

2026-2027 Advanced Placement English Language & Composition Syllabus

“All there is to writing is having ideas.

To learn to write is to learn to have ideas.”

- Robert Frost

Course Title: Advanced Placement English Language and Composition

Instructor Information: Deborah Howell (email: howellde@lee.k12.ga.us)

Course of Study:

AP English Language students will learn the skills necessary to succeed in university-level courses and on the AP Language and Composition exam, skills such as close reading of nonfiction writing, analyzing writing for rhetoric and skillful use of language, synthesizing numerous texts into coherent arguments, and writing sophisticated analytical and persuasive essays. Each of these skills will prepare students for the intense reading and writing demands they will experience in college.

To give shape to the content of our course and to unite the readings under common themes, we will read, discuss, and write about classic and contemporary nonfiction prose dealing with key cultural, social, and political issues which affect and define our country today (we will also examine multimedia texts including photography, video, music, political cartoons, etc.). Because a key aspect of college-level learning is critical inquiry into our lives—examining the aspects of our world we take for granted, ignore, or understand only superficially—this course will train students to think, read, and write critically, creatively, and persuasively. This course will combine our study of rhetoric and composition with an analysis of literature, so we will supplement our nonfiction reading with fiction, drama, and poetry. More information about the course can be found [here](#).

Student Learning Outcomes:

You will develop the background knowledge you need to be successful in writing and speaking endeavors throughout your academic studies and beyond. Through textual analysis and production of your own texts, you will become familiar with a variety of approaches to making an argument and appealing to a specific audience—knowledge and skills you will be able to apply in other academic courses, as well as in your lives outside academia.

Pacing Plan, Units, and Standards:

Each quarter we will have an overarching theme and essential question. Within the quarter will be 2-3 units, according to the College Board pacing plan, each of which focuses on specific skills. Following is a tentative list of the four themes and essential questions; the nine units for the year; the skills that each unit will address; and the corresponding texts. For each unit, students will have creative and personal writing assignments, as well as formal, analytical writing assignments (both in-class essays and out-of-class essays or projects). Major writing assignments are listed in each unit, with tentative dates that may well change. The College Board-aligned standards are interwoven and recursive, meaning we will continue to practice them as we progress throughout the year. Newly introduced standards are listed in the appropriate units. We will also focus on a particular aspect of grammar/style in each unit (listed below).

Standards Abbreviations:

RHS: Rhetorical Situation, **CLE:** Claims & Evidence, **REO:** Reasoning & Organization, **STL:** Style

Unit 1/The Origin of a Nation and its Emerging Voices

Skills Focus: Rhetorical Analysis (Claims, Evidence, and the Rhetorical Situation)

- Carlisle Indian School
- Speech by Chief Joseph (other native American Writings)
- Dekanawida (from the Iroquois Constitution...regular 11th textbook)
- Patrick Henry
- Jonathan Edwards
- Phillis Wheatley
- Thomas Paine
- Thomas Jefferson
- Abigail Adams (letter to John Adams)
- Elizabeth Cady Stanton (from Declaration of Sentiments...regular 11th textbook)
- Mary Wollstonecraft (A Vindication of the Rights of Women)
- **Central Text: *The Scarlet Letter***

Texts: “City Upon a Hill” by John Winthrop, “Paradox and Dream” by John Steinbeck, excerpt from The Shape of Things to Come by Greil Marcus, The Declaration of Independence by Thomas Jefferson, The Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions by Elizabeth Cady Stanton, 2012 Harvard Commencement Speech by Fareed Zakaria, excerpt from Noam Chomsky’s Requiem for the American Dream

Grammar/Style Skill: Appositives

Newly Introduced Standards:

RHS 1.A Identify and describe components of the rhetorical situation. **CLE 3.A** Identify and explain claims and evidence within an argument. **CLE 4.A** Develop a paragraph that includes a claim and evidence supporting the claim.

Unit 2/A Growing Nation

Skills Focus: Argument (Audience, Thesis Statements, and Claims and Evidence)

- Abe Lincoln
- Jeff Davis
- Frederick Douglass
- Herman Melville
- Walt Whitman
- Emily Dickinson
- Letters
- Diaries
- Audio and Visual Resources (battlefields.org,
<https://www.gilderlehrman.org/history-resources/essays/douglass-lincoln-and-civil-war>)
- Poe
- Hawthorn
- Holmes, Bryant (etc)
- <https://www.americanrhetoric.com/speechbank.htm>

- The Groaning of the Prisoner - Stowe (<https://speakingwhilefemale.co/anti-slavery-stowe/>)
- Thoreau
- Emerson
- Gandhi
- MLK
- **Central Texts: Stranger in the Woods**

Short Texts Including but not Limited to: Selections by F. Douglass, Margaret Fuller, Henry David Thoreau, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Abraham Lincoln, John Greenleaf Wittier, Jonathan Swift, Walt Whitman, Ghandi

Long Text: Choice novel to be read outside of class (*Les Misérables* by Victor Hugo, *Beloved* by Toni Morrison, or *Roots* by Alex Haley)

Grammar/Style Skill: Modifiers

Newly Introduced Standards:

RHS 1.B Explain how an argument demonstrates understanding of an audience's beliefs, values, or needs. **RHS 2.B** Demonstrate an understanding of the audience's beliefs, values, or needs. **CLE 3.B** Identify and describe the overarching thesis of an argument and any indication it provides of an argument's structure. **CLE 4.B** Write a thesis statement that requires proof or defense and that may preview the structure of the argument.

Unit 3/ A Nation in Transition (The Gilded Age - WWII)

Skills Focus: Synthesis (Line of Reasoning, Claims and Evidence, and Methods of Development)

- Carnegie
- Hemingway
- Steinbeck
- WWI Writings
- WWII Writings
- FDR
- Eleanor Roosevelt
- McArthur
- Hitler
- Mussolini
- Patton
- Pearl Harbor
- Truman
- Anti-War/Protest Writings
- Tim O'Brien(excerpts:
https://moodle.carmelunified.org/moodle/pluginfile.php/106429/mod_resource/content/2/Close%20Reading%20Passages%20The%20Things%20They%20Carried%202017-18.pdf)
- **Central Text: Choice - *The Old Man and the Sea* AND *Of Mice and Men* OR *The Grapes of Wrath* OR *The Things They Carried* (?)**

Texts: “9/11 Address to the Nation” by George W. Bush, “To Any Would-Be Terrorist” by Naomi Shihab Nye, political speech of student’s choice, Speech by Daniel K. Inouye, “A Paradise Built in Hell” by Rebecca Solnit, “Small Change” by Malcolm Gladwell, “Raised to Leave” by Lee Smith, “How Covenants Make Us” by David Brooks, “Why I’m Moving Home,” by J.D. Vance

Grammar/Style Skill: Pronouns

Short Texts Including but not Limited to:

Long Text: The Old Man and the Sea

Major Writing Assignments: AP-style synthesis essay (Week 8), AP-style rhetorical analysis essay (Week 10)

Newly Introduced Standards:

REO 5.A Describe the line of reasoning and explain whether it supports the argument’s overarching thesis.

REO 6.A Develop a line of reasoning and commentary that explains it throughout the argument. REO

5.C Recognize and explain the use of methods of development to accomplish a purpose.

REO 6.C Use appropriate methods of development to advance an argument.

Unit 4/A Nation in Search of Identity

Short Texts Including but not Limited to:

Long Text: Into the Wild by Jack Krakaur

Famous Arguments

Skills Focus: Argument (Organization of Ideas, Line of Reasoning, Transitions, and Style)

Texts: *Letter from Birmingham Jail* by Martin Luther King, Jr., “On Civil Disobedience” by Henry David Thoreau, “On Politics and the English Language” by George Orwell, *A Modest Proposal* by Jonathan Swift, various op-eds

Grammar/Style Skill: Concise Diction

Major Writing Assignments: AP-style argument essay (Week 20), Op-ed (Week 23)

Newly Introduced Standards:

REO 5.B Explain how the organization of a text creates unity and coherence and reflects a line of reasoning.

REO 6.B Use transitional elements to guide the reader through the line of reasoning of an argument. STL 7.A

Explain how word choice, comparisons, and syntax contribute to a specific tone or style of text. STL 8.A

Strategically use words, comparisons, and syntax to convey a specific tone or style in an argument.

Texts:

The Language of Composition, third edition, Renee H. Shea, Lawrence Scanlon, and Robin Dissin Aufses, eds.

Book-length texts include *The Namesake* by Jhumpa Lahiri, *Their Eyes Were Watching God* by Zora Neale Hurston, *Hamlet* by William Shakespeare, *The Smartest Kids in the World* by Amanda Ripley, and several others of your choice. **You will be provided with a copy of all texts and readings required for this course.** You may, however, choose to purchase your own copy of book-length texts if you prefer to annotate your readings.

Materials:

- Pens, pencils, and highlighters
- A spiral or composition notebook
- A binder for handouts, with loose leaf paper (dividers may be helpful for different units)
- Post-it notes to annotate texts (optional)

Grading:

Major Assignments: 50% – Timed Essays and Independent Writing Assignments

Performance Tasks: 35% - Quizzes, Claim & Thesis Statements, Homework, Classwork, Graded Discussion, Vocabulary, Etc.

Test Preparation: 15% - AP Classroom Practice Assignments, Claim and Thesis Statements

***All assignments must be submitted on time. If an unforeseen circumstance arises, you need to contact me as soon as possible. Unexcused late work will not receive credit.

