

Course Title:	English I (A)
Grade(s):	9

Course Description
This course introduces students to the expectations of high school-level work, including a review of grammar and vocabulary, the essentials of research, the basics of writing, and exposure to various literary genres. Students will engage in independent reading, student-led discussions, multimedia projects, and book clubs. Themes a first-year student will encounter in this class are the Hero Within, Justice, and Self-Identity. Students will read fiction and nonfiction pieces of American and global authors to practice building their reading stamina, self-reflection skills, collaboration skills, and independent work engagement. This academic-level English course fosters growth in reading, writing, active listening, and speaking as well as core literacy skills for college and career readiness. Academic-level courses are designed to support all learning styles.
Approved Curricular Materials/Textbook(s)
The English I curriculum exposes students to a range of literary and informational texts representing diverse voices, time periods, genres, and perspectives. Core works are a blend of short stories, poetry, nonfiction, drama, and full-length books. Supplemental texts may vary by teacher, but all fall within approved thematic and skill-aligned categories. These texts serve as the major literary anchors for the course and appear consistently across English I sections: • Short Stories (various) • Art of the Essay (various nonfiction essays) • <i>Just Mercy</i> by Bryan Stevenson • <i>The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet</i> by William Shakespeare • Book Club Texts (various age-appropriate texts with similar themes)

Unit Title	Unit Description (Include Unit Objectives)	Unit Pacing
Unit 1: Intro to English I and Short Stories	Students begin the year by building the foundational skills necessary for success in high school English through the study of contemporary and classic short stories. As they learn the routines and expectations of the English I classroom, students practice essential literacy skills including active reading, annotation,	6-8 weeks (September-October)

	discussion, and evidence-based analysis. Through stories such as “The Interlopers,” “The Sniper,” “The War of the Wall,” and “Lather and Nothing Else,” students analyze key elements of fiction, including characterization, conflict, plot, setting, and theme. They compare how authors develop similar ideas across texts and construct analytical claims supported by textual evidence. The unit culminates in a literary analysis essay that demonstrates students’ ability to interpret literature and support their ideas with evidence.	
Unit 2: Art of the Essay	Students explore writing as both a craft and a form of self-expression through the study of several essay genres, including personal narrative, informational nonfiction, op-eds, and reflective essays. By analyzing how authors use structure, language, and stylistic choices, students learn how essays communicate ideas, engage readers, and convey a clear voice and purpose. Using mentor texts such as “Sometimes the Earth Is Cruel” by Leonard Pitts, “I’m Really Into” by Birgit Benestante, and “The Flags of Our Sons” by Billy Shore, students examine techniques including voice, tone, imagery, anecdote, reflection, and purposeful organization. Students then apply these strategies in their own writing, culminating in an original essay written in the style of one of the texts studied.	6-8 weeks (October-November)
Unit 3: Research Unit	Students develop foundational research skills by learning how to locate, evaluate, and synthesize credible sources. Using research databases and reliable online resources, students practice identifying relevant information to support a focused research topic. A central focus of the unit is source evaluation, as students examine an author’s purpose, credibility, bias, and evidence to determine the reliability and usefulness of sources. For the culminating assessment, students investigate an empathy- or justice-centered issue through pro–con research, exploring multiple perspectives on a topic. They conduct independent research and write a formal paper that synthesizes information from several sources and presents a balanced, evidence-based analysis. Throughout the process, students practice integrating and citing evidence using MLA 9 conventions.	6-8 weeks (December-January)

Unit 4: <i>Just Mercy</i>	Students engage in a close reading of <i>Just Mercy</i> by Bryan Stevenson, examining themes of justice, injustice, and empathy. Through discussion, analysis, and reflective writing, students consider how social status, power, and point of view shape individual experiences within the justice system and influence the way stories are told and understood. Students also analyze complementary texts, synthesizing ideas across sources while evaluating multiple perspectives. For the culminating assessment, students research and present on a specific injustice explored in <i>Just Mercy</i> and related texts. Drawing on multiple sources, they analyze the issue's significance and reflect on broader questions of justice, accountability, and empathy. The unit emphasizes critical thinking, synthesis of information, and the ability to connect literature to contemporary issues.	8 weeks (February-March)
Unit 5: <i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	Students study <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> by William Shakespeare, examining how social norms and cultural expectations influence characters' choices and the consequences of challenging or upholding them. Through close reading of Shakespeare's language, students analyze how word choice, figurative language, dialogue, and rhetorical devices develop character and theme. Students also explore the play through multiple media, including performances and modern adaptations, to consider how interpretation and context shape understanding of the text. The unit culminates in a collaborative performance project in which students select, analyze, and perform a scene from the play. Through this process, students demonstrate their understanding of character, language, and theme as they interpret Shakespeare's work for a modern audience.	6 weeks (April-May)
Unit 6: Book Clubs: The Hero Within	In this culminating unit, students apply the reading, writing, and discussion skills developed throughout the year. Through a combination of independent reading and structured book-club discussions, students evaluate how narrative elements such as point of view, setting, and conflict—as well as literary devices such as simile, metaphor, symbolism, and imagery—shape an author's message, contribute to the development of theme, and influence a reader's understanding. Students identify key topics in a text, develop sustained analytical claims about themes, and support their interpretations with strong textual evidence. By the end of the unit, students demonstrate their ability to sustain independent reading,	4 weeks (May-June)

	collaborate thoughtfully with peers, and communicate their ideas clearly in both discussion and writing, preparing them for the expectations of English 10.	
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