

# Advanced Placement English Language and Composition Syllabus

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## Course Overview:

In accordance with the College Board's AP English Language Course Description, this course cultivates the reading and writing skills that students need for college success and for intellectually responsible civic engagement. The course guides students in becoming curious, critical, and responsive readers of diverse texts and becoming flexible, reflexive writers of texts addressed to diverse audiences for diverse purposes. The reading and writing students do in the course should deepen and expand their understanding of how written language functions *rhetorically*: to communicate writers' intentions and elicit readers' responses in particular situations. The course cultivates the rhetorical understanding and use of written language by directing students' attention to writer/reader interactions in their reading and writing of various formal and informal genres.

Reading and writing activities in the course also deepen students' knowledge and control of formal conventions of written language.

## Course Goals:

1. Developing critical literacy
2. Facilitating informed citizenship

## Required Texts:

Cohen, Samuel ed. *50 Essays: A Portable Anthology*. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's Press, 2004.  
Sebranek, Patrick, Vern Meyer, and Dave Kemper. *Writers Inc: Write for College: A Student Handbook*.  
Wilmington, MA: Great Source Education Group, Inc., 2007.

## Choice Texts:

Bradbury, Ray. *Fahrenheit 451*. Evanston: McDougal Littell Inc., 1998.  
Fitzgerald, F. Scott. *The Great Gatsby*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1995.  
Miller, Arthur. *The Crucible*. Evanston: McDougal Littell Inc., 1997.  
Morrison, Toni. *The Bluest Eye*. New York: Penquin Books USA Inc., 1994.

## Academic Integrity:

At its most basic level, the principle of academic integrity would require that all work you submit be your own. All assignments in the class are to be completed individually unless otherwise instructed. When an assignment, such as a research paper, requires you to consult outside sources, all such sources must be clearly credited in your work using MLA (Modern Language Association) citation format. Failure to do this is plagiarism and will result in failure of the assignment.

## Course Outline:

### Marking Period I. What Shapes Us

#### A. Summer Reading: Memoir Choice

1. Socratic Seminar Discussion
2. Contemporary Issue: Research (Use sentence starters to express the complexities of the issue.)

#### B. Outside of Class Reading: Choose from a list of recommended reading for college-bound students ~ literary analysis project and presentation to class

#### C. Literacy Unit

##### 1. Texts

- a. Sherman Alexie "The Joy of Reading and Writing: Superman and Me"
- b. Joan Didion "On Keeping a Notebook"
- c. Frederick Douglass "Learning to Read and Write"
- d. Malcolm X "Learning to Read"
- e. Amy Tan "Mother Tongue"
- f. Eudora Welty "Listening"
- g. Judith Ortiz Cofer "Paterson Public Library"

##### 2. Writing

- a. two assertion journals
- b. personal essay: literacy narrative
- c. argument impromptu (Tan, Simulated AP Question #2)

The students will engage in the writing process, prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing.

During this process the student will receive both peer review and teacher conferencing to hone the craft of writing with clarity and purpose, mechanical sufficiency, and style. Through instruction and feedback on students' writing assignments, students will revise their work for sentence structure and variety, for logical organization, and for balance of generalization and specific, illustrative detail.

#### D. Gender Unit

##### 1. Texts

- a. ten poems re: gender (What, How, Why, Verb/ Adverb Conversation among Texts)
- b. eight visuals (from *Conversations in American Literature*, images 2, 3, 29, 30, 31, and 41; from *The Language of Composition*, p. 68 and p. 670) (SOAPSTONE & Appeals)
- c. Summer Reading: *The Handmaid's Tale*
- d. Dave Barry "Turkeys in the Kitchen"
- e. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie "We Should All Be Feminists" Ted Talk
- f. Virginia Woolf "Killing the Angel in the House"
- g. Sojourner Truth "Ain't I a Woman?"
- h. Alice Walker "In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens"
- i. Deborah Tannen "There is No Unmarded Woman"

##### 2. Writing

- a. research (a contemporary gender issue)
- b. rhetorical analysis
- c. argument impromptu (Barry, Simulated AP Question #2)

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#### Marking Period II: Personal Choice and Responsibility

A. Outside of Class Reading: *The Crucible* ~ satire project ("How to Spot a Witch")

#### B. Ethics Unit

##### 1. Texts

- a. Barbara Lazear Ascher "On Compassion"
- b. Martin Luther King Jr. "Letter from Birmingham Jail"
- c. Nancy Mairs "On Being a Cripple"
- d. George Orwell "Shooting an Elephant"
- e. Virginia Woolf "The Death of a Moth"

##### 2. Writing

- a. research-based argument (recent ethical dilemma)
- b. synthesis: How does an individual judge right from wrong? What is the role of the individual in confronting injustice?

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#### C. Science, Nature and the Environment Unit

##### 1. Texts

- a. Henry David Thoreau "Where I Lived, and What I Lived For"
- b. E. B. White "Once More to the Lake"
- c. Bill McKibben "Curbing Nature's Paparazzi"
- d. Michael Pollan "What's Eating America"
- e. Bill Bryson "How You Became You"

##### 2. Writing

- a. assertion journal
- b. rhetorical analysis

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### Marking Period III: Challenge the Norm

- A. Outside of Class Reading: Choice of a non-fiction text from recommended reading list  
~ research-based problem/solution composition
- B. Civil Duty Unit
  - 1. Texts
    - a. Patrick Henry "Speech in the Virginia Convention"
    - b. Thomas Paine, from "The Crisis, Number 1"
    - c. Thomas Jefferson "The Declaration of Independence"
    - d. Martin Luther King Jr. "I Have a Dream"
    - e. Abraham Lincoln "The Gettysburg Address"
    - f. inaugural speeches of B. Obama and JFK
  - 2. Writing
    - a. compare/contrast two of the texts as persuasive works.
    - b. synthesis: What is the individual's duty to the government? What is the government's duty to the individual?

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### C. Civil Disobedience Unit

- 1. Texts
  - a. Henry David Thoreau "Civil Disobedience"
  - b. Lars Eighner "On Dumpster Diving"
  - c. Mike Rose "I Just Wanna Be Average"
  - d. Barbara Ehrenreich "Serving in Florida"
  - e. speech by Mandela, Malala, or King (in *Advanced Language & Literature*)
- 2. Writing
  - a. argument: Under what conditions is a citizen not obligated to society? When is challenging the norm justifiable?
  - b. assertion journal

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### Marking Period IV: Power of Story

- A. Outside of Class Reading: choose from *The Great Gatsby*, *The Bluest Eye*, or *Fahrenheit 451*
- B. A Single Story Unit
  - 1. Texts
    - a. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie "Danger of a Single Story" Ted Talk
    - b. Audre Lorde "The Fourth of July"

- c. Jamaica Kincaid, from *A Small Place*
  - d. Caryl Phillips, from *Cambridge*
  - e. "Christiansted" image & text (from *The Language of Composition*, pp. 1115-1117)
  - f. Zora Neale Hurston "How It Feels to Be Colored Me"
2. Writing
    - a. rhetorical analysis
    - b. synthesis essay

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### C. On Behalf of Others Unit

1. Texts
  - a. various commercials, ads, visuals
  - b. Susan Sontag "Regarding the Pain of Others"
  - c. Brent Staples "Just Walk on By: Black Men and Public Space"
  - d. Annie Dillard "Seeing"
  - e. Jessica Mitford "Behind the Formaldehyde Curtain"
  - f. Vicki Hearne "What's Wrong with Animal Rights?"
2. Writing
  - a. photo-essay: using images, song, and captions, speak on behalf of another
  - b. research: marginalized group

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### Ongoing Assignments:

- *Vocabulary Acquisition* ~ Students will engage in learning various terms, including but not limited to rhetorical strategies throughout this course.
- Informal Writing* ~ Students will write in many informal contexts: reader response journal, collaborative writing, in-class responses, etc., to make them aware of the features of their own writing and the techniques used by writers they read.
- Timed Writings* ~ Every other week, this course will require timed writings, imitating those of the AP English Language and Composition Exam and written on prompts that will vary in type but will include rhetorical analysis, argument, and synthesis.

*Formal Writings* ~ Formal paper assignments will be written each quarter. These essay assignments will vary in purpose but will require that the student engage in the writing process, prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. During this process the student will receive both peer review and teacher conferencing to hone the craft of writing with clarity and purpose, mechanical sufficiency, and style. Through instruction and feedback on students' writing assignments, students will revise their work for sentence structure and variety, for logical organization, and for balance of generalization and specific, illustrative detail. Each semester students will submit for assessment one rhetorical analysis, one argument, one synthesis, one informational, and one impromptu.

*Multiple-Choice Practice* ~ Multiple-choice selections will be given out periodically. These will be worked on individually and on some occasions, in pairs or small group situations. Working through these will enable students to effectively engage in the thought process of answering these questions.

*Quizzes* ~ Students will be given quizzes on the reading in this course. These quizzes will vary in length and in type and will generally be unannounced.

### Objectives:

- Analyze and interpret samples of purposeful writing, identifying and explaining and author's use of rhetorical strategies
- Analyze images and other multimodal texts for rhetorical features
- Use effective rhetorical strategies and techniques when composing
- Write for a variety of purposes
- Respond to different writing tasks according to their unique rhetorical and composition demands, and translate that rhetorical assessment into a plan for writing
- Create and sustain original arguments based on information synthesized from readings, research, and/or personal observation and experience
- Evaluate and incorporate sources into researched arguments
- Demonstrate understanding of the conventions of citing primary and secondary sources
- Gain control over various reading and writing processes, with careful attention to inquiry (research), rhetorical analysis, and synthesis of sources, drafting, revising/rereading, editing, and review
- Converse and write reflectively about personal processes of composition
- Demonstrate understanding and control of Standard Written English as well as stylistic maturity in their own writing
- Revise a work to make it suitable for a different audience