

AP English Language and Literature

Course Audit Information

Introduction

Students enrolled in English IV AP will challenge themselves to think critically about their response to literature and value themselves as writers. Using the chronological study of British and World Literature as a guide, students will regularly analyze the fundamental concepts of literature, using them as a springboard into deeper analysis. Through reader response, literature circles, writer conferences and various presentations, students will connect social, cultural and historical developments of a specific era when analyzing a text for its significance and ultimately assist them in building a more informed view of themselves and the world in which they live, all skills necessary for the Advanced Placement exam taken each spring.

Goals and Instructional Objectives

- Students will engage in intensive study of representative works of recognized literary merit from various genres and periods.
- Students will accompany reading with thoughtful discussion and writing about those books in the company of one's fellow students.
- Students will build upon done in previous English courses.
- Students will read works from several genres and periods—from the sixteenth to the twenty-first century.
- Students will read deliberately and thoroughly, taking time to understand a work's complexity, to absorb its richness of meaning, and to analyze how that meaning is embodied in literary form.
- In addition to considering a work's literary artistry, students will reflect on the social and historical values it reflects and embodies.
- Students will recognize that textual detail and historical context will provide a foundation for interpretation, whatever critical perspectives are brought to bear on the literary works studied.
- The following elements of the literary experience will serve as points of emphasis:
 - the experience of literature
 - the interpretation of literature
 - the evaluation of literature
- Students will also write about literary works.
- Writing may include (but is not limited to)
 - writing response and reaction papers
 - free writing
 - keeping some form of a reading journal
 - writing to explain a literary work that involves analysis and interpretation
 - writing brief focused analyses on aspects of language and structure
 - writing to evaluate a literary work involving making and explaining judgments about its artistry and exploring its underlying social and cultural values through analysis, interpretation, and argument
- Students will engage in active, careful, deliberative reading.
- Students will learn how to make careful observations of textual detail, establish connections among their observations, and draw from those connections a series of inferences leading to an interpretive conclusion about a piece of writing's meaning and value.
- Students will become aware of literary tradition and the complex ways in which imaginative literature builds upon the ideas, works, and authors of earlier times.
- Students will develop a stylistic maturity which is characterized by the following:
 - a wide-ranging vocabulary used with denotative accuracy and connotative resourcefulness

- a variety of sentence structures, including appropriate use of subordinate and coordinate constructions
- a logical organization, enhanced by specific techniques of coherence such as repetition, transitions, and emphasis
- a balance of generalization with specific illustrative detail
- an effective use of rhetoric, including controlling tone, maintaining a consistent voice, and achieving emphasis through parallelism and antithesis.

TEXTS: Applebee, Arthur, et al. The Language of Literature – British Literature. Illinois: McDougal Littell, 2002.

Carlsen, Robert G. and Gilbert, Miriam. British and Western Literature. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1979.

Pfordresher John, Veidemanis, Gladys, & McDonnell, Helen. England in Literature. Illinois: Scott, Foresman, and Company, 1989.

Vogel, Richard and Charles F. Winans. Multiple Choice Questions in Preparation for the AP English Literature and Composition Examination (fifth edition). USA: D&S Marketing Systems, Inc., 1997.

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT MATERIALS:

Novels

Pride and Prejudice – Jane Austen
 A Tale of Two Cities – Charles Dickens
 The Stranger – Jean-Paul Sartre
 Siddhartha – Herman Hesse
 Brave New World – Alduous Huxley
 1984 – George Orwell
 The Picture of Dorian Gray – Oscar Wilde
 The Death of Ivan Ilyich - Leo Tolstoy

Plays

Four Plays – Henrik Ibsen
 Waiting for Godot – Samuel Beckett
 Othello - William Shakespeare
 Macbeth - William Shakespeare
 King Lear – William Shakespeare
 Hamlet - William Shakespeare
 Much Ado About Nothing – William Shakespeare
 The Theban Trilogy – Sophocles

Independent Reading Selections Students will select approximately 7-10 works to read independent of mandatory class reading throughout the year. This list is intended to give a sampling and is by no means all inclusive:

Volpone
Victory
An American Tragedy
The Waste Land
Catch – 22
The Zoo Story
Wise Blood
Tess of the D'Ubervilles
The Grapes of Wrath
The Centaur
Desire Under The Elms
Song of Solomon
R & G are Dead
Cat's Eye
The Color Purple
Obasan
America is the Heart
The Bluest Eye
House Made of Dawn
Love Medecine
Zoot Suit
All the Pretty Horses
Bless Me, Ultima
Ceremony
The Stone Angel
The Warden
Delta Wedding
The Joy Luck Club
Pnin
The Shipping News
Grendel
Sula
Surfacing
A Thousand Acres
A Gesture Life

The Bonesetter's Daughter
Typical American
Alias Grace
The Way We Live Now
Sent for You Yesterday
Orlando
Ragtime
Poccho
The Things They Carried
Dancing and Lughansa
A Gathering of Old Men
Pale Fire
The Good Soldier
Cat on a Hot Tin Roof
In the Lake of the Woods
The Remains of the Day
The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man
Out of Africa
O Pioneers!
Adam Bede
The Bear
Wuthering Heights
The Vicar of Wakefield
For Whom the Bell Tolls
East of Eden
Ethan Frome

Units of Study

Unit Title: What to Look For: Becoming a Proactive Reader and Constructing a Critical Analysis of The Tragic Figure in Literature

Time Frame: Approximately 6 weeks

Description: Students will begin the school year by submitting a completed essay, written during the summer, based on a previously administered AP Essay prompt. Students will also have completed a required summer reading project having read Oedipus Rex, Oedipus at Colonus, and Antigone. Students will also be familiar with works such as Beowulf, The Canterbury Tales, and Le Morte D'Artur as these will also be required summer reading. The teacher will hold individual conferences with the students and discuss strengths and weaknesses with their summer essays. A general class discussion will then take place concerning the AP essay. Students will receive sample scoring rubrics, an essay strategy guide, and an overall discussion on the writing process. Points of emphasis of this ongoing discussion and instruction on writing will be discerning the difference between summarizing a work and analyzing a work using appropriate textual support, developing and using a wide-ranging vocabulary, using a variety of sentence structures, employing a logical organization, and displaying an effective use of rhetoric, including controlling tone, maintaining a consistent voice, and achieving emphasis through parallelism and antithesis.

As writing instruction and practice continue, students will move from a discussion of Sophocles' Oedipus Rex and Antigone and the concept of Aristotelian Tragedy and move on to read Shakespeare's Othello and Achebe's Things Fall Apart. Continued emphasis will be placed on writing skills. Meanwhile students will begin to cultivate and develop the skill of reading deliberately and thoroughly, taking time to understand a work's complexity, to absorb its richness of meaning, and to analyze how that meaning is embodied in literary form. Classroom discussion and further practice and focus on recognizing how textual detail and historical context provide a foundation for interpretation will allow students to more fully begin to experience, interpret, and evaluate the literature.

In addition, students will spend a short period of time each week reading a short poem or prose piece somehow related to the larger works being read in class. They will then take a multiple choice assessment each week on the selected reading assignment as a means of developing the critical reading and test taking skills necessary for success on the AP Exam.

Finally, students will independently read a novel of literary merit and complete some type of assessment. The assessment will be either a general literary analysis or an assignment with a more specific focus.

Activities/Assessments: (The number of assignments will vary.)

- Timed In-Class Essays
- Multiple Choice Mini-Tests
- Independent Reading Analysis/Research Paper
- Short Written Responses
- Reading Check Quizzes

Unit Title: Discoveries

Time Frame: Approximately 4 – 5 weeks

Description: This unit will focus on defining the self through literature therefore it will be an intensive poetry unit (which will also address skills necessary for the AP exam). Students will learn how to “break down” a poem according to form, literary devices, historical perspective and personal response . . . and then put it “back together” for meaning. Poetry from the Renaissance will be will be main source of material covered, with an independent reading assignment ongoing throughout the marking period to compliment classroom discussions.

Sample of Material Covered:

Background Readings (3)

The English Renaissance
p. 274 – 281 (LOL)
Sonnet Form
p. 295 – 296 (LOL)
Metaphysical Poetry
p. 449 – 450 (LOL)

Poetry Terms (35)

Allegory	Hyperbole	Purpose
Alliteration	Iambic Pentameter	Scan
Allusions	Litotes	Sestina
Apostrophe	Metaphor/Simile	Situation and Setting
Assonance	Meter:	Sonnet
Audience	Iambic	Speaker
Central Idea (Theme)	Trochaic	Symbol
Conceit	Dactylic	Tone
Couplet	Anapestic	Oxymoron
Consonance	Paradox	Shakespearean Sonnet
Epitaph	Pastoral	Petrarchan Sonnet
Free Verse	Personification	

Poems (46)

from The Language of Literature

“My Lute Awake” p. 284
“On Monsieur’s Departure” p. 286
“The Passionate Shepherd to His Love” p. 290
“The Nymph’s Reply to the Shepherd” p. 292
“Sonnet 30” p. 298
“Sonnet 75” p. 299
“Sonnet 29” p. 303
“Sonnet 116” p. 304
“Sonnet 130” p. 305
“Sonnet 169” p. 309
“Sonnet 292” p. 310
“A Valediction: Forbidden Mourning” p. 452
“Holy Sonnet 10” p. 454
“On My First Son” p. 459
“Still to Be Neat” p. 460
“To the Virgins to Make Much of Time” p. 464

“To His Coy Mistress” p. 465
“To Lucasta Going to the Wars” p. 467
“How Soon Hath Time” p. 477
“When I Consider My Light is Spent” p. 478
from “Paradise Lost” p. 483

from England in Literature

“Whoso List to Hunt” p. 166
“A Lover’s Vow” p. 168
“Alas, So All Things Now Do Hold Their Peace” p. 168
“When I Was Fair and Young” p. 173
“To Queen Elizabeth” p. 175
“Sir Walter Raleigh to His Son” p. 176
“What is Our Life?” p. 177
“Even Such is Time” p. 177
from “Arcadia” p. 182
from “Astrophel and Stella” p. 182
“Thou Blind Man’s Mark” p. 183
“Sonnet 18” p. 186
“Sonnet 30” p. 187
“Sonnet 71” p. 187
“Song, to Celia” p. 270
“To Althea, from Prison” p. 274
“Upon Julia’s Clothes” p. 276
“Delight in Disorder” p. 276
“Song” p. 279
“The Bait” p. 280
“Sonnet 14” p. 282
“Easter Wings” p. 287
“Virtue” p. 287
“On His Having Arrived at the Age of Twenty-Three” p. 293
“On His Blindness” p. 293

Additional Poetry Readings (10)

Students will independently read any 10 poems (their choice) written by the authors listed below.

Authors (16)

Shakespeare
Sir Thomas Wyatt
Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey
Sir Francis Bacon
Sir Walter Raleigh
Edmund Spenser
Sir Philip Sidney
Christopher Marlowe
Ben Jonson
Richard Lovelace
Robert Herrick
John Donne
George Herbert
Andrew Marvell
John Milton

Book Key

The Language of Literature (LOL)

England in Literature (EL)

Activities/Assessments: (The numbers of assignments are approximations)

- Timed In-Class Essays
- Multiple Choice Mini-Tests
- Independent Reading Analysis/Research Paper
- Short Written Responses
- Reading Check Quizzes
- Intensive Poetry Discussions
- Poetry Readings
- Poetry Presentation and Analysis
- Review key poetic devices
- Lead large group discussions on cultural/'historical events of the period under study.
- Model reading a poem repeatedly.
- Model and provide examples of poetry explications.
- Monitor and participate in literature circles.

Unit Title: The Human Tragedy (William Shakespeare)

Time Frame: Approximately 4-5 weeks

Description: Students will identify the heart of tragedy using three of William Shakespeare's plays as a springboard into character analysis and discussion. Two plays will be read and discussed in class (HAMLET & MACBETH) and students will pick one to read independently (OTHELLO or KING LEAR). The highlight of this unit allows students to research and focus on a specific element of the play Hamlet, develop a thesis, and defend the thesis. Students debate and discussion reaches an intense level as students utilize the text to support their points of view.

Activities/Assessments:

- Timed In-Class Essays
- Multiple Choice Mini-Tests
- Independent Reading Analysis/Research Paper
- Short Written Responses
- Reading Check Quizzes
- Also see Appendix A, B
- Review key poetic devices
- Lead large group discussions on cultural/'historical events of the period under study.
- Model reading a poem repeatedly.
- Model and provide examples of poetry explications.
- Monitor and participate in literature circles.
- Lead large group discussions about the Renaissance.
- Assign reading groups to perform scenes from the play
- Review elements of Shakespearean tragedy.
- Model quote and scene analysis.
- Engage students in large and small group discussions.
- Review how to write a character analysis.
- Conference with students during the writing process
- Various film and stage productions of Hamlet, Othello, and Macbeth.

Unit Title: The Enlightenment

Time Frame: Approximately 4-5 weeks

Description: The Enlightenment marks a dramatic change from the literary styles developed during the Renaissance. In this unit, students will be required to select a piece of literature indicative of the Enlightenment and connect it to the cultural/historical events of the period on an in-class essay test. We will also study the art of satire, allowing students to write one of their own.

Works Studied:

Views of Society

Samuel Pepys from The Diary of Samuel Pepys

An intimate look at history

Alexander Pope from An Essay on Man

Epigrams, from An Essay on Criticism

What it means to be human

Comparing Literature

Poetry of Alexander Pope and Jean de La Fontaine

Jean de La Fontaine

The Acorn and the Pumpkin

The Value of Knowledge

Humorous Moral Tales

Joseph Addison from The Spectator

Personal observations of everyday life and manners

Philip Stanhope, Lord Chesterfield from Letters to His Son

A father's advice to his son

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu

Letter to Her Daughter

Advice on her granddaughter's education

Mary Astell

from Some Reflections upon Marriage

What is woman's station in life?

Arguments for Change

Daniel Defoe from An Academy for Women

A man defends women's education.

Jonathan Swift from Gulliver's Travels

from Part 1. A Voyage to Lilliput

from Part 2. A Voyage to Brobdingnag

Gulliver encounters many adventures.

Letter from Richard Simpson

Swift uses a pseudonym to launch his book.

A Modest Proposal

What is his solution to poverty?

Comparing Literature

Gulliver's Travels, A Modest Proposal, and Candide

Voltaire from Candide

A naive young man interacts with the world.

Mary Wollstonecraft from A Vindication of the Rights of Woman

She speaks out about women's rights.

Revelations About Human Nature

Samuel Johnson from The Rambler - On Spring
from The Idler - On Idleness
Johnson's own brand of insight and wit

Related Reading

from A Dictionary of the English Language
The first English dictionary
James Boswell from The Life of Samuel Johnson
A perceptive account of Johnson's character
Thomas Gray
Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard
Contemplations of life

Activities/Assessments:

- Timed In-Class Essays
- Multiple Choice Mini-Tests
- Independent Reading Analysis/Research Paper
- Short Written Responses
- Reading Check Quizzes
- Review the background of the Enlightenment.
- Review writing styles and writers of the Enlightenment.
- Analyze and discuss one piece of literature indicative of the period (excerpt from On the Education of Women).
- Provide and review with students a list of essay test questions.

Unit Title: Voices of the Future

Time Frame: Approximately 4-7 weeks

Description: Students will read Brave New World and 1984 deliberately and thoroughly, taking time to understand a work's complexity, to absorb its richness of meaning, and to analyze how that meaning is embodied in literary form. Students will recognize the textual detail and historical context of these novels will provide a foundation for interpretation, whatever critical perspectives are brought to bear on the literary works studied. Students will also read contemporary new pieces and literary criticism in an effort to further enrich and enliven the reading experience. Finally, students will make careful observations of textual detail, establish connections among their observations, and draw from those connections a series of inferences leading to an interpretive conclusion about a piece of writing's meaning and value.

Works Studied:

- Brave New World
- 1984

Activities/Assessments:

- Timed In-Class Essays
- Multiple Choice Mini-Tests
- Independent Reading Analysis/Research Paper
- Short Written Responses
- Reading Check Quizzes
- See Appendix C
- See Appendix D

Unit Title: The Romantics

Time Frame: Approximately 4 weeks

Description: The Age of Romanticism returned to a more personal and emotional approach to literature, a marked contrast to the formal, regulated, and elegant style of the Enlightenment. Students will connect popular Romantic topics such as the hero as a revolutionary, living life with humility, and the mystery and beauty of nature to the wide variety of poems composed by some of the world's most famous poets. By the unit's conclusion, students will independently read and analyze an assigned poem in an essay.

Activities/Assessments:

- Timed In-Class Essays
- Multiple Choice Mini-Tests
- Independent Reading Analysis/Research Paper
- Short Written Responses
- Reading Check Quizzes
- Review and discuss the cultural/historical events of the Romantic Period.
- Review poetic devices.
- Model writing a poetry explication.
- Lead students in discussions (using song lyrics as examples) about Romantic beliefs still common today.

Works Studied:

Seeking Truth

William Blake from Songs of Innocence

"The Lamb"

"The Little Boy Lost"

"The Little Boy Found"

from Songs of Experience

"The Tyger"

"The Fly"

"The Sick Rose"

Brief Reflections of Nature

Author Study of William Wordsworth

"Lines Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey"

"Composed upon Westminster Bridge, September 3, 1802"

"The World Is Too Much with Us"

"It Is a Beauteous Evening"

"I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud"

The Power and Pleasures of Nature

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

"Kubla Khan"

What appeared in his vision?

"The Rime of the Ancient Mariner"

The adventures of a sailor on a haunted ship

Embracing the Imagination

George Gordon, Lord Byron

She Walks in Beauty

When We Two Parted
from Childe Harold's Pilgrimage
Love's passions, ocean's power
Percy Bysshe Shelley
Ozymandias
Ode to the West Wind
To a Skylark
Meditations on time, nature, and the meaning of life

Related Reading

from A Defense of Poetry
Poetry's transforming powers
John Keats
Ode on a Grecian Urn
To Autumn
When I Have Fears That I May Cease to Be
Bright Star, Would I Were Steadfast As Thou Art
Truth, beauty, love, and death

Unit Title: The Victorian Age

Time Frame: Approximately 4 weeks

Description: The Victorian Age was a time of extremes... and a time of reform. It was the worst decade for unemployment and poverty and many children lost their childhood working in a factory under deplorable conditions. As a result, this era brought about reforms to help the poor and reduce the exploitation of children. Students will end the unit writing an in-class essay examining two stories for their common theme, indicative of the period. In addition, students will return to reading a novel, in this case, A Tale of Two Cities.

Activities/Assessments:

- Timed In-Class Essays
- Multiple Choice Mini-Tests
- Independent Reading Analysis/Research Paper
- Short Written Responses
- Reading Check Quizzes
- Participation in Literature Circles
- Inferential Comparative Essay

Works Studied:

Personal Relationships

Alfred, Lord Tennyson

The Lady of Shalott

Ulysses

from In Memoriam

Crossing the Bar

Mystery, adventure, loss, and hope

Robert Browning

My Last Duchess

Porphyria's Lover

Jealous lovers

Elizabeth Barrett Browning

Sonnet 43

A much-quoted love poem

Charlotte Brontë

A Warning Against Passion

Is love a necessity for marriage?

Elizabeth Cleghorn Gaskell

Christmas Storms and Sunshine

Two feuding families

Mary E. Coleridge

The King Is Dead, Long Live the King

Who are the king's real friends?

Rudyard Kipling

The Miracle of Purun Bhagat

One man's journey through life

Leo Tolstoy

What Men Live By

New Voices, New Directions

Matthew Arnold

Dover Beach
To Marguerite—Continued
One poet's view of the human condition

Gerard Manley Hopkins
Pied Beauty
Spring and Fall: To a Young Child
Nature and the seasons of human life

Thomas Hardy
The Man He Killed
Ah, Are You Digging My Grave?
The Convergence of the Twain
Enemies, friends, and a shipwreck

A. E. Houseman
When I Was One-and-Twenty
To an Athlete Dying Young
Fleeting youth and love

Unit Title: The Play as Literature and Effective Facilitator of Social Change

Time Frame: Approximately 2-4 weeks

Description: Students will read plays such as *Waiting for Godot*, *A Doll's House*, and *Hedda Gabler* (selection will vary from year to year). Students will read deliberately and thoroughly, taking time to understand a work's complexity, to absorb its richness of meaning, and to analyze how that meaning is embodied in literary form. In addition to considering a work's literary artistry, students will reflect on the social and historical values it reflects and embodies.

Activities/Assessments:

- Timed In-Class Essays
- Multiple Choice Mini-Tests
- Independent Reading Analysis/Research Paper
- Short Written Responses
- Reading Check Quizzes
- Participation in Literature Circles
- Inferential Comparative Essay
- Students will act out a scene in front of the class.
- Students will re-write a scene from the play.

Unit Title: Modern Literature

Time Frame: Approximately 2 – 4 weeks

Description: Students will accompany reading with thoughtful discussion and writing about the literature covered. Students will read deliberately and thoroughly, taking time to understand a work's complexity, to absorb its richness of meaning, and to analyze how that meaning is embodied in literary form. In addition to considering a work's literary artistry, students will reflect on the social and historical values it reflects and embodies. Students will recognize that textual detail and historical context will provide a foundation for interpretation, whatever critical perspectives are brought to bear on the literary works studied.

Activities/Assessments:

- Timed In-Class Essays
- Multiple Choice Mini-Tests
- Independent Reading Analysis/Research Paper
- Short Written Responses
- Reading Check Quizzes
- Participation in Literature Circles
- Inferential Comparative Essay

Works Studied:

New Images of Reality

William Butler Yeats

The Second Coming

Sailing to Byzantium

D. H. Lawrence

The Rocking-Horse Winner

James Joyce

Araby

Katherine Mansfield
 A Cup of Tea
Virginia Woolf
 The Duchess and the Jeweller
T. S. Eliot
 Preludes
 The Hollow Men
 The Naming of Cats
W. H. Auden
 Musée des Beaux Arts
 The Unknown Citizen
Stephen Spender
 What I Expected
Dylan Thomas
 Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Night
 In My Craft or Sullen Art

Shocking Realities

William Butler Yeats
 An Irish Airman Foresees His Death
 What is he fighting for?
Rupert Brooke
 The Soldier
 A patriot's last wish
Siegfried Sassoon
 Dreamers
 Memories of another world
Vera Brittain from Testament of Youth
 A woman's perspective on war
Winston Churchill from The Speeches, May 19, 1940
 A leader inspires his people in war.
Aldous Huxley
 Words and Behavior
 Using language to mask the truth
George Orwell
 A Hanging
 Witnessing an execution

Appearance and Reality

Penelope Lively
 At the Pitt-Rivers
Margaret Atwood
 The Moment
 A poetic meditation on person and place
Seamus Heaney
 Digging
 Tools of the trade
Ted Hughes
 The Horses
 A waking world
Seamus Heaney
 from Crediting Poetry: The Nobel Lecture

A poet's beginnings

Czeslaw Milosz

In Music

What does he see when the music plays?

Stevie Smith

The Frog Prince

Not Waving but Drowning

Things may not be what they seem.

Culture and Conflict

Wole Soyinka

Telephone Conversation

Telephones are colorblind.

Derek Walcott

from Midsummer

Encountering prejudice

Nadine Gordimer

Six Feet of the Country

A simple request

Isabel Allende

from Writing as an Act of Hope

A writer speaks.

Unit Title: The 20th Century – Franz Kafka’s “The Metamorphosis”

Time Frame: Approximately 2 weeks

Description: As seniors on the threshold of adulthood, the theme “know thyself” should be particularly meaningful. The more self-knowledge we possess, the better prepared we are to meet life realistically. In this unit, students will read Kafka’s “The Metamorphosis” and meet main character Gregor Samsa, a man who has never been able to assess himself, and discover what occurs as a result. The unit will conclude with students exploring their own metamorphosis.

Activities/Assessments:

- Timed In-Class Essays
- Multiple Choice Mini-Tests
- Independent Reading Analysis/Research Paper
- Short Written Responses
- Reading Check Quizzes
- Participation in Literature Circles
- Inferential Comparative Essay
- Review and discuss Kafka’s biography.
- Identify and review characterization techniques.
- Assign and participate in literature circles.
- Lead discussions on the theme “know thyself.”
- Model a metamorphosis project.
- Metamorphosis Project – a collection of pictures from three phases of life. For each phase students must examine how and why they grew and changed. Students will conclude the assignment by discussing what they believe future change may hold.

Unit Title: Leo Tolstoy's "The Death of Ivan Ilyich"

Time Frame: Approximately 2 weeks

Description: This novella can be used to either introduce "know thyself" or conclude it as its main theme questions the meaning of life. In this unit, students will learn valuable lessons concerning what makes life meaningful and worth living. Such topics are especially poignant for senior level students as they are about to begin their official journey into adulthood. The main objective of this unit is to assist students in developing the ability to be introspective and embrace the importance of being true to themselves.

Activities/Assessments:

- Timed In-Class Essays
- Multiple Choice Mini-Tests
- Independent Reading Analysis/Research Paper
- Short Written Responses
- Reading Check Quizzes
- Participation in Literature Circles
- Review and discuss Tolstoy's biography.
- Assign and participate in literature circles.
- Lead discussions on the novel's theme and metaphors.
- Model writing a quote analysis.
- Model writing a character analysis.
- 5 Paragraph essay – Quote Analysis or Character Analysis – should conclude with a reflection on themselves and discussing the relevance of the novel to their own lives.

Unit Title: The Memoir

Time Frame: 3-4 weeks

Description: After a year of exploring themes related to the meaning of life, it is time for students to write their own stories. Relying heavily on the writer's workshop technique, students will write their own memoir based on an experience, time period or lesson learned from their own lives. To assist them in how to write a memoir, students will select a memoir to read independently in addition to the excerpts shared in class.

Activities/Assessments:

- Timed In-Class Essays
- Multiple Choice Mini-Tests
- Independent Reading Analysis/Research Paper
- Short Written Responses
- Reading Check Quizzes
- Participation in Literature Circles
- Model the writing process through his/her own memoir.
- Model revision through his/her own memoir.
- Provide examples of effective writing techniques.
- Conference with students individually about their writing.
- Multiple drafts of student memoirs.
- Conferences with individual students.
- Student selected areas of revision on each draft.
- Final copy of memoir.

Works Studied:

- Student selected memoirs.
- Excerpts from Weirsel's NIGHT.
- Excerpts from Wolff's THIS BOY'S LIFE.
- Excerpts from Weissmann's ALL BUT MY LIFE.
- Excerpts from FRIDAY NIGHT LIGHTS.
- Teacher's writing.
- Samples of student writing.

APPENDIX A.

HAMLET ASSIGNMENT

(courtesy of the AP Central – English Language and Literature Website)

Seminar Presentations and Papers on Hamlet

Please pick a topic that intrigues you. You will write a 3-5 page paper to be Xeroxed and distributed to the class the day before your presentation. In addition, you will be responsible for leading a lively 20-minute discussion of your passage, topic, or section from the play. You will receive 2 full paper grades for this project—a grade on your paper and a grade on the discussion.

Be ambitious in your approach. Comb the play for connections, references, and quotations. Look at criticism in the library if it would be useful. (Just be sure to acknowledge your sources appropriately.) This is a good way to trace a word or image through the play. I am looking for a first-rate paper and an intelligent and informed discussion. The class will be free to ask you questions, challenge your ideas (in a positive and pleasant way), and argue points with you. If your projects are done well, this should prove to be an exciting and valuable project.

I am giving you almost a week to complete your projects. This means that I expect you to be working on them for at least 30-40 minutes each night and spending more time on them when you need to. Come see me if you want to talk your project through.

Possible Topics

1. Look at the issue of fathers and sons. In Hamlet we find three almost parallel sets of fathers and sons—King Hamlet and Hamlet, Polonius and Laertes, and Old King Fortinbras and young Fortinbras. Each son has had a father killed. Compare and contrast the three pairs. Why does Shakespeare create these three parallel sets for Hamlet? Look at the play as a whole. Look closely at individual lines. Develop a thesis, explore it, and connect it to the rest of the play.

2. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are relatively minor characters in the play; nevertheless Tom Stoppard chose them as the main characters in his absurdist play *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* in which Hamlet is rewritten from their point of view. Examine Shakespeare's creation of these two characters. Write a character sketch of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern using very specific lines and examples from the play to support your points. What is their "role" in the play? Why include them at all? What, if anything, is their significance?

3. Claudius says of Hamlet, "Madness in great ones must not unwatched go" (III, i, 5) and Polonius says of Hamlet, "Though this be madness, yet there is method in 't" (II, ii, 201). Is Hamlet mad? Is he simply putting "an antic disposition on" as he suggests in Act I, scene v, line 171? Is there a point at which his play-acting becomes truth? Discuss the role of madness in Hamlet. This is an easy topic with which to be glib. Look closely and critically at this topic and go beyond the obvious.

4. Read about tragedy and the tragic hero. Look at other definitions of "hero." Is Hamlet a hero or not? Is Hamlet's death a tragic death? Support your points in the universe of the play. Again, don't be glib. Look closely and critically at this topic and go beyond the obvious.

5. Examine the character of Ophelia. What is her relationship with her father and brother? What is her relationship with Hamlet? With Gertrude? Write a character sketch of Ophelia using very specific lines and examples from the play to support your points. What is her "role" in the play? An interesting look into Ophelia's character and the development of that character is revealed through her songs and the flowers she

distributes in her madness. You might want to examine this scene for "double meanings." Look at the language of flowers. What does rosemary stand for? Pansies? etc.

6. The character of Gertrude has been equally fascinating to critics. Is she a strong, ambitious, manipulative woman? Is she a weak woman who is incomplete without a strong man? Does she fall somewhere between these extreme dichotomies? Examine her character carefully within the universe of the play. Write a character sketch of Gertrude using evidence from the text to support your points. (For some important questions to ask yourself, look at #13 and #14 in the Act III study guide).

7. Readers and critics have differed dramatically over the years as they have tried to identify the climax of the play—the turning point. There are many points when Hamlet is determined to avenge his father's death. At what point does he commit himself so that there is no turning back? Discuss the possible "climaxes" or pivotal points in the play. Determine which is the actual climax and support your assertion with clear evidence from the text.

8. Discuss Hamlet's character. Is he the "sweet prince," too sensitive and good for a world as "rank" as Denmark has become? Is he an ambitious young man eager to attain the throne of Denmark and willing to go to any extremes to do so? Is he both? Again, this is an easy topic with which to be glib. Look closely and critically at this topic and go beyond the obvious. Support your contentions with close and careful references to the text.

9. Some critics have described Claudius as a "slimy beast." Others have drawn a more positive and complex picture of him. Write a character sketch of Claudius and support your contentions with evidence from the text. Look at him in all his complexity and examine all his possible motivations. Don't be glib. Go beyond the obvious.

10. Trace a word or image through the play and connect its significance to the play as a whole. Here are some ideas: a. The play begins with a question: "Who's there?" (I, i, 1). Examined closely, one will note that the play contains an extraordinary number of questions. Look at all the interrogatories in the play — all the lines that begin with "who, what, when, where, why, how" and/or end in question marks. Trace this trope through the play and discuss its significance to the play as a whole. b. The power (or failure) of language is another issue in the play. When Polonius asks Hamlet what he is reading, he says "words, words, words," and later Hamlet says that he "must like a whore unpack [his] heart with words" (II, ii, 543). Trace "word" through the play and look at issues of language. What does it suggest about the play as a whole? c. The image of a fallen Eden is threaded throughout the play. Trace this image through the play and connect it to the larger concerns of the play. d. In Act II, scene ii, line 236, Hamlet says that "Denmark is a prison." Trace the images of prisons and confinement through the play. e. Look at the role of acting in the play and its significance to the text as a whole. f. There are other images and words that are equally provocative and interesting. Develop an idea of your own. Be sure to clear it with me, however, before you begin working on it.

11. In Act I, scene iv, line 66, Hamlet says, "I do not set my life at a pin's fee." Later, in Act II, scene ii, lines 209-211, he says to Polonius, "You cannot take from me anything I will not more willingly part withal—except my life, except my life, except my life." What is Hamlet's attitude toward death? Why? Again, don't settle for what is obvious and easy. Look closely at all his speeches about death, including the graveyard scene and his comments on "poor Yorick" as well as his more famous speeches—"To be or not to be" and "Oh that this too, too sullied flesh would melt." Why does he feel the way he feels? Is his death inevitable?

12. Look at Hamlet's advice to the players—and the play within a play. Discuss both in some depth and connect them to the text as a whole.

13. Look closely at a particular passage. Give a close reading of it and connect it to the play as a whole. (Use the paper that I gave you as a paradigm for this sort of project.)

- a. Act II, scene ii, lines 289-293 b. Act II, scene ii, lines 506-564 c. Act III, scene iv, lines 55-205 d. Act III, scene i, lines 56-90 e. Act III, scene ii, lines 36-98 f. Act IV, scene iv, lines 32-65

14. Why did Hamlet wait so long to avenge his father's murder? Survey the critical response to this basic question that has concerned critics for four hundred years. Conclude with a judgment about which interpretation seems to be plausible to you based on your interpretation of the play.
15. How does each of Hamlet's seven major soliloquies reveal the stages of his eventual downfall? What is Hamlet's "tragic flaw"?
16. Is Hamlet troubled more by his father's murder or by his mother's hasty marriage to Claudius?
17. Is Hamlet mad?
18. Does Hamlet love Ophelia?
19. Discuss numbers as sources of superstition for the Elizabethans. In *Hamlet*, a motif of the number three is evident, particularly in the organization of the minor characters, including Marcellus, Bernardo, Claudius, Fortinbras, Horatio, and Polonius.
20. Analyze Act Five of Shakespeare's Hamlet, where Osric, as well as the gravediggers are introduced. This essay includes a discussion of the comedic and satiric elements in the act.
21. Analyze the character of Horatio, his role in the play, and his nature in contrast to Hamlet and the other characters in the play.
22. Comment on Hamlet's "To Be or Not to Be" Soliloquy. Specifically, discuss Hamlet's famous soliloquy in relation to the major themes of the play.
23. Give a comprehensive overview of the historical, mythical, and religious content of *Hamlet*, drawing on numerous critical works.
24. "Something is rotten in the state of Denmark" (1.4.98). In fact, many things are rotten in the state of Denmark, and images of decay, corruption, and disease are common throughout the play. Following the conventions of tragedy, many of the characters become corrupted in some way, and, by the end of the play, all of the corrupt characters must be eliminated so that Denmark can once again be set right. Many characters in Hamlet die. In what ways is each of these characters "corrupt"? What images in the play suggest decay, corruption, or disease?
25. Hamlet has been called a "claustrophobic" play because of the ways the different characters spy on one another, but "spying" is only one form of deception in the play. There is also Claudius, the incestuous fratricide, playing the part of the good king, and Hamlet himself decides to "put an antic disposition on" (1.5.189). In a way, it is Hamlet's job to see through all of this deception and to discover the truth, although, to discover the truth, Hamlet himself must use deception. What point is Shakespeare trying to make by introducing all of the deception, lying, and false appearances into his play?
26. As Hamlet says, "What a piece of work is a man! How noble in reason, how infinite in faculties, in form and moving how express and admirable, in action how like an angel, in apprehension how like a god!" (2.2.286-

289). At the same time, though, we are sometimes ruled by our passions (lust, greed, gluttony, etc.). We are capable of greatness and nobility, but we are also capable of behavior fitting a beast, so Hamlet asks another "pregnant" question (a question loaded with meaning) when he asks Ophelia, "What should such fellows as I do crawling between earth and heaven?" (3.1.128-129). All of the characters in the play are "crawling between earth and heaven," but some are drawn more to earth by their "beastly" behavior. How does the theme of passion and reason apply to some of the main characters? How does the issue of passion and reason help to determine Hamlet's views of some of the other characters and of life in general?

27. In her madness, Ophelia brings up an important theme of the play: "Lord," she says, "we know what we are, but know not what we may be" (4.5.43-44). Both "what we are" and "what we may be" are problems that Hamlet struggles with throughout the play. Should one lead an active life or a passive life? Does God help to direct our actions? Is the world nothing more than a prison? Is there a meaning to life? Are some of Hamlet's views on life too pessimistic, or are his views supported by the world of the play? Is Hamlet an idealistic and therefore disappointed by the realities of life?

28. Remember, you can write on almost any topic that you find interesting and that you think will help readers better understand the play. If you are not interested in any of the topics above, you might read a few articles on Hamlet and see if any issues that the critics bring up could be developed into a research paper. You should not use someone else's thesis, but writers developing an interpretation often touch upon a variety of ideas that they do not explore in much depth. You could take one of these ideas and develop it into your own paper.

APPENDIX B.

QUESTION A

Choose a character from a work of recognized literary merit and write an essay in which you (a) briefly describe the standards of the fictional society in which the character exists and (b) show how the character is affected by and responds to those standards. In your essay do not merely summarize the plot.

QUESTION B

Choose a complex and important character in a novel or a play of recognized literary merit who might – on the basis on the character’s actions alone – be considered evil or immoral. In a well-organized essay, explain both how and why the full presentation of the character in the work makes us react more sympathetically than we otherwise might. Avoid plot summary.

QUESTION C

One definition of madness is “mental delusion or the eccentric behavior arising from it.” But Emily Dickinson wrote

Much madness is divinest Sense –
To a discerning Eye –

Novelist and playwrights have often seen madness with a “discerning Eye.” Select a novel or a play in which a character’s apparent madness or irrational behavior plays an important role. Then write a well-organized essay in which you explain what this delusion or eccentric behavior consists of and how it might be judged reasonable. Explain the significance of the “madness” to the work as a whole. Do not merely summarize the plot.

APPENDIX D.

Brave New World

In-Class Essay

In a well-organized, grammatically correct essay of at least four paragraphs answer the following questions:

Few of Huxley's predictions have proven to be perfectly accurate, yet many aspects of the Utopia of *Brave New World* feel uncomfortably like our world. Talk about the book as a prophetic vision of the future. Which aspects of the book did you find most disturbing? Which hit closest to home? Which seem the most far-fetched?

As dehumanizing and oppressive as the brave new world Utopia is, the alternative in the "savage reserve" is in many ways worse—dirty, violent, unhealthy, cruel, uncomfortable. What point is Huxley making about human nature and the nature of human communities? Is his vision totally negative—or does the book hold out some shred of hope, some alternative mode that fosters both freedom and community?

Make sure your essay has a thesis statement and sufficient textual evidence to support your argument(s).