

## ADVANCED PLACEMENT English Literature and Composition: Syllabus and Course Requirements

TEXT: The Bedford Introduction to Literature: Reading, Thinking, Writing  
SOFTWARE: LITERACTIVE Interactive tutorials accompanying Bedford Text  
Michael Meyer; Bedford/ St Martin's 2005 Seventh Edition.

Supplementary materials: Adventures in English Literature Pegasus Edition  
Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Orlando, FL 1989  
Literature: Reading Fiction, Poetry, Drama, and the Essay First Edition  
Robert DiYanni Random House New York 1986

Summer Reading: The Chosen by Chaim Potok; A Raisin in the Sun by Lorraine  
Hansberry; Nineteen Eighty-four by George Orwell.

GENERAL FOCUS: The class will address in depth the language of literary criticism, the diversity of ways in which to explore literature, including the analysis of an author's content and style, and the impact the work has had in a social, cultural, and historical context. Students will engage in the methodology of writing well-focused essays using literary analysis, with close attention to textual evidence to support their analysis and argument. Students will prepare for the AP exam through a close reading of novels, plays, short stories, poems, essays, and longer works of non-fiction. They will also engage in in-depth discussions of their reading on a daily basis. Essay-writing in response to questions paralleling the AP format and identified in AP course curriculum will be a major focus of the class [C-1]. Practice essays and response to multiple-choice questions in keeping with this exam will be written on a regular basis throughout the term. New vocabulary, including but not limited to a list of literary terms, will be integrated in context with reading and with good, sophisticated writing on a daily basis. Mechanics necessary to good essays will be addressed in context with writing or on an as-needed basis in isolation. Students will not be required to take the AP exam; however, the class final may be exempted by those committing to take the AP exam. Although one major focus of class is on the AP test, I hope to take students far beyond the idea of "teaching to a test" and into the realm of the many benefits gained from an appreciation and understanding of what makes a classic "classic literature."

CRITICAL ESSAYS: Focus includes student understanding and REVIEW of these elements:

-- Students will demonstrate knowledge of the STYLE used in formal writing about literature and research.

-- Students will demonstrate the understanding and demonstration of sophisticated analysis of literature in terms of CONTENT, and will demonstrate a close reading in application of evidence to support literary analysis; this application should go far beyond simple retelling of plot.

For example, literary essays should include no more than two sentences of pure PLOT retelling before addressing ANALYSIS. They should also emphasize important analytical concepts through an effective approach to semantics and word choice. [C- 5] Instead of writing that "Romeo is in love with Rosaline. He wishes she would return his love. She is not interested in him, though. Then he forgets her and falls in love with Juliet"—the student would revise references to plot to include literary ANALYSIS: "Romeo's character is in love with the idea of love. He experiences an inner conflict as he yearns for Rosaline's love in return." The expository, persuasive, and evaluative approach to using textual detail (a plot event, in this case) is a major focus of the class. [C- 4]

Along with the organization within paragraphs, including a sophisticated topic and concluding sentence and smooth transition between ideas (coherence), your essays should focus on sophisticated literary analysis as the primary content that is the focus of our class. This is intelligent discussion and analysis, based on textual details, of the elements that contribute to the work as a work of art. These would be elements such as setting, character, conflict, symbol, irony, point of view, and theme, and the ability to weave these aspects of literary technique into a cohesive and classic piece of literature. Therefore, students will demonstrate in writing and in class discussions an understanding that narrative technique and literary tools used by classic writers work together to convey theme. [C- 4] A demonstration of this ability is essential for AP standards to be met.

For example, if the essay question is "How does Shakespeare use a conflict to demonstrate a theme?"-- an adequate first-draft response for a topic sentence may be "Shakespeare uses a conflict to demonstrate a theme,". However, revision would work toward more detail and toward a more effective use of rhetoric [C- 5]: "Shakespeare's Juliet struggles with the idea that Romeo's name should evoke her hatred; through this internal conflict, the author demonstrates the idea that the deeper thinker will recognize prejudice for what it is." A more controlled approach to the formal tone required in this type of writing is evidenced here as well [C- 5].

For smooth transition into the next idea, one might write that "The struggle begins as. . ." or, "As a result of the hatred between the two families, the struggle intensifies as. . ." (bold represents good transition between ideas).

Or, if the student is addressing characterization ("How does character help to evoke theme in *Romeo and Juliet* ?), this sentence might provide focus and sophistication: "Shakespeare's *Romeo* is passionate, impulsive, and desperately in love; through his character, Shakespeare conveys the idea that this type of intensity will ultimately lead to tragedy." The sentence could also serve as a good conclusion.

Students will demonstrate sophisticated, varied sentence structure and vocabulary relevant to their reading and writing. Mastery of MECHANICS in grammar, sentence structure, usage, capitalization and punctuation. For example, avoid misplaced or dangling modifiers, other parallelism problems, agreement errors, misplaced commas, and unclear, awkward sentences. Avoid redundant wording or ideas. Avoid using words or phrases that "sound good" but really do not add substance to your analysis. Use effective word choice and experiment with more creative approaches to sentence structure. Your arguments should be persuasive especially in that they use specific evidence from the work studied to support the point you are making. Each sentence must add something valid and substantial to your over-all argument. [C- 5]

The student will demonstrate all aspects of revision and proofreading necessary to producing this type of essay, working toward a goal of producing well-written, timed, in-class essays in keeping with the AP exam. Individual conferences with the teacher after essays are returned will enable students to draw upon strengths and improve weaknesses. [C- 4]

ASSESSMENTS: Percentages given are approximate and may vary

CREATIVE ASSIGNMENTS: 10% Most units will begin with a journal entry, in which you will form a connection between your own personal world and the world of classic literature. You may also be asked to attempt a piece of writing in the STYLE of the author we are studying; in doing so, you will come to an understanding of that style. The great thinkers and writers of our time and before it strove to comment upon the human condition. Your own comment is valid and applicable to theirs. Dig into your own psyche for an answer to the question, "Why are we reading this?" Other assignments addressing creative interpretations of literature are to be announced.

TESTS/ESSAYS: 50% I give very few standardized tests. Your ability to communicate in writing is the most relevant assessment I can give you. Therefore, most formal essays are one hundred points in value. You will receive a set of criteria in keeping with AP focus to help you determine how grades are assigned. For your first essays, you will receive grades of an A, a B, or a "see me." The "see

me” will give you the opportunity to discuss your essay with me in a one-on-one conference and to learn how to improve your endeavor to write a good, thoughtful, formal critique of literature, maintaining an “effective use of rhetoric, including controlling tone, establishing and maintaining voice, and achieving appropriate emphasis through diction and sentence structure.” [C- 5] Regardless of your grade, these aspects of writing about literature will be addressed in context with each individual essay as we examine them critically before and after you revise your work.

Quizzes: 10% There will be pop quizzes on outside reading. A careful, “close” reading of each work is essential. Therefore, the quiz questions are designed to help you to absorb and think carefully about what is happening in the plot.

Group Work: 20% Working together in groups to write a group paragraph or essay is also a good way to learn about the content and mechanics necessary to good writing. You will learn from each other often in the class, as well as from me and from yourself as you revise, re-think, and re-write your own essays. You will be graded on how carefully you document your contribution and on the over-all quality of your group’s product. Most importantly, you will learn from each other as well as from me how to develop the rhetoric, voice, tone, emphasis, diction, and variety of sentence structure necessary to effective analytical, argumentative essays. [C- 4/ C- 5]

Discussion: 10% Individual contributions to discussion are necessary to further the understanding of the class as a whole.

This being said, my primary goal for you, believe it or not, is that you come to discover that the “work” that goes into the best understanding of the classics can also produce a great enjoyment of them: I hope that you will find pleasure in the experience of reading the novels, stories, poems, essays, and works of non-fiction that we will encounter, and that your awareness of some of the universal concerns of our time will be broadened.

A’s are very accessible if you are willing to work for them. Most of my student make A’s or B’s. Good class discussion and an enthusiasm for working outside of class, especially to improve your writing (which you can come in and discuss with me almost any time after school) can often “nudge” you over the A/ B border if you are very close to an A at the end of the term.

UNI FYI NG THEME: THE I NDI VI DUAL AND SOCI ETY

Students will explore many themes in literature, but THE INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIETY will provide a unifying thread woven through much of the literature studied, especially novels and play. We will be progressing on a "backwards time-line" basis, with more contemporary works addressed first, in keeping with summer novel assignments, and moving back in time toward Shakespeare's plays. If time allows, we will proceed further backwards in time to the Ancient Greeks. British and American writers of different genres will be addressed as a major focus, but others will be studied as well. These writers will span from contemporary times to the 16<sup>th</sup> century at the very least. [C- 2]

Week 1: OBJECTIVES: Students will identify and improve problems in mechanics and content in their writing.

--will demonstrate an understanding of characterization and conflict in writing, -- will recall and analyze plot from summer reading in terms of careful analytical, argumentative literary analysis. [C- 4]  
--will give creative interpretations of conflict relating to the work's artistry using color or drama.

Welcome and concerns.

AP Syllabus overview. AP defined and discussed. SUMMER NOVELS TEST (INCLUDING A FIRST TIMED ESSAY citing textual details to support argumentative analysis of character or conflict and theme).

Introductions and free-writing response to summer reading. Summer essays returned and critiqued as a whole-class endeavor. INDIVIDUAL CONFERENCES DIRECTED AT RE-WRITING OF FIRST ESSAY in conjunction with an introduction of AP essay-writing criteria, including effective rhetoric, tone, voice, emphasis, diction and sentence structure. Examples from student essays examined and discussed. [C- 4] Vocabulary: Literary terms such as characterization, conflict, irony, symbol, point of view, allegory, metaphor, foil, tone, foreshadowing, theme, reviewed and others introduced or further detailed.

Week 2: Journal Entry # 1: Reuven Malters life is like a baseball game. What is yours like? Use an EXTENDED METAPHOR to explain.

Students will analyze the above aspects effectively in writing.

--Analyze aspects of STYLE and TONE in literary excerpts.

Literary terms/writing criteria con'd. First time-line unit: Contemporary literature: [C- 2] The Chosen introduced and appropriate connections. Poetry

introduction. Terms such as paradox, allusion, alliteration, assonance, meter addressed and included in the context of writing about poetry.

Week 3: Students will work individually and cooperatively in groups to master mechanics and content of sophisticated literary essays; identify, analyze, and evaluate symbolism and metaphor as they relate to theme.

--Close Analysis of aspects of STYLE (including SYNTAX, DICTION and TONE as well as genre) in literary excerpts. [C- 4]

--Achieve success in close reading for textual detail

-- Analyze contemporary poetry for theme and relevant literary devices used to help convey theme. [C- 4]

The Chosen. Timed essay and group activities. Theme: Intelligence vs. Compassion addressed. Potok's focus through allegory emphasized and final essay turned in.

Connections with works by other contemporary authors such as the following, or works of comparable merit: Margaret Atwood, Maya Angelou, John Updike, Toni Morrison, William Styron, Randall Jarrell, Louis Simpson.

Sample questions to be considered for timed essay on The Chosen:

Which specific details of the text reflect aspects of the cultural significance of Judaism, especially the emphasis on the two different sects, as significant to THEME? Trace several specific details of the text reflecting an underlying focus on the advent of the Holocaust and its historical significance. How does the author tie this focus to the themes of intelligence and compassion? Analyze ways in which the author's use of setting (in terms of the novel's historical and cultural context) become a device used in conjunction with other literary techniques, such as allegory, characterization, tone, or irony? [C- 3/ C- 4] Discuss point of view as significant in The Chosen. What other characters might have told this story effectively? How would the story change in terms of its theme if told by Reb Saunders? By Danny? Mr. Malter? Include in your essay a short example of how TONE might be affected if the story were told from another character's point of view.

Re-writes of first essay. Peer review of essays and one-on-one conferences with me to determine individual strengths and weaknesses in writing. Focus will include a definition of and an early identification of the student's rhetorical skills, tone, implementation and maintenance of voice, and success in specific appropriate word choice and semantics [C- 5].



Feedback on Re-writes [C- 5]: conferences and peer review.

Begin A Raisin In the Sun: Journal Entry #2: Sample: Have you ever felt less than human, or as if you were invisible? Explain.

Students choose prompts from a list and are grouped to write a group essay addressing prompts. Individual essays stem from group findings.

Timed essay: Sample questions to consider:

What do you see as important aspects of characterization pertinent to an evoking of theme? Argue that SETTING is vital to Hansberry's concerns in a conveyance of this theme. [C3/ C/ 4] What conflicts with society does each character encounter? Use textual details to relate internal conflicts to the author's development of character as well. How does race, as an element placed in the historical context of a post-WWII context up to the 1960s, play a central role in the conflicts of specific characters? [C3/ C/ 4] How do specific textual details in excerpts from the author's collection To Be Young, Gifted, and Black reflect similar cultural aspects of the play? Which literary techniques, such as tone, foil, and irony, help to emphasize both works in a historical context? [C3/ C/ 4]

Multiple choice question practice: old AP exams. Continued syntax/ grammar review as needed. Syntax/ mechanics review in conjunction with writing as needed: .

Week 4: Students will write effective conclusions to literary essays, emphasizing the contribution of earlier elements in those essays to thematic conclusions.

Literary terms continued and applied to literature explored.

Students will employ close analysis of sound devices in poetry toward analysis of theme.

A Raisin in the Sun con'd. The individual in society emphasized. Group analysis. Group essays due.

Individual timed essays on Raisin. Conferences (teacher-student, one-on-one) and feedback. Focus on vocabulary, voice, and sentence structure. Re-writes and more feedback: peer review and essays compared to old AP essays. [C- 4]

Continue Poetry analysis: Modern literature such as T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, Robert Frost, or works of comparable merit. Continued practice with multiple choice reading comprehension items. Sample concerns:

"The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" (Bedford Text): How does J. Alfred compare to Orwell's Winston Smith? --To Danny in The Chosen? How would you

characterize J. Alfred? Who are "you" and "I"? Discuss the IMAGERY. Which images help reveal Prufrock's character? How does the image in Line 4, "Like a patient . . ." help convey character and TONE? Which other images are equally striking and why? In what way might the themes of LOVE, DEATH, TIME, and FAI LURE relate to the speaker? Choose any two. The poem's ending is relevant there. DI SCUSS.

Timed essay on poetry, including a focus on post WWI angst as cultural and historically significant. Conferences and peer review. Rewrites. Emphasis on voice, diction, sentence structure, vocabulary. [C- 3,4,5]

Week 5/6: Students will analyze literature to AP standards

- Will read for in- depth analysis and understanding
- will write with sophistication and insight, addressing THEME, STYLE, TONE, CLIMAX, SYMBOL, CONFLICT, FORESHADOWING;
- Will respond to nonfiction critical articles with understanding and sophistication in writing. (Often using the newspaper and journals such as Newsweek or Time)
- Will explore and apply new vocabulary words to reading comprehension and in writing essays.

Nineteen Eighty- four. Journal Entry # 3. Research essays introduced: literary criticism explored and responses integrated into research essay.

Interpretations of Post- WWI literature and concepts. Modern poetry connections. Analysis of professional critical articles. Specific vocabulary study in conjunction with writing.

TEST on Nineteen Eighty- four, multiple- choice format paralleling AP test questions applied to critical article discussed in class.

Weeks 7/8: In keeping with earlier objectives in accordance with AP standards, students will employ research methods to write a literary research essay on Nineteen Eighty- four, by George Orwell. This essay will employ an analytical, argumentative approach to writing about literature, as usual. However, Students will implement evaluative skills in their use of published collections of essays to support their arguments [C- 4]. These essays will be found in sources such as Contemporary Literary Criticism to be used as references. Students will apply non- Internet sources to their research.

Sample Research Essay Topics:



1. Compare and/ or contrast aspects of the social and historical context in which Orwell's novel was written and aspects of a different social/ historical context pertaining to the writing of another novel. Be sure to include specific significant events or quotes from the novels to support your argument. [C- 3/ C- 4]
2. Discuss one or two ways that Orwell's own experiences influenced the writing of this novel. Select at least one event in the novel not addressed by another critic and analyze it as a possible parallel to one of Orwell's own real-life experiences and the time in which he lived and wrote. [C- 3]
3. Option: Your choice. To be approved.

Sources explored; stacks of literary criticism (such as Twentieth Century Literary Criticism or Twentieth Century Literary Criticism) utilized in essay. Topics chosen.

Excerpts/ short stories from Modern literature: Faulkner, Hemingway, Orwell, Fitzgerald, Hurston, Dostoevsky, Steinbeck, or works of comparable merit. Transcendentalism. Continued analysis and practice: essays and MC questions. Continued vocabulary enhancement. Samples: "Barn Burning" "Hills Like White Elephants" "Soldier's Home." (Bedford text) Themes addressed: family loyalty, war and community. Journal.

Sample questions:

How is the quest for power reflected in Faulkner's "Barn Burning?" What elements of character, conflict, point of view, or setting (cultural and historical significance relating to Faulkner's attitude toward class is relevant here) help to evoke this theme? How does Faulkner's style contribute to this emphasis on power? What symbols are used to emphasize his point? What is not said is as important as what is said in "Hills Like White Elephants. How does this element within and "without" dialogue become essential to the characters' power struggle in this work? "A Soldier's Home" reflects Hemingway's take on the individual's role in war. How does Krebs reflect a power struggle as conveyed through the events and dynamics in this story?

Timed essay, including a focus on themes relevant to Faulkner's attitudes toward the South and Class. Conferences and peer review. Rewrites. Emphasis on voice, diction, sentence structure, vocabulary. [C- 3,4,5]

Weeks 9/ 10: Above objectives apply where appropriate. Students will also apply characteristics of literary trends to a time-line, demonstrating an understanding of the impact of characteristics shared (by the Romantic Poets,

for example) on benchmark works. Literature of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to early 1900s. The Romantic period. Excerpts, short stories, and poetry: The Brontës, Hardy, Dickens, Melville, Hawthorne, Frederick Douglass, other slave narratives, Poe, the Brownings, Wordsworth, Coleridge, or works of comparable merit. Begin scansion as an aspect of style analysis.

Journal, con'd . Student writing of a Dramatic Monologue to convey character of speaker and subject, and to anticipate Browning's "My Last Duchess."

AP exam practice: old AP essays evaluated and revised. Close analysis of nineteenth-century syntax for comprehension.

Regarding the analysis of poetry, students will add to their store of vocabulary and analysis the following concepts: PARADOX, HYPERBOLE, IMAGERY, METAPHOR, ALLUSION, and sound devices such as alliteration, assonance, and meter.

Regarding an understanding of the concerns of the Romantic and Victorian Eras, students will express this understanding in timed essays addressing questions such as the following:

Browning's "My Last Duchess" (Harcourt text): Read the following poem and explain how the poet uses literary techniques such as irony, characterization, syntax and tone to evoke character and theme. Include an identification of the type of poetry used and work a reference to the era in which the poem was written into your discussion of theme. Coleridge's "Kubla Khan: or; A Vision in a Dream" (Harcourt text): Read the following poem and write a well-organized essay explaining how the poet uses literary technique such as imagery, tone, or figurative language to evoke meaning relevant to the time in which the poem was written. Wordsworth's "The Prelude": (Old AP exams) "Trace the speaker's changing responses to his experience and explain how they are conveyed by the poem's diction, imagery, and tone." Include a reference to the characteristics defining the poetry as historically relevant: for example, explain how "Kubla Khan" addresses Romantic concerns [C- 2/ 3/ 4]

Timed essay, including a focus on themes relevant to Romantic and Victorian writers. Conferences and peer review. Rewrites. Emphasis on rhetoric, voice, diction, sentence structure, new vocabulary as appropriate to close reading and sophisticated explication of poetry. [C- 3,4,5]

Rough Drafts of Research Essays critiqued and returned. [C- 4]

Continue 19<sup>th</sup>-century literature as above. A play or novel such as Ibsen's *A Doll House* or *The Awakening* read outside of class and explicated by the class. Class preference will ultimately determine choice. Journal. Whole-class essay. Timed individual essay. Research essays due.

Loose ends, Exam: timed essay from previous AP test prompts.

Weeks 11/12: Conclude 19<sup>th</sup>-century literature. Intro to Age of Reason. Journal entries con'd throughout the term. Possibilities include works by Swift, Pope, Burke, Addison, Boswell. Sample questions for timed essays:

Analyze the approach Jonathan Swift takes in his essay "A Modest Proposal." How does he use his PERSONA to evoke an effective SATIRIC TONE in this essay? Explain one aspect of the cultural and historical significance of Swift's essay, such as economy or the class system of the times. Use specific quotes from the essay to emphasize your point. How do these quotes reflect the genius of Swift's essay? [C-3/4] If the world is a theater to Addison, what about the people who are not merely onlookers? Which aspects of Addison's style help to emphasize the point he is making?

Weeks 13/14: Continue Age of Reason and 18<sup>th</sup>-century literature. AP exam practice and essays. Individual conferences, re-writes, continued feedback on essays, which will address the significance of the Age of Reason in a historical context.

Weeks 15/16: Metaphysical Poets and Restoration Drama: 1600s-1700s. Examples: Milton, Donne. Begin *Hamlet* and introduction to the Renaissance. Cultural and historical significance of Renaissance tied to Shakespeare's concerns in the play [C-3]. *Hamlet* outside reading assigned. Reading check test on first act. Continued practice as above.

Weeks 16/17: Continue Metaphysical Poetry/Restoration Drama. AP practice and essays. The 1600s con'd: Students will demonstrate an appreciation for and a sophisticated understanding of the techniques used by Shakespeare to produce a work of genius such as the play *Hamlet*. Early modern English syntax explored. Intro to sonnets. Elements of style pertinent to sonnets. Character, conflict, symbol, style, metaphor, theme, addressed and analyzed. AP multiple choice items practice and essays. *Hamlet* reading check tests.

Sample questions for *Hamlet*: How would you characterize Hamlet? What elements of technique does Shakespeare use to emphasize his complex series of

conflicts? Compare/contrast the Prince in his various soliloquies. How have aspects of his character changed in each? Trace this development using terms such as TONE, SYNTAX, METAPHOR, PERSONIFICATION. Compare/contrast Hamlet with Horatio. Characterize and analyze conflict in other characters such as Gertrude, Claudius, Ophelia, Polonius. What new questions can you ask as the plot develops? How do the themes of hesitation, revenge, good vs. evil, and / or the irony of Hamlet's early statement "I know not seems" become emphasized through the genius of Shakespeare's various approaches? Which questions are left unanswered? How does the play emphasize the cultural and historical significance of the Renaissance? Defend or refute: Hamlet is insane. He hesitates too much. Ophelia should have behaved differently. Claudius is a sympathetic character. Hamlet's final soliloquy proves that wars should not be fought over trivial issues. Be sure to continue to base your analysis and argument on careful reference to textual detail.

Timed essay. Turn in rough draft with essay. After essays are graded, use the following to guide you toward your final draft: Peer review; teacher conference. Rewrites. Final individual conferences with teacher to gauge improvements and successes achieved in rhetoric, voice, tone, emphasis, vocabulary.

Students will convey through individual creative interpretation sophisticated analysis and evaluation of Shakespeare. Continue Hamlet. Creative projects; stream-of-consciousness technique expressed and emphasized (one option in this endeavor will be your insertion of what the characters are thinking between the lines of what they are saying. An attempt at reflecting Early Modern syntax in your own insertion will increase your understanding of the manipulation of syntax as an effective way to emphasize aspects of diction.) Ancient Greek literature addressed if time allows: Oedipus, Antigone, Lysistrata, or other of comparable merit.

Conclude projects/ conclude Hamlet or Greek play. Final practice sessions for exam using old AP exams. Projects presented.

Week 18: Exam: timed essay in keeping with AP format, or exam exempted if students commit to taking AP test.

Literature and some strategies will vary in accordance with class character and teacher discretion.