

Welcome to High Honors English 1A

Course Content and Classroom Policies and Procedures
2014-2015

Course Content

The major goals of this course are for students to think critically and to effectively communicate ideas and information using a variety of formats. Students can expect to develop these skills through a combination of class work, homework, independent study and group centered activities.

Core Idea: Our focus this semester will be on actively reading both literary and informational texts and working to master argument writing. Reading selections and writing prompts will be tied to the theme of universal human experiences, and how writers effectively communicate their experiences to others. This course also places emphasis on preparation for the Grade 10 ELA MCAS.

Essential Questions:

- What is human nature?
- What is universal and timeless about the human experience? What is not?
- How does an understanding of the universal themes in literature help us better understand ourselves and our world?
- What qualities have people historically valued in heroes?
- How do writers and speakers present evidence to effectively support a claim?

Assessments*: All students in this course will be assessed through:

1. Two summer reading tests during the week of September 1st, 2014
 - Weighted as one test grade each
 - Evaluation Criteria: These are objective, multiple-choice tests
2. Unit 1: Short Fiction and Introduction to Argument Writing
 - Three Short Responses to Reading
 - Two responses will be weighted as a combined test grade
 - Evaluation Criteria: Argument Writing Rubric
 - Two Longer Responses to Reading: *The House on Mango Street* and “A Mother in Manville”
 - Weighted as one test grade each
 - Evaluation Criteria: Argument Writing Rubric
 - Final Response to Reading: “Before the End of Summer”
 - Weighted as 20% of first quarter grade
 - Evaluation Criteria: Argument Writing Rubric
3. Unit 2: The Epic
 - Research Activity: Ancient Greece
 - Weighted as a test grade
 - Evaluation Criteria: Research Project Rubric

- Narrative Writing: The Lost Episode of *The Odyssey*
 - Weighted as 20% of second quarter grade
 - Evaluation Criteria: Narrative Writing Rubric
- Outside Reading Assessment: Students will read a work of fiction or literary nonfiction in addition to the core text. The assessment may take the form of a test, project or writing assignment.
 - Weighted as one test grade.
 - The evaluation criteria will be communicated to students by individual teachers.

4. Unit 3: Poetry

- Three short responses to reading poetry
 - Two responses will be weighted as a combined test grade
 - Evaluation Criteria: Argument Writing Rubric
- A longer response to reading poetry (literary analysis)
 - Weighted as a test grade
 - Evaluation Criteria: Argument Writing Rubric
- Portfolio of original poems
 - Weighted as a test grade
 - Evaluation Criteria: Project Rubric
- Outside Reading Assessment: Students will read a work of fiction or literary nonfiction in addition to the core text. The assessment may take the form of a test, project or writing assignment.
 - Weighted as one test grade.
 - The evaluation criteria will be communicated to students by individual teachers.

5. Other formative assessments as determined by the teacher

These may include, but are not limited to, tests, quizzes, writing assignments, short and long term projects and presentations.

*Assessments are subject to some modification. Any changes will be communicated to students well in advance of due dates.

Texts:** Sandra Cisneros, *The House on Mango Street*, Guy de Maupassant, “The Necklace,” James Hurst, “The Scarlet Ibis,” Grant Moss, “Before the End of Summer,” Marjorie Rawlings, “A Mother in Manville,” Michael McLaverty, “The Wild Duck’s Nest,” Homer, *The Odyssey*, various poems, outside reading texts

Supporting Texts and Resources:

Each unit of study will be supplemented with **3 to 4 short literary works** (additional short stories, memoirs, poems), and **2 to 3 informational texts** (literary nonfiction, speeches, essays, articles, transcripts). Other forms of media will also be used in support of the course learning objectives.

**Lowell High School is committed to providing students with reading material that is challenging, engaging and age appropriate. We have worked hard to establish an inventory of literary works that span from classic to contemporary. Some of these works contain mature language and content. Reading selections are addressed in the context of key ideas, craft, structure, and connection to essential questions. Parents are encouraged to read along with students. In the event that a parent objects to a specific title used in class, the students will be provided with an alternative, comparable reading selection.

Content Objectives and Expectations:

The content of this course is aligned with the *Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for ELA and Literacy*. While our classroom practices reflect all areas of these frameworks, the following standards will be the focus of this semester's work.

By the end of this semester, students will be able to:

- Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. (9-10 RL/RI.1)
- Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text. (9-10 RL2)
- Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme. (9-10 RL.3)
- Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.
 - a. Interpret figures of speech (e.g., euphemism, oxymoron) in context and analyze their role in the text.
 - b. Analyze nuances in the meaning of words with similar denotations. (9-10 RL5)
- Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how an author uses rhetoric to advance that point of view or purpose. (9-10 RI.6)
- Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence. (9-10 W.1)
- Demonstrate understanding of the concept of point of view by writing short narratives, poems, essays, speeches, or reflections from one's own or a particular character's point of view (e.g., the hero, anti-hero, a minor character). (9-10 W-MA.3.A)
- Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (9-10 W.4)
- Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question). (9-10 W.7)
- Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9–10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively (9-10 SL.1)