

English I - Foundations of Literature and Language CP-A and Advanced Course Syllabus

Course Description

In English I, students develop high school-level reading, writing, and critical thinking skills in preparation for upper level classes and college entrance. They read and analyze informative and persuasive texts, focusing on nuanced vocabulary, text structure, hierarchy of ideas, rhetorical strategies, and the author's implicit purpose. They read literary works that explore the world and the human condition, moving beyond an understanding of plot into an analysis of character, theme, author's craft, and text connections. As importantly, students learn to write effectively, sharing their knowledge and insights through well-structured responses and analyses. Throughout the year, reading and writing instruction is coupled with instruction in grammar to ensure effective, fluent communication.

As detailed in this syllabus, skills are introduced in unit one, and skill development and refinement progresses in complexity throughout the course. In the CP-A course, skills are scaffolded, especially during semester one, to ensure the development of critical reading, thinking and effective writing skills. The Advanced course level requires more independent reading and responding activities from the start of the school year. In units one and two, common mastery assessments require students to read, analyze, and respond to new material to ensure that the course is measuring the authentic application of skills.

In alignment with the school's *Portrait of the Crusader*, students learn the importance of developing and following a moral compass rooted in respect, integrity, hope, and kindness. The literature read and the discussions that follow encourage students to develop a compassionate understanding of others and themselves. The writing practiced in class encourages students to use thoughtful and precise words that facilitate clarity, cooperation, and productivity.

Essential Questions for the Course

Literature

- How does literature change us? How does it change the world?
- How do life experiences affect the writer and the reader?
- What can we learn from the hero? The antihero? The seemingly ordinary person?
- How does each literary element contribute to the author's purpose?

Language

- Why does language have power?
- How should language change depending on our purpose?
- What is the ethical component of using language to persuade others?
- How does effective communication enhance cooperation and understanding? Efficiency?

Course Curriculum

Unit One: Reading and Responding to Nonfiction

7 - 8 weeks

In this unit, students learn and practice advanced-level reading skills to enhance comprehension of informative and persuasive texts aligned with those they will encounter in science, history, and theology classes throughout high school. In addition, students read nonfiction narratives, such as biographies, to analyze how these texts combine factual information with literary elements and stylistic devices to engage the reader. The comparison of expository, persuasive, and literary works allows students to see how form follows function and how authors use specific rhetorical strategies to communicate their messages. A culminating activity for the unit is an independent reading and analysis of newly presented informative and persuasive texts. This “cold read” ensures that students are mastering advanced level skills. Throughout the unit, students learn grammar and essential writing skills with a focus on constructing clear and fluent responses to the texts read in the unit.

Reading Nonfiction

Reading Options for Informative Texts: Articles and primary source excerpts focused on topics linked to current events, current medical or scientific findings/innovations, and the World History and Scripture curricula. Nonfiction Narratives: Flowers in the Gutter, K.R. Gaddy; Tuesdays with Morrie, M. Algom.

Skills:

- Apply specific reading strategies and systems (SQ4R) to nonfiction texts.
- Apply research-based strategies for active engagement with the text, including focused questioning, annotation, notetaking, and summarizing.
- Synthesize information from multiple sources through note taking and outlining.
- Read nonfiction narratives and analyze narrative arcs and literary elements.
- Evaluate the author’s craft for the elements of engaging story-telling (captivating plot, relatable characters, suspenseful conflict).
- Contrast the purpose, content, and form of informative texts with nonfiction narratives.

Grammar

Skills:

- Identify parts of speech; learn and apply specific usage rules for each part of speech.
- Understand and apply the concept of paragraphing.
- Identify and use appropriate transition words when writing.

Writing

Skills:

- Write well-structured expository paragraphs in response to texts read in class; use specific methods of development.
- Write well-structured persuasive paragraphs in response to texts read in class; use specific methods of development, including claim, evidence, reasoning.
- Write a first-person, non-fiction narrative about a significant life event. Plan the narrative arc to have an exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and conclusion. Ensure that the conclusion focuses on how the event led to personal growth/change.
- Compare and contrast the purpose, structure, and style of the expository essay versus narrative writing.

Mastery Assessments:

- Reading Skills Assessment: “cold read” of and response to varied informative and persuasive texts at grade-level Lexile levels
- Narrative Essay 600 words; usage rules applied.

Unit Two: Reading and Analyzing Short Fiction

8 - 10 weeks

In this unit, students practice advanced-level reading skills that enhance comprehension and interpretation of short literary works. Initially, they learn how the elements of point of view, plot, setting, and character work together to illustrate one or more universal themes. Next, they learn how each author uses the literary devices of figurative language, symbolism, foreshadowing, and irony to enhance reader engagement, develop the theme, and create a unique writing style. Throughout the unit, students study specific grammar and writing skills and apply these skills to literary analysis responses and creative writing pieces. A culminating activity in this unit includes an independent, cold read of a short literary work with literary analysis responses.

Reading Literature

Reserved Reading Options: Short Stories - “Gift of the Magi,” O. Henry; “Charles,” Shirley Jackson; “Lamb to the Slaughter,” Roald Dahl; “All Summer In a Day,” Ray Bradbury; “Thank You Ma’am,” Langston Hughes; “War,” Luigi Pirandello, “The Most Dangerous Game,” R. Connell. Novella: The Old Man and the Sea, Hemingway (Advanced level reads and responds independently).

Skills:

- Explore the essential question: *What can we learn about life in fifteen pages?*
- Identify and interpret literary elements while reading: determine how setting and point of view shape the text; trace the development of the plot and conflict; analyze how characters change as a result of conflicts and choices; infer themes and evaluate how conflict and character changes illustrate these themes.

- Recognize the unique components of each author’s writing style, especially the use of literary devices: figurative language, foreshadowing, symbolism, irony, mood, suspense.
- Apply appropriate strategies to determine nuanced word meaning in context.
- Evaluate stories for specific strengths and defend opinions with text evidence.

Grammar

Skills:

- Recognize and write the five sentence patterns: S/AV; S/AV/DO; S/AV/IO/DO; S/LV/PN; S/LV/PA.
- Identify phrases.
- Write and accurately punctuate simple and compound sentences with and without phrases.

Writing

Skills:

- Outline and write literary analyses that include a clear position statement, relevant text evidence, and sound reasoning to show how the evidence supports the position statement.
- Use MLA format and in-text citation.
- Apply grammar learned to date to written work. Peer edit and revise.

Mastery Assessments

- Literature Assessment: Read a new short story, respond to questions, write a literary analysis in response to a prompt.
- Literary Analysis with MLA citations - 500- 600 words.

Unit Three: Reading and Analyzing the Modern Novel

7 - 8 weeks

In unit three, students read a modern classic novel, trace the development of conflict, character, and theme over the course of the text, and analyze how the author portrays complex characters and conveys sophisticated themes. The author’s choice of literary devices is also a focus of this unit. Non-fiction readings are aligned with the novel and explore the social and emotional issues that young adults face and provide positive options for dealing with internal and external conflicts. Grammar and writing skills are taught and assessed in this unit. (Advanced level students will complete at least half of the reading independently; CP-A students will complete more active reading in class.)

Reading Literature

Reserved Reading Options: The Catcher in the Rye, Salinger; Speak, Andersen (excerpts).

Skills:

- Practice active reading through focused questioning, annotation, and note taking.
- Interpret and analyze literary elements: Trace the narrative arc and identify linear, episodic, parallel, and flashback plot lines. Determine how setting and point of view shape the text.

- Analyze the motivations and choices of main characters and how these characters develop over the course of the text. Investigate the use of dialogue to reveal character.
- Determine themes based on analysis of character, conflict, and setting.
- Interpret literary devices of foreshadowing, figurative language, mood, symbolism, and irony; evaluate how they enhance the text.
- Review the components of the author's style: stream of consciousness, word choice, sentence structure, descriptive technique, and tone. Evaluate the author's craft.

Reading Nonfiction

Reserved Reading Options: Growth Mindset for Teens (excerpts), Sheppard; relevant articles focused on author, setting or historical time period.

Skills:

- Read informative and argumentative texts focused on the themes of the unit.
- Apply reading strategies taught in unit one; make predictions and inferences when reading; draw conclusions and form opinions based on accurate information.
- Practice active reading through focused questioning, annotation, and note taking.

Grammar

Skills:

- Identify phrases and clauses and their use in given sentences.
- Identify and punctuate complex and compound-complex sentences correctly.
- Use sentence combining to accurately write and punctuate varied sentence types with and without phrases.

Writing

Skills:

- Write two impactful letters to show the main character's feelings at specific points in the novel. The letters can be to any other character in the novel. 200 words each.
- Write a literary analysis focused on the development of one literary element (e.g., character or theme) or literary device (e.g., symbolism) over the course of the novel. Follow essay structure and MLA format; 800 words.

Mastery Assessments

- Open-ended response assessment of the novel focused on all literary elements and text-to-text connections.
- Literary Analysis Essay: 700 words; focused on one element of the novel; MLA format.

Unit Four - Reading and Analyzing Drama and Poetry

6 weeks

In this unit, students read and analyze an early modern or modern play and study modern poetry. Students interpret the literary elements and the figurative language of the play and poetry read in class, focusing on the writers' command of the language and exploration of the human experience. Students write original poetry. (Advanced level students will complete at least half of the reading independently; CP-A students will complete more active reading in class. In all classes, audio and film versions of the plays may be used to support analysis.)

Reading Drama

Reserved Reading Options: Romeo and Juliet, Shakespeare; Twelve Angry Men, R. Rose.

Skills:

- Understand the format of the written play: act, scene headings, dialogue, directions.
- Interpret literary elements: setting, point-of-view, primary conflicts, and plot line.
- Analyze character development, including the underlying motivations; recognize foils.
- Analyze literary devices, allusion, monologue, soliloquy, aside, motif, symbolism, dramatic irony.
- Interpret specific sonnets for meaning; analyze figurative language.
- Analyze themes and determine how a play reflects and transcends the time-period.
- View a film version of the play and review literary elements. Analyze and evaluate the choices of the director in adapting the play to film.

Reading Poetry

Reserved Reading - Rhyme: "The Bells," Edgar Allen Poe; "Fire and Ice," Robert Frost; "An Obstacle," Charlotte Gilman; "We Wear the Mask," Paul Dunbar; "Still I Rise," Maya Angelou.

Reserved Reading - Free Verse: "At the Window," Carl Sandburg; "Theme for English B," Langston Hughes; "Remember," Joy Harjo; "Tree of Fire," Adonis (Translated by Hazon); "The Rose That Grew From Concrete," Tupac Shakur; "Enough," Andru Defeye. "Small Frogs Killed on the Highway," Wright.

Skills:

- Recognize poetic form.
- Examine how sound creates mood and evokes emotion.
- Interpret figurative language: metaphor, simile, personification, hyperbole.
- Determine the central purpose of each poem.
- Compare and contrast the form, language, and speakers of varied poets.
- Compose poetry, exploring different forms and stylistic features to convey a specific message.

Grammar

Skills:

- Recognize and correct fragments, comma splices, and run-on sentences in written work.
- Accurately use marks of punctuation in written work.
- Apply the conventions learned throughout the year.

Writing

Skills:

- Write literary analyses responses to the play and poems read in class; use MLA format.
- Write letters or journal entries assuming the persona of one or more characters in the play.
- Create two original poems modeled after selected poets and focused on the same theme. One is rhyme and one is free verse. Each poem should be 10 -15 lines.

Mastery Assessments

- Test: Elements of drama and poetry; analytical responses
- Original poems and reflection

Grading Policy

In all units, students are assigned formative and mastery work. Formative work helps the student apply the skills learned each day and guides the teacher to adjust future instruction. Formative assessments are based on student response and vary from year to year. Much of the formative work is focused on reading comprehension and writing practice. Students who do not receive a passing grade on a formative assignment may make up the assignment during office hours for a grade of up to 75.

Mastery work is given at the end of a teaching unit to assess student knowledge. This syllabus lists the mastery assessments given during each unit. Mastery assessments are summative and cannot be retaken.

In general, students receive 7 - 10 formative grades per unit and 2 -3 mastery grades depending on the length of the unit. Homework is primarily reading assignments, and, periodically, students may be given unannounced quizzes to ensure that they have read the assigned work. Grades for these quizzes cannot be made up.

When a student is absent, the student must contact the teacher and arrange to complete missed homework, classwork, or assessments. **Those arrangements are expected within two school days after returning.** Canvas/PowerSchool will show a zero placeholder until work is graded.

Grading Percentages Each Marking Period (Quarter):

Class Participation and Engagement - 20%.

Formative Work: classwork and homework; quizzes - 40%.

Mastery Assessments: essays, tests - 40%.

Participation grades offer a valuable way for students to show effort and commitment. From a teacher's perspective, they provide a way to encourage engagement, collaboration, student-to-student learning, and an academic environment.

Please note: The pace and/or elements of this syllabus may be modified based on student need.

Please review the school's website for additional information - <https://www.holycrossct.org> .