

English II / English II Honors Syllabus

Instructors: Jessica Bond & Ragan Osborne

Unit 1: Fiction Matters

This unit uses informational texts as well as personal narratives to convey the importance of reading fiction, especially to the developing individual. The foundational skills of annotation and incorporating textual evidence in writing are introduced and honed.

Essential Questions:

- Why is fiction important?
- How can annotation help us to better understand the content and purpose of a text?
- How can writers use textual evidence to strengthen their writing?

Core Texts:

- "Reading Literature Makes Us Smarter and Nicer" by Annie Murphy Paul
- "Shakespeare in Shackles: Laura Bates" by Jeremy Berlin
- "Speech at the inauguration of the Library of Birmingham" by Malala Yousafzai
- "Why a Good Book is a Secret Door" by Mac Barnett (Ted Talk)

Unit 2: Understanding Theme

Through the study of a series of short stories, students will critically analyze how authors' use of literary devices and elements affects and develops theme.

Essential Questions:

- How do the decisions authors make affect and develop theme?
- How can we communicate our observations about literature in an organized way?

Core Texts:

- "There Will Come Soft Rains" by Ray Bradbury
- "A Sound of Thunder" by Ray Bradbury
- "The Open Window" by Saki
- "Good Country People" by Flannery O'Connor (honors)
- "Ashputtle" by the Brothers Grimm
- "The Story of an Hour" by Kate Chopin

Unit 3: Leaders in Crisis

This chapter focuses on speeches given by American leaders in times of crisis. Students will analyze speeches for rhetorical devices in addition to the rhetorical situation of each. Ultimately, students will use what they learn to craft and perform an original crisis speech.

Essential Questions:

- How do writers craft effective speeches?
- How do rhetorical devices help a speaker achieve a purpose?

Core Texts:

- 9/11 Address by George W. Bush
- Pearl Harbor Address by FDR
- Challenger Tragedy Address by Ronald Reagan

Unit 4: Macbeth

Students explore the ideas of ambition and failure. They learn that conflicts serve as the basis of a text's meaning and that identifying the internal and external conflicts of a story reveals the motivations of complex characters. They come to understand how characters advance a plot and develop a theme, reflecting real life in which conflicting motivations propel humans to act in different ways.

Essential Questions:

- How does an author reveal characterization?
- How do superstition, power, and ambition affect human behavior?
- How are decisions, actions, and consequences related?
- How does language reflect a time in history?

Core Texts:

- *Macbeth* by William Shakespeare

Unit 5: Argumentative Research

Continuing the study of the rhetorical situation, students will analyze and create argumentative texts, using research to support claims.

Essential Questions:

- How does a researcher find and cite credible sources?
- How does a writer organize and synthesize information to make and support a claim?

Core Texts:

- *The New York Times: Upfront Magazine*

Throughout the Semester

- Grammar
 - Elements of a Complete Sentence
 - Clauses and Phrases
 - Using Relative Clauses
 - Avoiding Sentence Fragments
 - Compound Sentences
 - Avoiding Run-Ons
 - Commas
 - Semicolons and Colons
 - Apostrophes
 - Dashes
 - Avoiding Wordiness and Redundancy
 - Parallelism
 - ACT Practice
- Independent Reading
 - Every day, 10 to 15 minutes are dedicated to reading books selected by students according to their interests.
- Honors* Book Club
 - Students form book clubs to read and discuss novels (from a list of contemporary novels chosen by the teacher).
- Summer Reading and corresponding assessments are required for admittance to honors.
- All instruction is correlated to TNReady ELA 9-10 Standards.
- 10th Grade ELA Flexbook available [here](#).