

COURSE SYLLABUS

Course Title: Advanced Placement English Language and Composition

Department: English Language Arts

Course Description: Students in this course learn the skills that will prepare them for college reading and writing. They read a wide and ambitious range of no-fiction prose and fiction focusing on the way in which the authors use words to create meaning. They continually examine how writing is constructed and why it is effective. They respond to challenging reading by closely examining text and evaluating manuscripts from a wide variety of authors. Students create expository essays, reflective responses, and both analytical and persuasive writing in and out of class. Working closely with their peers and their instructor, they reexamine and perfect writing assignments. Students prepare for the AP English Language and Composition examination and also work on elements that prepare them for other College Board assessment tests.

Summer Reading:

Baker, Russell. *Growing Up*
Dillard, Annie. *An American Childhood*
Hersey, John. *Hiroshima*
Banana
Devil in the White City
Unwind

Primary Course Materials:

McCuen, Jo Ray, and Anthony C. Winkler. *Readings for Writers*. 11th Edition. Boston: Thomson Heinle, 2004.
Shostak, Jerome. *Vocabulary Workshop: Level G*. New York: Sadlier, 2002.
Strunk, William, and E. B. White. *The Elements of Style*. 5th Edition. New York: Longman, 1999.

Capote, Truman. *In Cold Blood*
Fitzgerald, F. Scott. *The Great Gatsby*
Hawthorne, Nathaniel. *The Scarlet Letter*
Hemingway, Ernest. *A Farewell to Arms*
Melville, Herman. *Moby Dick*
Miller, Arthur. *The Crucible*
Shakespeare, William. *Macbeth*
Steinbeck, John. *The Grapes of Wrath*
Steinbeck, John. *Of Mice and Men*
Williams, Tennessee. *A Streetcar Named Desire*
Williams, Tennessee. *The Glass Menagerie*

Selected short fiction, poetry and essays

The Atlantic January to April issues of current year

Essential Questions:

Thematic Concept: American/American Nightmare

What is the American Dream?

How has the American Dream changed over time?

To what extent do culture and society influence an individual's concept of happiness?

How does an individual balance the American Dream's promise of freedom with his or her responsibilities?

Is "liberty and justice for all" attainable?

To what degree is human will a factor in the relationship between good and evil?

Course Objectives:

MHS Learning Expectations:

Melrose High School students will:

- Write effectively using standard English
- Demonstrate the ability to read effectively
- Demonstrate the ability to communicate effectively
- Demonstrate the ability to use technology responsibly and effectively

MHS Grade 11 Advanced Placement English Language and Composition Course Goals:

Students will be able to:

- I. Write compositions that reflect knowledge of formal written English, including appropriate ideas, organization, voice, word choice, and sentence fluency.
- II. Read age and grade-level appropriate fiction and non-fiction for comprehension and analysis.
- III. Complete an autobiographical essay that compares their present and former selves.
- IV. Write a convincing, well-organized persuasive essay using effective rhetorical techniques exploring some issue of interest or importance and incorporating pertinent details and examples, and then present a speech to the class.
- V. Complete a short research paper using MLA style that makes a connection between the lives and times of American authors and the literature they wrote
- VI. Complete an original Advanced Placement English Language and Composition synthesis question packet and response.

Learning Standards from the Massachusetts Curriculum Framework:

Content Outline: This course follows the expectations of the College Board, introducing students to reading material and writing assignments that will prepare them to succeed when they take the Advanced Placement English Language and Composition course national examination in May at the end of the

school year. Students in this course also follow, to a lesser extent, the development of American literature, following elements of curriculum from a chronological survey of American literature.

Unit: Summer Reading Review and Exploration: Students who sign on for the course in the spring are instructed to read the five texts during the summer and complete a reader response journal. These journals represent a “ticket” into the class in September and form the basis of early discussion and analysis, allowing students a common background from which to discuss new or newly applied literary terminology. Students complete five in-class or assigned essays during the first eight weeks of class in which they analyze passages using the acronym SOLLLIDD as a vantage point from which to begin.

An American Childhood, Dillard

Hiroshima, Hersey

Growing Up, Baker

Unit: Grammar: *The Elements of Style*, Strunk & White: Students spend the first quarter or more of the year in study and review of this text. We strive to complete the text before eleventh grade students take the PSAT examination in October. Students must complete tests and quizzes involving material mentioned in the first four chapters of the books, and they are required to achieve an average grade of at least eighty-five percent on all of the exercises.

Unit: Reading the News: Selections from current articles, *The Boston Globe*, *The New York Times*, and other daily publications are introduced in class, and students are asked to analyze writing styles and strategies used in editorials, feature stories, and news stories.

Unit: Critical Reading: “Guidelines for Critical Reading” *Readings for Writers* (RfW, 3-9). “Education of a Wandering Man,” L’Amour. (RfW, 10-14). “Nobel Prize Acceptance Speech,” Faulkner. Each of the elements in this section is introductory, focusing on the best way to read passages analytically, the variety of intellectual experiences, and the role of the writer in contemporary society.

Unit: The American Dream: The first thematic unit offers many different views of the American Dream. Students are expected to identify these thematic views and compare and contrast various views. Writings representing a variety of years of American fiction, poetry, essay, memoir, and editorial provide many ideas.

- 1.) *Of Mice and Men*, Steinbeck
- 2.) *The Great Gatsby*, Fitzgerald
- 3.) “Incidents with White People,” Delany, Sarah and Elizabeth. (RfW, 506-9).
(Division/Classification)
- 4.) “Warriors Don’t Cry,” Beals. (RfW, 501-4). (Division/Classification)
- 5.) “It’s America’s Good Fortune,” Worthington. (RfW, 223-5). (Narration)
- 6.) “America and Anti-Americans,” Rushdie. (RfW, 227-30). (Narration)
- 7.) “The Right Moves Against Terrorism,” Arakelian. (RfW, 232-3). (Narration)
- 8.) Selections from Robert Frost
 - a.) “After Apple-Picking”
 - b.) “Mending Wall”
 - c.) “Out, Out...”
 - d.) “The Road Not Taken”
 - e.) “Design,” (RfW, 554). (Causal Analysis)
- 9.) Images from political cartoons (past and present) are included as representative of this theme. *The Boston Globe*, *The New York Times*, and *The New Yorker* are the sources for these images. Students identify the general focus of the cartoon,

key images, pertinent text (if included), and the intent of the presentation. Some cartoons lend themselves to comparison and contrast.

Mid-Term Examination: Students answer two open response questions taken from the 2001 released examination. After the students assignments are graded, students work with the graded sample essays in class and at home, first assigning their own grades to each sample and then reading the commentary provided by the scorers.

Unit: The Personal Essay: “The Stranger in the Photo Is Me,” Murray, Donald. Students read and discuss this column from the writing of the late *Boston Globe* columnist. They consider his comments about identity and change. After discussing the article in class, they select a photograph taken of them at approximately age five and write a formal personal essay in which they describe both their former selves and their current identities. The essay must include description, narration, and analysis related to the images that inspire their compositions.

Unit: Analyzing Poetry: Writing Project: Robert Frost: Students find a poem from Frost’s work that we have not discussed in class. Using the teacher generated handout, “Twenty Questions to Ask a Poem,” write an analytical essay in which you explain the message of the poem, its speaker and format, literary devices that help create meaning, and symbolism. Students begin their first timed textual response writing assignments at this time. Passages and prompts are introduced from past exams and practice manuals. They also begin work on multiple choice passages. Examining one passage and group of multiple choice questions (usually ten or so), students decide on a set of answers and then brainstorm as a class to arrive at a set of responses one which they are graded. During these practice exercises (both essay and multiple choice), students develop a familiarity with the language of rhetoric as it is applied in testing situations. Students usually complete two to four writing prompts and a similar number of short multiple choice selections each quarter.

Unit: Sin and Guilt: This unit represents another side of the American Dream – the American Nightmare reality that sometimes emerges. Students review the fiction, drama, sermon, poetry, essay, and news articles that provide the other side of the hopeful dream.

- 1.) *The Scarlet Letter*, Hawthorne
- 2.) *The Crucible*, Miller
- 3.) “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God,” Edwards
- 4.) “On the Burning of Her House,” Bradstreet
- 5.) selections from *Kyrie*, Voigt
- 6.) “Who the Devil Is the Devil?” Wernick. (RfW, 364-72) (Definition)
- 7.) selections from *The Atlantic* (December) In this initial month of receiving this magazine, students become acquainted with format, types of articles and sections, advertising, layout, and contributors. Students read at least three articles from each issue with great attention to detail. They are expected to respond to questions in class, offer their opinions in discussion, and share their interpretation of the articles with other class members. Occasionally students groups read individually or group assigned articles and present the information to other students in the class. Students also respond to visuals used in the articles, including but not limited to charts, graphs, photos, line drawings, and cartoons.

Writing Project: Students select from a series of questions relating to this month’s reading. They fashion a response (argumentative/synthesis) relating to the question of public v. private guilt and punishment using specific passages from the texts for example and illustration.

Unit: American Identities: In this unit, students examine a wide variety of American identities. In the novel, short story, testimony, essay, article, and poetry included, students identify various “types” and “originals.”

- 1.) *A Farewell to Arms*, Hemingway. Students use this novel and its plot as a jumping off point for a variety of writing assignments. Using Hemingway’s text, groups of students working together create new passages in which they illustrate the nine modes of writing: narration, division/classification, description, argumentation and persuasion, comparison/contrast, process analysis, definition, illustration/exemplification, and causal analysis.
- 2.) “A Worn Path,” Welty. (RfW 250-7). (Description)
- 3.) selections from *The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*
- 4.) selections from *Leaves of Grass*, Whitman
- 5.) “I Am Tired of Fighting,” Chief Joseph (RfW, 182-3). (Developing Paragraphs)
- 6.) “Grant and Lee: A Study of Contrasts,” Catton (RfW, 428-31). (Comparison/Contrast)
- 7.) “A Good Man Is Hard to Find,” O’Connor (RfW, 113-25). (Thesis Development)
- 8.) selections from *The Atlantic* (Jan./Feb.) At this point, particular focus is placed upon the visuals that appear in the magazine. Students examine advertisements (and their placement), graphs that accompany and illustrate information in text, diagrams, maps, and other graphic representations such as street maps from a war zone. The magazine provides an excellent source of visual prompts for examination and analysis.
- 9.) Vocabulary Unit 10.

Writing Project: Examining specific passages from Hemingway, students identify use of detail, definition, and appeal evident in the author’s examination of war. Students compare and contrast the views of two characters.

Unit: American Optimism and Aestheticism

- 1.) selections from *Walden*, Thoreau
- 2.) selections from “Self-Reliance”
- 3.) selections from Dickinson
- 4.) selections from *The Atlantic* (March)
- 5.) Vocabulary Units 11 and 12.

Writing Project: The Persuasive Essay The culminating activities of this unit will encompass a core assignment which is a persuasive speech incorporating the rhetorical strategies studied in this and other units and relevant research. Also included in this unit is a non-fiction open response identifying key elements in Lincoln’s “Gettysburg Address.” The specific requirements and details of these assignments are included in the supplementary curriculum materials.

Unit: The Element of Surprise: This quirky unit provides students with a look at several different types of writing, some, at least, that defy easy classification. In biography, memoir, short story, essay, satire, expository writing and drama, they investigate how authors use language to further their aims.

- 1.) “Hitler’s Workday,” Shirer. (RfW, 292-3) (Process Analysis)
- 2.) “Have a Cigar,” Herriot. (RfW, 47-49) (Rhetoric)
- 3.) “A Rose for Emily,” Faulkner
- 4.) “A Modest Proposal,” Swift. (RfW, 581-7) (Argumentation and Persuasion)
- 5.) selections from *The Onion*

- 6.) "The Singer Solution," Singer
- 7.) *The Glass Menagerie*, Williams
- 8.) selections from *The Atlantic* (April)

Writing Project: The Research Paper: Students will fulfill the departmental research requirement by choosing an American author and text included in the high school's English department's eleventh grade English curriculum. They must develop a thesis that investigates some aspect of the text, an argument which they fashion and develop as they research their topics. They complete pertinent research, and write a standard six to nine page paper that represents both an analysis of the topic and text and a synthesis of ideas gleaned from a variety of sources. This work bridges a three month time block.

- Topic Selection (RfW, 677-8)
- Stating a Thesis (RfW, 678-9)
- Forming an Argument (RfW, 678-9)
- Collecting Notes (RfW, 679-80)
- Outlining (RfW, 134-139)

Unit: American Hubris: After the AP English Language and Composition examination, students and teacher choose from a variety of materials to cover in the last weeks of the year. The AP examination forms the final examination in the course so student input into the curriculum can be considerable at this point of the year. The department requires a Shakespearean play for each class, and *Macbeth* is assigned to and required of all eleventh grade students.

- 1.) *Macbeth*, Shakespeare
- 2.) "The Open Boat," Stephen Crane
- 3.) The Beat Poets
- 4.) *A Streetcar Named Desire*, Williams

Writing Project: The Synthesis Packet: Students will create a facsimile Synthesis question, sources to assist in answering that question – including visual and text, and an answer to the question.

Students will complete a common final assessment incorporating all units of study from the mid-year assessment to the end.

Major Evaluation Strategies:

Name of Assessment	Type of Assessment	Common Core Standards Assessed	MHS Learning Expectations Assessed
Essay: <i>Growing Up</i>	Writing	Reading Standards for Literature: 1-6, 8A. Reading Standards for Informational Text: 1-6, 10. Writing Standards: 1-2, 4-5, 9-10 Language Standards: 1-6.	1, 2, 3
Essay: <i>An American Childhood</i>	Writing	Same as above	1, 2, 3
Essay: <i>Hiroshima</i>	Writing	Same as above	1, 2, 3

Essay: <i>The Great Gatsby</i>	Writing	Same as above	1, 2, 3
Essay: <i>In Cold Blood</i>	Writing	Same as above	1, 2, 3
Essay: <i>Of Mice and Men</i>	Writing	Same as above	1, 2, 3
Essay: <i>Moby Dick</i> selections	Writing	Same as above	1, 2, 3
Essay: <i>The Scarlet Letter</i> selections	Writing	Reading Standards for Literature: 1-6, 8A. Reading Standards for Informational Text: 1-6, 10. Writing Standards: 1-2, 4-5, 9-10 Language Standards: 1-6.	1, 2, 3
Essay: <i>A Farewell to Arms</i>	Writing	Same as above	1, 2, 3
Essay: <i>The Crucible</i>	Writing	Same as above	1, 2, 3
Essay: "The Stranger in the Photo Is Me"	Writing	Reading Standards for Literature: 1-6, Reading Standards for Informational Text: 2-6, 10. Writing Standards: 1-6, 10 Language Standards: 1-6.	1, 2, 3, 4
Persuasive Speech	Writing/ Presentation	Reading Standards for Literature: 1-6, 8a, Reading Standards for Informational Text: 1-6, 10. Writing Standards: 1-2, 4-5, 9-10, Speaking and Listening Standards: 2-6, Language Standards: 1-6.	1, 2, 3, 4

Learning Standards from the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks:

Reading Standards for Literature

1. Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.
2. Determine two or more central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to provide a complex analysis; provide an objective summary of the text.
4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze how an author uses and refines the meaning of a key term or terms over the course of a text (e.g., how Madison defines *faction* in *Federalist* No. 10).
5. Analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of the structure an author uses in his or her exposition or argument, including whether the structure makes points clear, convincing, and engaging.

6. Determine an author’s point of view or purpose in a text in which the rhetoric is particularly effective, analyzing how style and content contribute to the power, persuasiveness, or beauty of the text. .
8. Delineate and evaluate the reasoning in seminal U.S. texts, including the application of constitutional principles and use of legal reasoning (e.g., in U.S. Supreme Court majority opinions and dissents) and the premises, purposes, and arguments in works of public advocacy (e.g., *The Federalist*, presidential addresses).
9. Analyze seventeenth-, eighteenth-, and nineteenth-century foundational U.S. documents of historical and literary significance (including The Declaration of Independence, the Preamble to the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and Lincoln’s Second Inaugural Address) for their themes, purposes, and rhetorical features.

Writing Standards

1. Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.
3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.
4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
5. Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.
6. Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products in response to ongoing feedback, including new arguments or information.
7. Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.
8. Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the strengths and limitations of each source in terms of the task, purpose, and audience; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and overreliance on any one source and following a standard format for citation.
9. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
10. Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Speaking and Listening Standards

1. Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on *grades 11–12 topics, texts, and issues*, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
2. Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) in order to make informed decisions and solve problems, evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source and noting any discrepancies among the data.
3. Evaluate a speaker’s point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric, assessing the stance, premises, links among ideas, word choice, points of emphasis, and tone used.
4. Present information, findings, and supporting evidence, conveying a clear and distinct perspective, such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning, alternative or opposing perspectives are

addressed, and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and a range of formal and informal tasks.

5. Make strategic use of digital media (e.g., textual, graphical, audio, visual, and interactive elements) in presentations to enhance understanding of findings, reasoning, and evidence and to add interest.
6. Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating a command of formal English when indicated or appropriate. (See grades 11–12 Language standards 1 and 3 on page 67 for specific expectations.)

Language Standards

1. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
2. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.
3. Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.
4. Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on *grades 11–12 reading and content*, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.
5. Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.
6. Acquire and use accurately general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.