeted outside reading from revised book list to reinforce themes, concerns, conventions of British authors

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AP British Literature Syllabus (in preparation for the AP English Language and Composition Exam)

Overview:

The goals of this course are to introduce the students to the breadth of styles and themes from British literature while helping each student to continue to develop his/her own writing process. The course covers the chronological history of British literature from ancient to modern texts, including epic poetry, lyric poetry, philosophical exposition, plays, the short story, the novel, and non-fiction. In response to the literature reviewed, the students will produce a research paper each semester in MLA format, as well as classic persuasive, argumentative, compare and contrast, and other expository writings (including a précis and a speech employing parallelism). One of the research papers is by design a synthesis question (prior to the mandate from the AP Program). The class requires a variety of types of writing, from informal journal entries, to timed in class essays (both of the teacher's making and from past AP released prompts), to properly formatted and organized, carefully revised papers with or without research. Students will leave the course with their own voice well established, and the ability "to read complex texts with understanding and to write prose of sufficient richness and complexity to communicate effectively with mature readers" (AP English Language and Composition Course Description 2007-2008 p. 6).

Unit 1: The Novel (Two weeks)

The year begins with two assessments of the summer reading that the students were assigned, a novel of manners and a Dickens melodrama. The students are given an in class essay about A Tale of Two Cities which requires an argumentative response. They are also given a paper to be performed outside of class about Pride and Prejudice which mandates a persuasive analysis with support from the text. The students are immediately confronted with two different styles of writing and two different approaches to their task. Obviously, the polish expected of the outside of class essay (from self, peer, and teacher review during the writing process prior to its final submission) is substantially greater than the polish of the in class essay where the text is not available and the opportunity to revise is substantially limited. This exercise reminds the students what the AP grading system frankly acknowledges: writing under pressure requires organization, clear logic, and transitions but some grammar or word choice mistakes are allowed or expected. However, these same grammar or diction errors are serious problems when the student has had the opportunity to revise carefully.

Unit 2: Anglo-Saxon Epic and Medieval Characterization (Two Weeks)

The year's first reading assignment from the textbook is, appropriately, an excerpt from Beowulf. Students are encouraged to identify the many aspects of Anglo-Saxon culture which the epic includes: loyalty, heroism, diplomacy, boasting, fate, nascent democracy,

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concern for others, response to mortality, and the desire for a legacy. While the list of themes to analyze will change throughout the year, the opening list does provide a framework from which to view the progression of British literature and culture. The next focus is on characterization, specifically the characterization that Chaucer accomplishes in a few short words in The Canterbury Tales. After the relatively flat characterization of the morality tale Everyman, the students enjoy making the necessary inferences to understand the praise, blame, and insight of the author. Each student will also perform the task of imitating Chaucer, creating a modern day character and parable for oral presentation (and written submission) about a pilgrimage to either the New York shopping district (flippant) or to the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem (serious).

Unit 3: Shakespeare Play (Five Weeks)

With initial mastery of British themes and characterization, the students are ready to tackle Hamlet. The play will be carefully reviewed in class, so the students have the opportunity to explore the language and imagery that Shakespeare utilizes, whether to entertain the groundlings or the aristocracy. Special attention is given to themes that are likely to become possible research paper topics, including insanity/madness, imprisonment, gender roles, faith, justice, revenge, and the “hero” of the play (if the play is a response to Machiavelli). The students are assigned a research paper, and Modern Language Association format is thoroughly reviewed. The students are expected to use the Internet and the local library to find their sources, as no paper can rely exclusively on potentially unreliable Internet sources. This assignment inevitably leads to non-fiction reading and analysis, whether in the form of literary criticism, psychological texts, or political science. The students are also provided an ongoing framework for the paper. A thesis statement is due two weeks after the assignment is given, and an opportunity is provided for review of a rough draft a week before the final version is due. While some creativity is allowed in this paper (some students assessing Hamlet’s mental state enjoy the framework of a trial with expert witnesses), the large majority of students perform a traditional research paper. Regardless, sources are incorporated, and a Works Cited page is mandatory. Once the class has completed the play, the Kenneth Branagh version of the movie (1996) is watched during class time (for at least Act 1). Students are required to present a list of elements of the movie which are consistent with the play and a parallel list of elements which are different. At the conclusion of their list, they are assigned a two paragraph response to the most effective elements of the movie, incorporating a visual dimension to the written text they have otherwise encountered. Finally, a review of Elizabethan poetry and Shakespearian sonnets usually end the first semester, although some classes have been able to reach the next unit before the mid-term.

Unit 4: Metaphysical Poetry and the Personal Essay (Three Weeks)

The students are now ready to tackle conceits and the substantially different love poems (devotions of faith and interpersonal) of the 17th century. The textbook also provides a good opportunity to review different kinds of essay styles, beginning with John Donne (“Meditation 17”), and including John Dryden (“An Essay of Dramatic

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Poesy” and the preface to “Fables Ancient and Modern”), Samuel Pepys (an excerpt from his diary), Daniel Defoe (“A Journal of the Plague Year”), Jonathan Swift (excerpts from Gulliver’s Travels), and Joseph Addison and Richard Steele (“Remembering the Dead” and “Plan and Purpose”). Grounded in essays of personal reflection, social commentary, literary criticism, and historical import, students are ready to pursue a unit which does not strictly follow historical chronology. Students will also benefit from exposure to the various kinds of writing that are effective, whether through appeals to reason and logic, emotional appeals based on pathos, writing that employs gentle satire to mock the society, and writing that is historical fiction or journalistic.

Unit 5: Satire (1.5 Weeks)

The students read two non-fiction essays and an excerpt from Pope’s “The Rape of the Lock” as background for the next writing assignment. One essay is Swift’s “A Modest Proposal” and the other one is from the 20th century, Jessica Mitford’s “Behind the Formaldehyde Curtain.” The three writings provide a good opportunity to discuss the difference between the satire of Horace and Juvenal, and students are asked to contemplate which is more effective in accomplishing change in society. Political cartoons are then produced, and these visual texts are the springboard for analysis of current events. Timely op-eds from the previous sixth months that employ satire are also used to demonstrate modern use by columnists and pundits. Students are given the option of writing a paper based on a political cartoon, explaining the context, the argument advanced, and its efficacy or of creating their own satire about a topic of concern to them. While few students imitate the shock value of Swift’s persona, they do enjoy the opportunity to vent, ridicule, or engage in political discourse (and the opportunity to imitate the writing style of a contemporary journalist).

Unit 6: Romanticism and the Gothic Novel (Four Weeks)

Students review the poetry of Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, Shelley, and Keats, admiring its optimism, introspection, love of nature and beauty, rebelliousness, and willingness to experiment with established forms (textbook 475-580). With a firm background of romantic themes, students are prepared to analyze Frankenstein. The class reviews the frame story, the interest in discovery, the psychological journey, the creation, the abandonment, the isolation, the joy in wild scenes of nature, justice, revenge, and the concerns about technology. Shelley’s obscure belief system and stated search for sources of morality are also explored. Now, the students are ready for the next project.

Unit 7: Stem Cell Research Paper and Synthesis (1.5 Weeks)

The students are provided a difficult prompt involving a sick young child, few good options for cure or alleviation, an unproven stem cell treatment, and the inherent dilemma of how to proceed. They are then asked to research the “correct” answer scientifically, ethically, and morally. Their belief system allows certain uses of stem

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cells, and there is already a large body of non-fiction essays and articles explaining the parameters under which such treatments may be used. Students are also encouraged to consult a rabbi if they are struggling with their answer. The final paper must explain how Shelley would respond to the same scenario based on the novel. While the ready response may be that she is mistrustful of technology, more sophisticated students are able to use the novel to prove that she so values life that experimentation performed in a carefully supervised way would be allowed. The paper must also provide a research based rationale for why the individual student would or would not choose to intervene. Ultimately, student papers synthesize the novel, 21st century non-fiction scientific and religious writings, and individual ethical considerations into a coherent whole. As in the research paper from first semester, some students do make this paper a creative endeavor. For example, students pretend it is a diary entry that works out the answer, and the novel happens to be bedtime reading for the many sleepless nights the poor parent is enduring. Regardless, students must provide a Works Cited page at the end of their paper, so each semester they have reviewed and used MLA format.

Unit 8: Colonialism: Modern Fiction and Non-Fiction (Three Weeks)

The primary texts for this unit are Heart of Darkness by Joseph Conrad and “Shooting and Elephant” by George Orwell. Students are asked to assess the narrative structure of Conrad’s novel, as well as its depiction of the toll Africa takes on both Kurtz and Marlow. Students are also asked to assess whether the novel is sympathetic to the plight of the natives under European imperialism, or, in the alternative, if Conrad is in fact a racist. This ambiguity and tension is similarly portrayed in Orwell’s essay. Students inevitably point out the similarities in both works with the psychological struggles, the disdain, the self loathing, and the “victory” of the native land. A brief discussion of existentialism concludes the novel.

Unit 9: Victorian and Modern Poetry (Three Weeks)

The students are now prepared to grapple with the themes from Tennyson, Arnold, Browning, Hardy, Housman, Yeats, Eliot, Owen, and Thomas (textbook 626-629, 638-643, 647-651, 652-654, 663-669, 928-938, 949-957, 977-980). Students quickly grasp the increasing alienation and isolation, the loss of faith, the irony, bitterness, and hollowness as a response to World War 1, and the search for meaning in an increasingly meaningless world. The lyrical quality of several of these poets and their rapture in the natural world provide a contrast with the otherwise negative tilt of this unit.

Unit 10: Synthesis and Summary (Two Weeks)

The AP synthesis question format provides a unique opportunity for the students to review the year while preparing for the AP. The following plan forces the students to review the wide spectrum of poetry and prose that they have read (with one additional non-fiction essay included, the Virginia Woolf essay).

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Curricular Unit on Isolation

Central Texts:

Heart of Darkness by Joseph Conrad
Frankenstein by Mary Shelley

Poetry:

The Seafarer translated by Burton Raffel (textbook 35-38)
Dover Beach by Matthew Arnold (textbook 650)

Nonfiction texts:

Meditation 17 by John Donne (textbook 271-272)
Remembering the Dead by Joseph Addison and Richard Steele (textbook 393-394)
Shooting an Elephant by George Orwell (textbook 884-889)
The Death of the Moth by Virginia Woolf (50 Essays 475-478)

Visual Texts:

The Thinker by Auguste Rodin



Focus Topics for Discussion and Writing:

- Consider the causes of isolation and loneliness over 1500 years of Anglo-Saxon writing. Consider the differences between external and internal causes. Use your knowledge of history, psychology, and current events as well as reference to the texts.
- Discuss the desire for connection and meaning reflected in at least three of the works. Is the connection personal, interpersonal, societal, religious, or of some other manifestation? Does the work ultimately provide hope or answers?
- The beauty, majesty, and ferocity of nature frequently play a role in man's assessment of his place in the world. Compare and contrast the role of nature to comfort and the role of nature to isolate in at least three of the works.
- Mortality is a frequent theme of literature and a frequent cause of isolation. What various responses to this inherent aspect of the human condition are advanced or proposed?
- What role does faith play as a response to isolation in these writings? Does it seem to become more or less significant over time? Why or why not?

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As a review of the year, the students will write a paper about one of the last four topics proposed above in preparation for the AP.

Writing:

In addition to the papers described in the syllabus above, students will perform a variety of types of writing. Some classes will begin with a four to five minute journal writing in response to a question about the previous night's reading. For example, a student might be asked to support a tone analysis of a poem, a character or theme analysis from an epic or novel, or a personal response to Donne's statement, "No man is an island...Any man's death diminishes me." Tests and exams will be given regularly, and every test will have an essay of forty minutes to acclimate the students to writing an essay of that length. The students will be asked to write argumentative, analytical, and persuasive essays as well as analyze tone and purpose for the major works reviewed (and frequently for a minor one as well). Tests will also have at least a few multiple choice questions to keep that skill fresh in the students' arsenal. Finally, past AP exam questions and at least one practice AP synthesis question will be performed so students have direct exposure to the kinds of questions asked and how they will be assessed based on the released rubric.

Grading:

As indicated above, formal papers and in class essays will not be graded precisely alike. Formal papers will have a thesis statement that has been vetted, revised grammar, precise diction, and increasingly effective parallelism. Papers are created through a process that involves teacher and/or peer review at every stage, so the final product should be extremely accomplished. Most papers have been reviewed by the teacher for organization and support at the rough draft stage, and many are also reviewed for grammar and word choice purposes prior to completion. Once submitted as a final draft, students expect and receive a carefully crafted comment broken into two paragraphs concerning organization, support, logic of the presentation, and possible questions left unresolved. Students also receive a style assessment concerning sentence variety, diction, grammar, and tone. It is the expectation that students will improve on these areas as the year progresses, and a running log of past problem areas is kept to ensure that the student knows what areas need special attention. In class essay writing is still held to a high standard, but lapses in diction, grammar, and sentence variety (but not construction) are tolerated and expected.

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Texts in Order of Presentation:

Adventures in English Literature (Pegasus Edition). Ed. William C. Bassell. Chicago: Harcourt, 1989.

50 Essays: A Portable Anthology. Ed. Samuel Cohen. New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2004.

Gibaldi, Joseph. MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers. 6th ed. New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 2003.

Shakespeare, William. Hamlet. Ed. Barbara A. Mowat and Paul Werstine. New York: Washington Square Press, 1992.

Shelley, Mary. Frankenstein. New York: Dover Thrift, 1994.

Conrad, Joseph. Heart of Darkness. New York: Dover Thrift, 1990.

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Grade 11/12

Course:

World Literature and Rhetoric-Standard Course

Text(s):

50 Essays A Portable Anthology by Samuel Cohen

Glencoe/McMillan/McGraw-Hill, World Literature

Metamorphosis by Franz Kafka

Rosencrantz & Guildenstern Are Dead by Tom Stoppard, or Cyrano de Bergerac by

Edmund Rostand

Things Fall Apart by Chinua Achebe

Wordly Wise 8

Excerpts from ancient Greek and Roman texts to initiate rhetoric program

AP glossary of literary terminology

The Odyssey by Homer

Outside Readings from Current Year Yeshiva High School Reading List

Major Topics:

This course has two components, a writing component focusing on expository writing and rhetoric, and a continued review of world literature. The writing program will employ brief excerpts to focus responses based on the rules and constructs originally employed by ancient authors. Students will produce two papers a month to practice and refine their logic and powers of persuasion (or one paper and one presentation). Possible writing assignments include a precis, a persuasive essay, a compare and contrast essay, an essay describing a process, a letter to the editor, a speech employing parallelism, an essay of argumentation, an essay of definition, a problem/solution essay, a book review, or other writing process at the teacher's discretion. This course subsequently covers the chronological history of world literature from ancient to modern texts, including epic poetry, lyric poetry, philosophical exposition, the short story, and the novel. A major research paper will be required. Grammar and vocabulary emphasize competencies needed for success on college entrance examinations as well as style and usage issues

Key Units:

- Rhetorical and expository writing
- Ancient period in Greece, Rome and Eastern traditions
- Medieval period in Italian and Eastern traditions
- Renaissance period in Italy, France and England
- Seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in eastern European, western European and Eastern traditions
- Nineteenth century in eastern European, western European and Eastern traditions

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- Twentieth century in eastern European, western European and Hispanic literature
- MLA style conventions

Skills Taught:

- Literary analysis through discussion of texts
- Literary analysis through journal responses and written essays
- Literary analysis through creative writing: imitation of styles of classical literature
- Compositional style: parallel structure, number agreement, pronoun/antecedent agreement, dangling modifiers, misplaced modifiers; correct usage
- Oral presentation skills
- Review of research paper skills using MLA style
- Literary terminology for AP language test
- Vocabulary development for PSAT/SAT

History Tie-In:

- A mandatory outside reading could be The Prince by Machiavelli (first quarter) or Hard Times by Charles Dickens (third quarter)
- The English teacher should assign a research paper about Homer and The Odyssey

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AP Rhetoric and World Literature Syllabus (in preparation for the AP English Language and Composition Exam)

Overview:

The goals of this course are to introduce the students to the breadth of styles and themes in modern essay writing while helping each student to continue to develop his/her own writing process. As a companion to the focus on the essay, the course introduces the students to world literature from ancient to modern texts, including epic poetry, lyric poetry, philosophical exposition, the short story, the novel, and non-fiction. In response to the literature reviewed, the students will produce a research paper each semester using MLA format, as well as classic persuasive, argumentative, compare and contrast, and other expository writings (including a précis and a speech employing parallelism). One of the research papers is by design a synthesis question, and the other one requires the students to become better informed citizens. The class requires a variety of types of writing, from informal journal entries, to timed in class essays (both of the teacher's making and from past AP released prompts), to properly formatted and organized, carefully revised papers with or without research. Students will leave the course with their own voice well established, and the ability "to read complex texts with understanding and to write prose of sufficient richness and complexity to communicate effectively with mature readers" (AP English Language and Composition Course Description 2007-2008 p. 6). This course is a parallel course to one approved in May 2007, but a new syllabus was required given the different focus and primary text.

Unit 1: The Novel (Two weeks)

The year begins with two assessments of the summer reading that the students were assigned, a novel of revenge and a novel of lost innocence. The students are given an in class essay about All Quiet on the Western Front which requires an argumentative response. They are also given a paper to be performed outside of class about The Count of Monte Cristo which mandates a persuasive analysis with support from the text. The students are immediately confronted with two different styles of writing and two different approaches to their task. Obviously, the polish expected of the outside of class essay (from self, peer, and teacher review during the writing process prior to its final submission) is substantially greater than the polish of the in class essay where the text is not available and the opportunity to revise is substantially limited. This exercise reminds the students what the AP grading system frankly acknowledges: writing under pressure requires organization, clear logic, and transitions but some grammar or word choice mistakes are allowed or expected. However, these same grammar or diction errors are serious problems when the student has had the opportunity to revise carefully.

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Unit 2: Ethos, Logos, Pathos and Rhetorical Approaches (Ten Weeks)

The year's first reading assignment from 50 Essays is the Maya Angelou essay "Graduation." Students are expected to improve their critical reading skills by identifying the theme of each essay reviewed, the style of writing employed, and the interplay of rhetorical devices intentionally selected by the author. In other words, students will be expected to understand the difference between an essay based on comparison/contrast, cause/effect, description, process analysis, example, classification, definition, argument/persuasion, and narration. Students will also improve their ability to recognize the purpose of a piece of writing, the audience for such writing, and the tone an author employs to achieve his/her purpose. Students should grasp the significance of diction choices, allusions, parallelism, and sentence structure. The class will provide a variety of ways to reinforce these skills and lessons, including imitation essay writing, the brief quizzes presented in Teaching Nonfiction in AP* English, class discussion and analysis, and quizzes of the teacher's making. Students are already familiar with SOAPS, and they will become familiar with Toulmin's model for analysis of argument. Angelou's essay presents a good opportunity for students to write a personal essay regarding their expectations and their ability/failure to meet them. This essay may well assist them as they plan and execute college essays during the fall semester. Students will read at least three more narration essays, including Hughes' "Salvation," Orwell's "Shooting and Elephant," and Momaday's "The Way to Rainy Mountain." As students review each reading, they will be asked to perform a form of a precis on each one, distilling the message of the essay in a paragraph (similar to the Graff template provided in the Shea/Scanlon text on page 3). In this way, students will improve their critical reading and enter the conversation with the author at the same time.

Students will begin reviewing example essays with Ascher's "On Compassion." It has proven to be an extremely effective essay to imitate, as students enjoy the format of beginning in the middle, providing two examples, conveying possible ambiguity, incorporating an allusion, and concluding with an unexpected twist at the end. A peer review sheet will be provided so that each student will assess a peer's ability to copy the logos and tone of the original essay. Students will also read Ehrenreich's "Serving in Florida" to review example essays. The two essays provide a good opportunity to compare the narrator's point of view, especially their distance from the events they are describing.

Continuing the pattern of providing at least two works from each rhetorical mode, the class will analyze "On Being a Cripple" and compare Mairs' essay with the lighter "How to Tame a Wild Tongue" by Anzaldua. The works are likely to elicit strong reactions about how one treats the other, especially since the students will more readily identify with Mairs' plight. Having discussed how the essays are representative of definition essays, students will write a personal essay describing how they understand their identities as members of a minority religious group. As in the original essays, students will be expected to discuss how they see themselves and how they believe others view them.

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The next unit involves process analysis, and students will read three essays that demonstrate the form. A logical triumvirate employs Alexie's "The Joy of Reading and Writing: Superman and Me," "Douglass' "Learning to Read and Write," and Didion's "On Keeping a Notebook." Students will be asked to pay particular attention to the motivations the authors describe. Students are then asked to write a personal essay about a talent or skill they have mastered, explaining the process, setbacks, motivation, and purpose in similar detail (those students who struggle to find a topic frequently write about acquiring their driver's license).

To approach description essays, students will compare the voices and tones of Woolf's "The Death of the Moth" with Vowell's breezy "Shooting Dad." Obviously, the latter will prove initially more accessible, but the conflict and internal struggle involved in Woolf's essay may appeal to some students. The class may not perform a description essay. Instead, and to encourage a more informed citizenry, the class will analyze the legal basis for the Supreme Court's second amendment ruling that is anticipated in June 2008. Vowell's essay logically leads into the possibility of performing this exercise.

Students are quite familiar with cause and effect writing and thinking, so this unit should run smoothly. The essay by Staples entitled "Just Walk on By: Black Men and Public Space" provides a wonderful opportunity to discuss race and fear in a "safe" way. Similarly, in an age when a television free week is a national program encouraged by the school, Winn's "Television: The Plug-In Drug" should provide interesting theme analysis in class. In response, students will be asked to perform a persuasive essay that mirrors a question posed by one of the colleges to which many of them apply: Have television, the Internet, and Ipods led to human progress? Students must prove their assertions with careful claims, concessions, and conclusions.

Argument/persuasion essays are again already familiar to the students, and they provide a logical opportunity for debate and speeches. The class will analyze Dr. King's "Letter from Birmingham Jail" and pair it with Singer's "Animal Liberation." How do the authors handle those who disagree with them? What do they hope to accomplish by writing their essays? What is the effect of the parallelism and allusions in Dr. King's essay? How does Singer enhance his ethos and how does it impact his argument? Having reviewed both essays, the class will generate a list of current injustices, and a series of debates will take place concerning the practicalities of proposed alternatives for at least three of the topics. In this way, students will confront the importance of rhetorical skill and the need to respond quickly and authoritatively.

Classification essays frequently involve issues of identity, and the two the class will analyze from the primary text are no exceptions. Both essays revolve around linguistic and ethnic discrimination: "Mother Tongue" by Amy Tan and "The Myth of the Latin Woman: I Just Met a Girl Named Maria" by Cofer. Students should explore the pain the authors have felt, as well as the humor and anger they have employed as defense mechanisms. Since the students have previously written an essay based on their religious identity, students are asked to select a "label" that applies to them (politically,

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socially, artistically, or experientially) and write a classification essay that explains their understanding of themselves and how they are perceived by others.

Finally, comparison/contrast essays are reviewed with two examples separated by almost 150 years. The essay by Mukherjee entitled “Two Ways to Belong in America” explains contrasting immigrant experiences, while Thoreau’s “Where I Lived, and What I Lived For” compares ordinary daily life to a simplified version in the woods. Assuming an environmentally conscious class, an in class essay would be a comparison/contrast essay asking the students to define how “green” they currently are and how “green” they would like to be. Students with an environmental science background are likely to add significantly to the discussion.

Unit 3: Speeches, Newspaper Columns, and Buildings (Three Weeks)

With initial mastery of rhetorical approaches, the students are ready to apply these concepts to ancient and modern speeches, op-ed pieces, and local architectural structures. The class will review Pericles’ Funeral Oration for its organization, purpose, thesis, and the reticence of the speaker. Similarly, the class will review at least two modern speeches for content, style, and approach including a commencement address from Wellesley delivered in June of 1990 and Jim Lehrer’s speech at the dedication of the National Museum of the Marine Corps in 2006. The students will readily use the triangle of speaker/subject/audience to explore the appeals based on ethos/logos/and pathos from their work with the 50 Essays materials. Similarly, the class will review five current op-ed pieces from the newspaper (two of which will be satirical in nature) from five different authors. Students will identify how the authors employed rhetorical strategies to enhance their persuasiveness. Now, students are ready for their initial research assignment. They select an author from a newspaper or periodical, gather five written pieces from that author, and analyze the rhetorical strategies and tendencies that author regularly employs. The students are also welcome to point out circumstances involving deviation from an expected process, but the primary goal of the paper is to explore the writer’s “regular” tone, sentence structure, diction, use of dialogue or examples, support, use of statistics, allusions, and organization. The students should explain how the author verifies his/her credibility, how the author draws a reader into the text, and how the author persuades a reader effectively. The students have five sources to incorporate in their paper (mirroring the sources essay from the AP), and Modern Language Association format is thoroughly reviewed. While MLA format will be easy for this paper, the students will be familiar with the expectations when a more traditional research paper is assigned second semester. Regardless, sources are incorporated, and a Works Cited page is mandatory. The final peer review is a two page assessment that asks the reviewer to assess sentence variety, diction, and adherence to parenthetical documentation, in addition to the logic of the argument presented. This assessment is returned to both the student (to help perfect the paper) and to the teacher to see what kind of grammar and logical problems persisted. Once the class has completed the paper, photographs and images of various local buildings and monuments will be provided in class, and students will write short articles and

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responses identifying the rhetorical statements that such buildings make as a fun way to review their learning and a new/old way to look at architecture.

Unit 4: Satire (1.5 Weeks)

The students read two non-fiction essays as background for the next writing assignment. One essay is Swift's "A Modest Proposal" and the other one is from the 20th century, Sedaris' "Me Talk Pretty One Day." The writings provide a good opportunity to discuss the difference between the satire of Horace and Juvenal, and students are asked to contemplate which is more effective in accomplishing change in society. Political cartoons are then produced, and these visual texts are the springboard for analysis of current events. Timely op-eds from the previous six months that employ satire are also used to demonstrate modern use by columnists and pundits. Students are given the option of writing a paper based on a political cartoon, explaining the context, the argument advanced, and its efficacy or of creating their own satire about a topic of concern to them. While few students imitate the shock value of Swift's persona, they do enjoy the opportunity to vent, ridicule, or engage in political discourse (and the opportunity to imitate the writing style of a contemporary journalist).

Unit 5: The Odyssey (Four Weeks)

Students begin their analysis of World Literature with the epic poem The Odyssey. A particular focus of the class review of the epic will be the many ways Odysseus is representative of the ideal Greek hero around 800 BCE. Therefore, class time will be spent analyzing Odysseus' skill with words, his rhetoric. For example, upon first meeting Nausicaa, the hero defuses a precarious situation with a careful speech that is masterful and engaging. Students will appreciate the guest/host relationship, the adventures, the coming of age story for Telemachus, and the wily way Odysseus and Penelope deal with outsiders and each other. Now, the students are ready for the next project.

Unit 6: Odyssey Research Paper (2 Weeks)

The students are provided the opportunity to research a wide range of topics relating to the epic poem. These include the father/son relationship, the guest/host relationship based on reciprocal obligations, the intervention of the gods in mortal affairs, the Greek understanding of morality and justice, the role of women, fidelity, or a topic of their choosing that has been approved. Students must provide Internet and book research to support their analysis of the topic, and explain how the epic poem handles the issue. Does the epic provide the expected understanding of Greek culture at the time, or does Homer potentially stray from standard practice (especially relevant with regard to the role of women)? Students must synthesize the epic with their research, and they must organize their paper beyond the comfortable and familiar five paragraph format. The paper provides a good opportunity to explore an idea in depth, to organize a body of material into a coherent whole, and to refine their research skills. Students must

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provide a Works Cited page at the end of their paper, so each semester they have reviewed and used MLA format.

Unit 7: Colonialism: Modern Fiction and Non-Fiction (Two Weeks)

The primary texts for this unit are Things Fall Apart by Chinua Achebe and “Shooting and Elephant” by George Orwell. Students are asked to assess the fate of Onkokwo while recognizing the rich tradition of community, justice, economic structure, and faith that predated the arrival of the colonialists. Having recently finished a tale of revenge with a “successful” conclusion, they also must reconcile how and why the novel is a tragedy (especially since the author patterned it after the Greek convention). The ambiguity and tension portrayed in Orwell’s essay provide a glimpse of the same issues from the other side. Students inevitably point out the similarities in both works with the psychological struggles, the disdain, and the self loathing. Both works represent the conquests of the colonialists, and students appreciate how the Europeans and the natives were permanently changed by the experience.

Unit 8: The Anti Hero (One Week)

The students have been exposed to an epic hero, a tragic hero, and a man who recognizes his weakness and foibles. They are now ready to grapple with an anti-hero who has been dehumanized by his family, modern society, or his own psychological makeup. Students have many different reactions to Kafka’s The Metamorphosis, but they do enjoy arguing about the author’s point in creating such a character and situation.

Unit 9: Chinese and Latin American Poetry (One Week)

The students are provided a brief opportunity to analyze a variety of works by authors like Li Po, Tu Fu, Pablo Neruda, and Octavio Paz. The poems focus on nature, the pain of separation, longing, love, isolation, politics, rebellion, and leadership. While too brief an exposure to become experts in understanding the cultures, students nevertheless benefit from exposure to the universal themes the poets all address.

Unit 10: Synthesis and Summary (Two Weeks)

The AP synthesis question format provides a unique opportunity for the students to review the year while preparing for the AP. The following plan forces the students to review the wide spectrum of writing they have read..

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Curricular Unit on Honor and the Hero

Central Texts:

The Odyssey by Homer
Things Fall Apart by Chinua Achebe

Poetry:

The Sun Rises and Sets by Li Po
Interruptions from the West (2) (Mexican Song) by Octavio Paz

Nonfiction texts:

Funeral Oration by Pericles
Letter from Birmingham Jail by Martin Luther King, Jr.
Shooting an Elephant by George Orwell
Dedication of the National Museum of the Marines by Jim Lehrer

Visual Texts:

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D. C.

Focus Topics for Discussion and Writing:

- A leader must sometimes make statements and take positions that are not popular. What happens to leaders who honor their obligation to pursue what is just as they see it?
- Discuss the role of the hero in at least three of the works. Is this role consistent across cultures and times? If not, what changes and how do you account for the changes?
- Every society values the power of language and the ability of those in leadership positions to make a persuasive or inspiring speech. Using at least three of the works listed above, explain the rhetorical strategies that worked to move the intended audience, listener, reader, or viewer. What features are common across cultures? What appear to be unique to the culture or situation? Are there any surprises or unusual usages to analyze?
- Mortality is a frequent theme of literature, and a frequent concern for non-fiction authors as well. How does a speaker face the inevitable? Is there resignation, defiance, hope, or a renewed call to action? What various responses to this inherent aspect of the human condition are advanced or proposed?
- What role does faith play in the life of the hero or honored leader in these writings? Does it seem to become more or less significant over time? Why or why not?

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As a review of the year, the students will write a paper about one of these topics proposed above in preparation for the AP.

Writing:

In addition to the papers described in the syllabus above, students will perform a variety of types of writing. Some classes will begin with a four to five minute journal writing in response to a question about the previous night's reading. For example, a student might be asked to support a tone analysis of an essay, a character or theme analysis from an epic or novel, or a personal response to Staples' essay regarding the "menace" he becomes when walking on a public street. Tests and exams will be given regularly, and every test will have an essay of forty minutes to acclimate the students to writing an essay of that length. The students will be asked to write argumentative, analytical, and persuasive essays as well as analyze tone and purpose for the major works reviewed (and frequently for a minor one as well). Tests will also have at least a few multiple choice questions to keep that skill fresh in the students' arsenal. Finally, past AP exam questions and at least one practice AP synthesis question will be performed so students have direct exposure to the kinds of questions asked and how they will be assessed based on the released rubric.

Grading:

As indicated above, formal papers and in class essays will not be graded precisely alike. Formal papers will have a thesis statement that has been vetted, revised grammar, precise diction, and increasingly effective parallelism. Papers are created through a process that involves teacher and/or peer review at every stage, so the final product should be extremely accomplished. Most papers have been reviewed by the teacher for organization and support at the rough draft stage, and many are also reviewed for grammar and word choice purposes prior to completion. Once submitted as a final draft, students expect and receive a carefully crafted comment broken into two paragraphs concerning organization, support, logic of the presentation, and possible questions left unresolved. Students also receive a style assessment concerning sentence variety, diction, grammar, and tone. Students are taught to vary their sentence length and structure to maintain reader interest, and they are encouraged to consider carefully how their sentence structure impacts their presentation of ideas. Obviously, contrary evidence is minimized by placement in dependent clauses of complex sentences, for example. It is the expectation that students will improve on these areas as the year progresses, and a running log of past problem areas is kept to ensure that the student knows what areas need special attention. In class essay writing is still held to a high standard, but lapses in diction, grammar, and sentence variety (but not construction) are tolerated and expected.

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Texts in Order of Presentation:

Cohen, Samuel, ed. 50 Essays: A Portable Anthology. 2nd ed. New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2007.

Gibaldi, Joseph. MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers. 6th ed. New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 2003.

Homer. The Odyssey. Trans. Allen Mandelbaum. New York: Bantam Books, 1991.

Achebe, Chinua. Things Fall Apart. New York: Anchor Books, 1994.

Kafka, Franz. The Metamorphosis. Trans. and ed. Stanley Corngold. New York: Bantam Books, 1986.

Teacher Resources:

McWhorter, Kathleen T. Seeing the Pattern. New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2006. (Primarily for visual aids in understanding and creating essays)

Sebranek, Patrick, Dave Kemper, and Verne Meyer, Writers Inc. Wilmington, MA: Great Source, 2006. (Section on improving vocabulary skills pages 385-389)

Shea, Renee H., and Lawrence Scanlon. Teaching Nonfiction in AP English A Guide to Accompany 50 Essays: A Portable Anthology. New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2005. (Rhetorical strategies and questions relating to rhetoric and style)