

English I Honors

Foundations of Literature and Language

Course Description

In English I Honors, students read literary works that explore the world and the human condition. They learn to read deeply, moving beyond an understanding of plot into an analysis of character, theme, and author's craft. In addition to literature, students read and analyze informative and persuasive texts, focusing on advanced vocabulary and reading strategies to determine the author's purpose, hierarchy of ideas, and, as necessary, the unintended or purposeful use of bias.

As importantly, students learn to write effectively, sharing their ideas and insights through well-structured responses and analyses. Their writing is based upon a solid knowledge of grammar and organizational skills. As outlined in this syllabus, reading, writing, and critical thinking skills are introduced in unit one and then progress in complexity throughout the course.

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 in class 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

- What is mythology and why was it created?
- How do older stories influence newer stories?
- How does literature change us? How does it change the world?
- When is a character a hero? What can we learn from the hero? The antihero?

Language

- How does an author make a text come alive?
- How can we make our creative writing vivid and engaging?
- How can we make our analytical writing clear and effective?
- Why does language have power?

English I Honors Course Curriculum

Unit 1 - Mythology

6-8 weeks

In Unit 1, after reviewing and assessing the summer reading selection, *The Pearl*, students read and analyze ancient myths, those stories that explore the human condition, good and evil, and the meaning of life and death. They explore the influence of Greek and Roman mythology on the writing of literature through time, and they develop an understanding of how imaginative stories can reveal universal truths. In this unit, and all others in the course, students learn and apply grammar and essential writing skills to construct clear and fluent sentences, paragraphs, narratives, and essays. In this unit, the culminating activity is an original narrative that incorporates the literary elements and imagery depicted in mythology.

Reading Myths

Reserved Reading Options: *The Pearl*, John Steinbeck; Ch. 1-3, "Prometheus and Io," "The Flower Myths...", "Pyramus and Thisbee," "Orpheus and Eurydice," "Daedalus," "Perseus," "Theseus," "Hercules," "The Heroes of the Trojan War" and other selected myths of prominent Greek heroes from *Mythology*, Edith Hamilton.

Skills:

- Explore the origins of mythology and the importance of myths to a culture and to modern literature.
- Explain the concept of the epic hero and trace the hero's journey in specific myths.
- Define the literary elements of plot and conflict, character, setting, point of view, parable, and theme. Analyze the literary elements in each myth.
- Interpret imagery and figurative language, including personification, irony, and symbolism.

Reading Poetry

Poetry: "Musee des Beaux Arts," W.H. Auden; "Landscape with the Fall of Icarus," William Carlos Williams. "Siren Song," Margaret Atwood. "Persephone, Falling," Rita Dove. "An Ancient Gesture," Edna St. Vincent Millay. "Helen," H.D. "To Helen," Edgar Allen Poe. "Atlas," Lucille Clifton. "Hubris," Mary Karr.

Skills:

- Contrast the structure, word choice, and impact of prose and poetry.
- Recognize and interpret figurative language.
- Determine the purpose and meaning of each poem.

Reading for Information

Reserved Reading Options: “Introduction to Classical Mythology” in Edith Hamilton; article focused on mythology in modern literature.

Skills:

- Apply reading comprehension strategies: preview to set a purpose for reading; use headings to formulate focus questions; identify the main idea of each paragraph; use context to determine word meaning; separate fact from opinion; determine author’s purpose.
- Annotate during reading to ensure focus and provide reference notes for future analysis.
- Use informative text to expand interpretations and analyses of literary works.

Grammar

Skills:

- Identify the parts of speech; learn and apply specific usage rules for each part of speech.
- Apply knowledge to in-class writing assignments.

Writing

Skills:

- Write short constructed responses discussing literary elements in Steinbeck’s *The Pearl*
- Write a short literary analysis to analyze one literary element or device across three myths. Analysis should include a position statement, text evidence to support the position and an insightful conclusion. Incorporate information from Hamilton’s introduction.
- Write a creative narrative using the literary elements learned in the unit. Determine the moral or theme; plan the narrative arc, choose the setting, create the main character, write in the third person, use vivid language (imagery) to engage the reader.

Mastery Assessments

- Grammar Assessment
- Creative Narrative/Myth -750-1000 words
- Mythology Test

Unit 2: Short Fiction

8-10 weeks

In this unit, students focus on reading the modern short story and the novella, analyzing how literary elements work together to illustrate the theme and how each author uses literary devices to create a unique writing style and engage the reader. Nonfiction reading skills from unit one are reinforced as students read to learn background information about settings, cultural norms, and conflicts portrayed in the literature. Throughout the unit, students continue their study of grammar and writing skills. As a culminating activity, they write their first literary analysis.

Reading Short Fiction

Reserved Reading Options: Short Stories - "The Most Dangerous Game," Richard Connell; "Gift of the Magi," O. Henry; "The Necklace," Guy de Maupassant; "Charles," Shirley Jackson; "Lamb to the Slaughter," Roald Dahl; "All Summer In a Day," "There Will Come Soft Rains," Ray Bradbury; "Thank You Ma'am," and/or "Salvation," Langston Hughes; "War," Luigi Pirandello; "A Very Old Man With Enormous Wings", Gabriel Garcia Marques. "A Clean Well-Lighted Place," Hemingway. "Two Kinds," Amy Tan. Novella- The Old Man and the Sea, Hemingway.

Skills:

- 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 the literary elements are woven together to convey these themes.
- Interpret literary devices: figurative language, allusion, foreshadowing, symbolism, allegory, irony, mood, tone.
- Recognize the unique components of each author's writing style: syntax, word choice, and specific literary devices such as foreshadowing, symbolism, irony, mood, and tone.
- Apply appropriate strategies to determine nuanced word meaning in context.
- Evaluate stories for specific strengths and defend opinions with text evidence.

Grammar

Skills:

- Identify the parts of the sentence: subject, predicate, complement, modifiers.
- Identify types of phrases (prepositional, appositive, and verbal) that may serve as subjects, complements or modifiers.
- Identify dependent and subordinate clauses that may serve as subjects, complements, or modifiers.
- Identify and write simple, compound and complex sentences with phrases.

Writing

Skills:

- Write structured responses to literature based on specific prompts. Focus on supporting all claims with relevant text evidence.
- Write a literary analysis essay that includes: a thesis statement, three points of argument (premises), text evidence to support each point of argument, sound reasoning to connect text evidence to the point of argument, and an insightful conclusion that consolidates the argument. Use MLA format with accurate citations.

Mastery Assessments:

- Grammar Assessment - Sentence Structure
- Short Fiction Test
- Literary Analysis Essay - 500-1000 words

Unit Three: Reading and Analyzing the Modern Novel

6-7 weeks

In unit three, students read a modern novel, trace the development of conflict, character, and theme over the course of the text, and analyze how the author portrays complex characters and sophisticated themes. They focus on the author's writing style and use of literary devices to enhance meaning and engage the reader. Non-fiction readings explore the social and emotional issues that face young adults and provide positive options for dealing with conflicts. Advanced grammar and writing skills are taught and assessed in this unit. At the end of this unit, students write a well-structured literary analysis using MLA format with accurate citations.

Reading Novels

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

Skills:

- 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.
- Use informative reading to enhance understanding of the novel.

Reading Nonfiction

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

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 annotation and note taking.

Grammar

Skills:

- Use sentence combining techniques to create simple, compound, and complex sentences with and without phrases.
- Accurately use marks of punctuation: comma, semicolon, apostrophes, capitalization.
- Recognize and correct fragments, comma splices, and run-on sentences.
- Revise written work for accurate sentence structure and punctuation.

Writing

Skills:

- Write two impactful letters and/or diary entries to show the main character's (and/or a major character's) feelings at specific points in the novel. The letters can be to any other character in the novel.
- Write a well-structured 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.

Mastery Assessments

- Letters from the Novel: graded 50% content and 50% sentence structure as taught in the unit; 300 words each.
- Literary Analysis Essay: 750-1000 words; focused on one element of the novel; MLA format.
- At least one seminar assessment

Unit Four - Drama and Poetry

7- 8 weeks

In this unit, students read and analyze a Shakespearean play and study classic and modern poetry, focusing on the writers' command of the language and exploration of the human experience. At the end of the unit, students write original poems and explain each poem's meaning in a teacher conference or to the class (student choice). Grammar, writing, and nonfiction reading skills taught throughout the course are reviewed and applied in this final unit of the year.

Reading Drama

Reserved Reading Options: Romeo and Juliet or Midsummer's Night Dream, Shakespeare.

Nonfiction Enrichment: Background information on Shakespeare, the Globe Theatre, and the time period of the play.

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. Analyze and evaluate the choices of the director in adapting the play to film. (If time permits, view the musical *West Side Story* and compare the modern adaptation to the original.)

Reading Poetry

Reserved Reading Options - Rhyme: "The Bells," Edgar Allen Poe; "Fire and Ice," "Design," "The Need for Being Versed in Country Things," and other selected poetry by Robert Frost; "An Obstacle," Charlotte Gilman; "We Wear the Mask," Paul Dunbar; "Still I Rise," Maya Angelou. "We Real Cool," Gwendolyn Brooks. "[Stop all the clocks, cut off the telephone]," W.H. Auden. "The White House," Claude McKay. "Ars Poetica," Archibald MacLeish.

Reserved Reading Options - Free Verse: "At the Window," Carl Sanburg; "Theme for English B," "The Negro Speaks of Rivers," Langston Hughes; "Remember," Joy Harjo; "Tree of Fire," Adonis (Translated by Samuel Hazo); "The Rose That Grew From Concrete," Tupac Shakur; "Enough," Andru Defeye. "To a Daughter Leaving Home," Linda Pastan, "The Fury of Overshoes," Anne Sexton. "Hanging Fire," Audre Lorde. "Morning Song," Sylvia Plath. "A narrow Fellow in the Grass," "Hope is the Thing with Feathers," Emily Dickinson.

Skills:

- Recognize poetic form, including line length, rhyme scheme, meter, and stanza organization.
- Examine how sound creates mood and evokes emotion.
- Interpret figurative language: metaphor, simile, personification, hyperbole.
- Determine the purpose, speaker, and meaning of each poem.
- Compare and contrast the form and language of varied poets.
- Compose poetry, exploring different forms and stylistic features to convey a specific message.

Grammar

Skills:

- Know the form and function of verb tenses. Use appropriate and consistent verb tenses when writing.
- Ensure subject/verb and pronoun/antecedent agreement.
- Define parallel structure and recognize faulty parallel structure.

Writing

Skills:

- Delineate an argument to prove who is responsible for the deaths of Romeo and Juliet and use this as a basis for a class debate. Use parallel structure to create a bulleted list.
- 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 -12 lines.

Mastery Assessments

- Test: Romeo and Juliet and the elements of the Shakespearean tragedy; constructed responses.
- One major seminar assessment with written component on Romeo and Juliet
- Creative Writing: Two original poems, one rhyme and one free verse focused on the same theme; each modeled after a poet studied in the unit. Conference with the teacher to analyze theme, speaker, and literary devices.

Grading Policy

In all units of study, students are assigned formative and mastery work. Formative work helps the student apply the skills learned each day and guides the teacher to plan and adjust future instruction. Formative assessments are based on student response and will vary from year to year. Much of the formative work is focused on reading comprehension and writing practice. 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. Generally, students can expect several formative grades and at least 2-3 mastery grades per unit.

Student preparation for class (homework) primarily involves reading, and students at the honors level can expect unannounced quizzes and/or some kind of classwork related to the assigned reading on a regular basis to ensure they are not just completing but also comprehending the assigned reading.

Students are expected to use Canvas to keep up with their daily reading and assigned work. Thus, students who are absent from class should check Canvas for any work missed *before* emailing the teacher in order to keep up with the work assigned while they were absent. Any classwork or assessments that students miss when they are absent from class must be made up in a timely fashion, within the week.

The English Department late work policy is as follows:

- Late homework and/or daily classwork that is 1-7 days late will result in 25% off; 8-14 days late will result in 50% off; and over 14 days late will result in a zero on the assignment.
- Late essays or major projects will be reduced 10% per day late.

Grading Percentages:

Formative Assessments (quizzes, written responses, seminar discussions, group work): 40%

Mastery/Summative Assessments (essays, tests, projects, seminar assessments): 40%

Participation and Engagement (includes some classwork, notebook grade, preparation, etc.): 20%

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