

# AP English Literature and Composition

## Course Long Plan

### Brief Description of Course

AP English Literature and Composition is a two-semester, college-level course for qualified seniors. This course prepares students for the AP English Literature and Composition examination in May and provides experience in and preparation for college English courses. The course emphasizes close reading and critical analysis of literature in conjunction with composition. The literature studied includes poetry, short fiction, novels, and drama. Writing assignments are based on the works under study or are modeled on AP examination questions. The course is designed to follow the guidelines described in the AP English Course Description.

Juniors who sign up for this course the following year are required to complete a summer assignment. This consists of a provided novel (currently Orwell's 1984) with a packet to be completed and turned in on the first day of school. Also included is the 1994 AP test to be taken for diagnostic purposes. This, too, is due on the first day. If a student fails to complete the summer work, he or she may lose a place in the class.

We use a seminar format in the classroom, arranging the desks in a circle. This greatly facilitates discussion.

### Unit information

Unit Name or time frame:

The portion of the school year before the examination on May is distributed in units approximately as follows:

Poetry unit, (9 weeks)

Short fiction unit, (5 weeks)

Nonfiction unit, (3 weeks)

Novels unit, (5 weeks)

Drama unit, (4 weeks)

Focused test-prep unit, (3 weeks)

After the test, the final weeks of the course are used for selections that are outside the parameters of a typical AP test, but are greatly desirable for college preparation and for life knowledge, such as *BEOWULF* and *THE CANTERBURY TALES*.

## **Content and/or Skills Taught**

**General Language Skills** (ongoing throughout the year with some form of Language exercise or activity each week):

Language history and development

Vocabulary:

- Word parts and combining forms
- Specific and discipline-related forms
- General vocabulary as needed
- Diction and levels of usage

In addition to our ongoing study and review of discipline-related terminology, students keep a VOCABULARY RECORD throughout the year. This includes selected general vocabulary from our readings and also individual “problem” vocabulary from their own papers. Once a word goes into their Vocabulary Record, students are responsible for its use. In our timed, in-class writings based on selected readings, we pay close attention to diction and levels of usage.

Syntax:

- Sentence structure, analysis, and variation
- Style
- Modeling

In addition to our review of syntax, including sentence subordination and coordination, loose and periodic sentence structure, and style, we use selections from various periods and styles of writing to analyze the elements of syntax. Students then model these elements in short papers. We also return to previous papers in their WRITING RECORD (see below in Writing Skills) to analyze and revise syntactical elements.

Mechanics as needed

## **Writing Skills** (ongoing throughout the various units):

Writing assignments are either specific to the selection or skill under study or modeled on the AP examination essay questions. Students write short papers and longer formal papers for each unit.

Students keep a WRITING RECORD folder for selected short and long papers throughout the year. These may be used later for analysis of different elements and for further rewriting. Examples: A paper that focused on the skill of providing a prose paraphrase of a poem may also be used as a review/rewrite of a sentence combination and subordination. A paper that focused on a plot, biographical, or historical summary may be used in a review/rewrite of transitions. A paper that analyzed the organization and development of an argument selection may itself be used in a review/rewrite of the rhetoric of argumentation.

A formal AP-style paper is based on the summer reading novel, 1984. We use a free-response question from a previous test. Papers are times, collected, and then typed the next day for ease of reading. We share these (without names) for our discussion of the prompt and rubric. We evaluate these together and then they go in the WRITING RECORD for future use or for comparative purposes at the end of the year.

### **Writing Rationale:**

None of our writing occurs in a vacuum. All is preceded by prewriting activities and followed by appropriate evaluation and feedback. Before-writing activities include direct instruction or review, deductive instruction, sample or example papers, in-class or small-group or partnership planning. During-writing activities include review of rough drafts or works-in-progress by individual peer evaluation, and teacher evaluation. Checklists, forms, and rubrics will be supplied as appropriate.

Students are given and keep in their WRITING RECORD folder a general checklist for written work. These are used for self-checking, for partner and group review, and include:

- Thesis statement
- Organization and coherence
- Transitions
- Rhetorical devices
- Supporting details
- Direct and indirect citation
- Audience awareness
- Voice and tone
- Word choice and usage level
- Coordination and subordination
- Language conventions

With all papers, especially longer, formal ones and timed, in-class writings, emphasis is on close reading of the work, use of textural details, proper use of citations, appropriate and logical organization, and attention to prompt and purpose.

### **Writing to understand:**

- A. In poetry, fiction, and drama, students are given instruction in "Reading Notes." These are a kind of reading journal, a checklist of applicable items to be noted and/or questioned as students read. These include such things as title, speaker or narration, setting or situation, vocabulary/diction, figurative language, style, form/genre, connections to other works, and reader reaction. In poetry and in fiction, we use a selected work as an instructional model. After that initial instruction, students make reading notes on each assigned work. These support our class discussion. These also may be subject to a quick check in class or may be placed in their WRITING RECORD.
- B. Frequent, informal use is made of 3 by 5 cards, asking students for a quick response to something in the or from our discussion. Students may be given a

card the day before and asked to bring a reflective comment or question based on the work under study.

- C. C. Mid-length “Reader Response” papers ask for reaction, not summary. We have at least two of these each unit.

### **Writing to Explain or Interpret**

A. With their reading of a work, students are often asked to write a quick, short explanation of a given excerpt or an idea from the work. These are used for class discussion and then may be placed in the WRITING RECORD for possible use in a longer paper. We do these on almost every work.

B. Mid-length, informal papers explain an element or two of a work, e.g., tone or style, metaphors/symbols/motifs, diction and syntax. We use some of these as instructional models for formal papers. We have two or three of these in a unit.

C. Timed, in-class writings focus on a few elements, using details from the text. We have one or two of these in a unit.

D. A full-length, formal papers on a selected work pulls together all appropriate elements in a comprehensive analytical explication and interpretation of the work. We have one of these in a unit.

### **Writing to Evaluate**

A. Again, students will write short and quick responses of judgment and evaluation.

Example: FROM A JURY OF HER PEERS and TRIFLES, Which is a more effective title and why? We have two or three of these in a unit.

B. Mid-length, informal papers respond with more analysis and textual support.

Example: From AREOPAGITICA, What might be Milton's position today on censorship in our society considering out different social and cultural values? We have one or two of these in a unit. At least one will be a timed, in-class writing.

C. A full-length, formal argumentative paper requires close reading, attention to textural details, and logical organization in analyzing a selected work for its overall quality and effectiveness in its social and cultural context. Example: A MODEST PROPOSAL as effective satire.

### **Other Writing:**

Once each quarter, we have an in-class writing which focuses on one or two specific skills. These include logical and coherent organization with appropriate use of transition, development of voice and tone, syntactical variation, levels of diction, and audience awareness.

Once each quarter or between units, we do a timed, in-class writing from a past AP test, using provided rubric and sample essays for evaluation.

Additional examples of writing lessons and assignments are provided in the appropriate units.

**Poetry Unit:** The following poems are used from the main text to study the elements of poetry and appropriate analysis.

Housman, LOVELEIST OF TREES, TO AN ATHELETE DYING YOUNG (from supplementary text)

Browning, MY LAST DUCHESS

Arnold, DOVE BEACH

Donne, HOLY SONNET 14

Reed, MANING OF PARTS

Herbert, THE PULLEY

Keats, ON FIRST LOOKING INTO CHAPMAN'S HOMER

Shakespeare, SONNET 18; SONNET 73; SONNET 116

Cummings, SHE BEING BRAND/-NEW

Hopkins, GOD'S GRANDEUR

Shelley, OZYMANDIAS

McKay, IN BONDAGE

Thomas, DO NOT GO GENTLE INTO THAT GOOD NIGHT

Yeats, THE SECOND COMING

Tennyson, ULYSSES

Auden, MUSE DES BEAUX ARTS

Sexton, TO A FRIEND WHOSE WORK HAS COME TO NOHING

Field, ICARUS

Additional poems may be added from another source, such as Coleridge's THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER. Also, some poems may be deleted, if we have a time crunch.

Each of the poems is closely studied for at least one element and most are studied for a combination of elements. These include speaker or characters, setting or situation, imagery and allusion, tone and style, diction and syntax, prosody and form, and theme.

Use is made of 3 by 5 cards and of very short responses for individual elements.

### **Some writing Assignments:**

A short paper at the beginning of the poetry unit asks students to provide a prose paraphrase of a designated poem, using good paragraph form, proper paraphrasing technique, and showing understanding of the poem's concepts and imagery. These are typed, distributed (without names) and evaluated in class.

During this unit, we read several poems with themes from mythology. Three of the poems deal with the same myth—the fall of Icarus. Students write a formal paper comparing/contrasting these poems, with attention to theme, style, diction and syntax, imagery, and total effect. These are revised as needed based on self or peer review.

At least one timed, in-class paper is written using a prompt from a past AP test with a poem or pair of poems not studied in class. We use the provided rubric and sample papers as the basis for our own evaluation.

After several practice, prewriting activities, students write a formal paper of analysis and interpretation of a designated poem, using context, detail, and appropriate citations.

**Fiction Unit:** The following stories are used from the main text and from supplementary texts.

Updike, A&P

Glaspell, A JURY OF HER PEERS (and TRIFLES for comparative purposes)

Olsen, I STAND HERE IGNORING

Carver, LITTLE THINGS

White, THE DOOR

Poe, MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH

THE PARABLE OF THE PRODIGAL SON

Each story will be used in the analysis of at least one element of fiction, usually several. These will include characterization, setting, style, imagery, tone, and theme.

3 by 5 note cards and very short responses are used for daily attention to specific items.

Additions, substitutions, and deletions happen. For example, we usually read THE PARABLE OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN in conjunction with the PARABLE OF THE PRODIGAL SON. Students then write a short paper identifying a possible theme and relating it to a contemporary situation.

Students are required to read an additional four stories from a provided list and to write a short paper of reader response and evaluation (not summary) for each.

Writing assignments include paper of comparison/contrast, analysis of one aspect of the story (e.g., point of view/ perspective in THE DOOR), evaluations and analysis of total effect--how all the major elements interact.

### **Some writing assignments:**

A short paper at the beginning of the fiction unit asks students to provide a plot summary on a designated story.

We use A JURY OF HER PEERS for two papers. 1) Students will have researched the period/setting for the story. They will then write a paper of analysis discussing the social and historical context of the story and the influences of that on action and theme. 2) Students write an argumentative paper evaluating the action/non action of the woman in the story and justifying or opposing their position. The paper must show an understanding of the social and ethical questions involved. This paper is evaluated, not for the opinion of the writer, but for the understanding and effective use of the techniques of argumentation.

**Nonfiction Unit:** This unit is quite brief as almost all of my students have previously taken AP English Language and Composition which deals extensively with nonfiction.

Milton, excerpt from AEROPAGITICA, the portion about wariness in killing good books. We use this as a springboard to a discussion of censorship and as an example of argumentative writing. Students then write a short paper speculating about Milton's probable stance on free speech and censorship today.

Swift, A MODEST PROPOSAL as an example of satire.

Donne, MEDITATION XVII

Woolf, excerpt from A ROOM OF ONE'S OWN

Short writing assignments from this unit focus on argumentation (development and organization) and personal reflection.

**Novels Unit:** The main text is Faulkner's AS I LAY DYING. We spend time on multiple narration, the historical and social influences of setting, the development of character using various narrators, the darkness and the humor, and Faulkner's use of varied syntax and diction. This is a difficult text for many students and we do several (six or more) short, informal writings with it.

A longer paper is based on three prompts from past AP tests. Students are asked to make a plan (prewriting) for each of the three prompts, showing how they would apply the text to each of those questions. After evaluation and revision of these three plans, students choose one of them and write the complete essay. These are written out of class, properly edited, and typed. Representative (or out-of-the-box) papers are then used (without names) for all class discussion and evaluation.

If time permits, we may read FRANKENSTEIN.

**Drama Unit:** The main text is a Shakespeare play and we have four from which to choose. Frequent writing assignments in this unit are short, dealing with one aspect—perhaps a prediction, a brief character analysis, an interpretation of a figurative element, or a brief summary of a piece of action. A longer paper may ask for careful analysis of the development of a major character, an analysis of imagery used and its effect, an analysis of the influence of setting—this would depend in part on which play we use.

A long formal paper in this unit is done in two steps. First, a timed, in-class writing uses a suitable free-response prompt from a past AP test. These are photocopied and the original goes back to the student. He/she uses the general writing checklist and the specific rubric for that prompt to self-check and revise the paper. The revised paper is typed, returned for teacher commentary, and placed with the original in the WRITING RECORD folder.

**Focused Test-Prep Unit:** We use 5 STEPS TO A 5 (Rakin and Murphy) and much material from past AP tests. Although we have used AP-style multiple choice format often during the year, we do intense review of that type of question, the different formats, common terminology, and appropriate techniques for approaching those questions. We also do a more intensive, direct review of essay prompts and test-taking strategies for those questions. In practicing for the essay, students may be asked to do a “plan” for a designated question without writing an entire essay. We often begin with an all-class planning session for a question that would fit one of the works we have studied. My students need the planning process modeled and practiced as much as possible.

**Post-Test Unit:** After the test, our time is spent reading selections that would not normally be within the parameters of the test, but are important works, primarily from BEOWULF and THE CANTEBURY TALES. Some writing assignments in this unit are informal and reflective. An example: a paper comparing the heroic ideas of Anglo-Saxon society as portrayed in BEOWULF with those of the individual student writing the paper.

Major writing Assignments and/or Assessments:

Most of the writing assessment has been discussed in previous sections

In addition to writing assignments, students take major tests at the end of the poetry, fiction, novels, and drama units.

A student VOCABULARY RECORD and WRITING RECORD provide for both ongoing and cumulative assessment.

We have not done so previously, but we are planning to use the WRITING RECORD or a “best work” portfolio as an alternative method of final assessment, in place of a traditional year-end examination.



## **Textbooks**

Author: Kirsznner, Laurie G.

Second Author: Mandell, Stephen R.

Title: Literature: Reading, Reacting, Writing Sixth Edition

Publisher: Thomas Wadsworth

Published Date: 2007

Description: Our main text. A standard college-level textbook providing introduction in reading, responding, and writing about literature. The text has extensive units in poetry, fiction, and drama.

## **Other Course Materials**

Material Type: Other

Description: Kovacs, Mary Anne, ADVANCED PLACEMENT SHORT STORIES, The Center for Learning, 1993. A reproducible workbook text with a wide variety of reading and writing instructional activities. Some selections are used in our fiction unit.

Material Type: other

Description: Rankin, Estelle M. and Barbara L. Murphy, 5 STEPS TO A 5: AP ENGLISH LITERATURE, McGraw-Hill, 2002. A test-prep text with two sample AP-style tests. Used in our focused test-prep unit right before the test.

Material Type: Other

ELEMENTS OF LITERATURE SIXTH COURSE: LITERATURE OF BRITAIN WITH WORLD CLASSICS, Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 2003. Our school's adopted textbook for 12<sup>th</sup> grade. Used for selections not in the main text, e.g., BEOWULF, THE CANTERBURY TALES, AND THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER.

Material Type: Other

Description: Orwell, George, 1984, Holt Rinehart and Winston, 1977. Used as part of our summer reading assignment and our novels unit.

Material Type: Other

Description: Wharton, Edith, ETHAN FROME, Pocket Books, 2004. May be used as part of our summer reading assignment or as part of our novels unit.

Material Type: Other

Description: Shelley, Mary, FRANKENSTEIN OR THE MODERN PROMETHEUS WITH CONNECTIONS, Holt Rinehart, and Winston, 1998. May be used as part of our summer reading assignment or as part of our novels unit.

Material Type: Other

Description: Faulkner, William, AS I LAY DYING, Vintage International, 1990. The main text of our novels unit.

Material Type: Other

Description: Shakespeare, William, HAMLET, MACBETH, MERCHANT OF VENICE, AS YOU LIKE IT, Folger Library editions, Pocket Books. One of these will be used as the main text of our drama unit.

Material Type: Other

Description: AP TEST: ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION, 1994, The College Board, 1994. Used as part of our summer reading assignment.