

## EXPOSITORY WRITING COURSE SYLLABUS

**Course Title:** Expository writing

**Department:** English Language Arts

### **Course Description:**

Students will learn expository writing skills and gain experience writing various types of articles: argument, informational, news, feature, arts and entertainment, opinion, and sports. Students will take part in school and community publications. This course is designed for both students who have little or no knowledge in expository writing, as well as those who have interest and experience in expository writing media. Advanced students will polish their skills for this specific type of nonfiction writing.

### **Primary Course Materials:**

- *Boston Globe*
- *New York Times*

### **Thematic Concept:**

- The Role of the Writer of Essays

### **Essential Questions:**

- What is expository writing, and what are the rights and responsibilities of essay writers?
- What is the impact of technology on expository writing?
- What types of writing comprise expository writing?

### **Course Objectives:**

#### **MHS Learning Expectations:**

Melrose High School students will:

1. Write effectively using standard English
2. Demonstrate the ability to read effectively
3. Demonstrate the ability to communicate effectively
4. Demonstrate the ability to use technology responsibly and effectively
6. Demonstrate an understanding of arts and culture
8. Demonstrate good citizenship
9. Demonstrate the ability to plan and implement goals

## **MHS Course Goals:**

Melrose High School students will be able to:

- Develop and improve their ability to assess information.
- Learn the fundamentals of proofreading, editing, interviewing and numerous other skills one must hone to become a competent writer.
- Choose their own topics and meet deadlines, and evaluate and critique their own writing, as well as professional writing, in order to improve their work.

## **Content Outline:**

**Students will complete a written mid-year assessment incorporating all units of study up to this point.**

### **1. Unit: Writing Approaches:**

Students will be introduced to different types of stories and the various styles of reporting that can best represent those types of stories. Students will have the opportunity to examine news, feature, sports, and opinion pieces, in addition to editorials and reviews. Students will be assessed on their own original article writing, which will become part of their writing portfolio.

**2. Unit: Expository Essays:** The expository essay is a genre of essay that requires the student to investigate an idea, evaluate evidence, expound on the idea, and set forth an argument concerning that idea in a clear and concise manner.

### **3. Unit: Self and Peer Editing**

Good writing requires factual accuracy, good grammar, and appropriate and intriguing language. Students will consider why a copy editor's job is important, why a variety of sources are better than a single source, how grammar, punctuation, word choice, and sentence structure can affect meaning, readability and interest, and how headlines can affect a reader's interest. Students will be assessed with their work as an assistant section editor on at least one issue.

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

Students will demonstrate understanding of essential questions, key knowledge, and skills through: Maintaining a writer's portfolio of the notes, interviews, drafts, published and unpublished essays, peer-edits, special assignments, and daily diaries, they create.

**Assessments:**

Name of Assessment	Type of Assessment	MA Standards Assessed	MHS Learning Expectations Assessed
Analysis of <i>New York Times</i> Articles	Writing	Reading 1, 2, 5, 6, Writing 1, 2, 6, Language 1, 2, 3, 6	1, 2, 3, 4, 6
Writing Arguments	Writing	Writing 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, Language 1, 2, 5	1, 2, 3, 4, 9
Writing Informational Text	Writing	Writing 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, Language 1, 2, 5	1, 2, 3, 4, 6
Writing Expository Essays	Writing	Writing 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, Language 1, 2, 5	1, 2, 3, 4, 6
Student Blog	Writing	Writing 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, Language 1, 2, 5	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.