

# Advanced Placement English Language and Composition Syllabus 2011-2012

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## Course Overview:

This rigorous course is equivalent to a college-level class with an emphasis on writing in an array of modes of discourse, analytical analysis of fiction and nonfiction, and rhetorical analysis of selections. As stated in the current AP English Course Description: "...its purpose is to enable students to read complex texts with understanding and to write prose of sufficient richness and complexity to communicate effectively with mature readers.... Students should be encouraged to place their emphasis on content, purpose, and audience and to allow this focus to guide the organization of their writing" (2006).

## Curriculum Course Overview:

This course meets the description of the AP Course Description as well as the district's requirements, in which states: "This course will further develop students' abilities as skilled analysts of a broad range of prose written in a variety of periods, disciplines, and rhetorical contexts. Reading will include works of autobiographers, biographers, diarists, critics, essayists, journalists, and writers of history, politics, science and nature. The writing content will focus upon lengthy expository and analytical essays. Students will compose in a variety of modes and for a variety of purposes. Students will enhance vocabulary skills, hone research skills, and practice speaking and listening skills" (District Course Description, 2005).

## Students (Audience):

Taught to juniors, this course follows Honors English II. These juniors are above-average students who are college-bound. Many will opt to take AP English Literature as a follow-up.

## Instructor's Preparation:

Melissa Noel has taught the course for six years with a high success rate. Weeklong workshops are attended every three years as recommended by the school district. The last institute attended by this instructor was in June 2011 at the University of North Carolina-Asheville. Additionally, Mrs. Noel is a Reader for the AP Lang exam and has participated in this process for four years.

## Textbooks:

Title	Authors	Publisher	Year	Edition
<b>Primary Text:</b> <i>The Language of Composition</i>	Renee H. Shea, Lawrence Scanlon, Robin Dissin Aufses	Bedford/St. Martins	2007	

<b>Others:</b>				
<i>The Bedford Reader</i>	X. J. Kennedy, Dorothy Kennedy, Jane Aaron	Bedford/St. Martins	2006	9 <sup>th</sup>
<i>Everything's an Argument</i>	Andrea Lunsford, John Ruskiewicz, Keith Walters	Bedford/St. Martins	2004	3 <sup>rd</sup>
<i>50 Essays: A Portable Anthology</i>	Samuel Cohen	Bedford/St. Martins	2004	1 <sup>st</sup>
<i>The Bedford Handbook</i>	Diana Hacker	Bedford/St. Martins	2005	6 <sup>th</sup>

**Books:**

*The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* by Rebecca Skloot  
*In Cold Blood* by Truman Capote  
*Ghost Soldiers: The Forgotten Epic Story of World War II's Most Dramatic Mission* by Hampton Sides  
*Fast Food Nation: The Dark Side of the All-American Meal* by Eric Schlosser  
*And miscellaneous nonfiction books*

**AP Audit Summary:**

This summary serves as an abbreviated description of the lengthy syllabus that appears later in this document. It is intended to be a comprehensive overview and generalization of the AP Language & Composition course with sample activities. All of the examples follow the requirements as stated by AP and district curricula.

<b>Readings</b>	The course relies on nonfiction selections about 90% of the time. Fictional selections are from American authors and used to instruct students on the principles of American Literary Canon. The course is not divided up according to themes but, instead, guided by the chronological history of American literature. These selections are studied for their literary, historical, and rhetorical value. When applicable, themes are discussed as they are addressed during different eras. All works are studied as an argument according to their audience, purpose, and speaker. Works are supplemented by AP Language prompts and articles.
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<b>Writing</b>	<p>Students are required write in observation journals three-four times to provide writing practice and critical thinking. The writing process is taught as a recursive process through instruction and illustration. Students will create outlines and drafting, revising, editing, and publishing follow the process. Peer assessment will be completed about three times a quarter, and self-assessment occurs for every major writing assignment when each student examines his or her writing folder to reflect on work.</p> <p>Students will write expository essays on argumentative issues in addition to a personal narrative. (See details in the document.) Annotations are required for AP prompt essays. Major essays (timed writings, especially) follow every unit, with MLA requirements, to practice the ability to synthesize information and ideas. Out –of-class essays include a personal narrative and several research-based essays.</p> <p>The teacher will provide feedback on all written essays. Feedback will always focus on good writing habits, but an essay may focus on one aspect (organization, tone, etc.) more than another at times. For one essay, we may focus more on “writing thesis statements with introductions” more than writing transitions, etc. Students will often write a second draft after I’ve made my comments on the first draft. The teacher keeps a personal journal noting students’ strengths and weaknesses. Students keep the same information in their own writing folders. This information is used during peer editing activities. I provide feedback on all areas of writing for essays, and students revise and resubmit work frequently. My feedback focuses on vocabulary, syntax, organization, tone, voice, emphasis, and generalized/specific details.</p> <p>The teacher uses AP scoring guidelines for all major assignments and they are scored holistically according to AP’s guidelines. Students are taught the rubric and eventually score each other’s work using the same document. The teacher provides sample AP Lang prompts and student essays to teach the AP Lang scoring guide early in the year. This is a constant activity throughout the year.</p>
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<p><b>Teacher Assessment</b></p>	<p>At the beginning of the school year, students are taught the importance of incorporating sophisticated diction and syntax in order to develop “voice.” Students are taught organization techniques to increase coherence. The teacher models good writing skills throughout the year by showing multiple examples of effective essays. For example, activities will involve practices for students to explore different methods to organized ideas in their own writing. (See the Comparison/Contrast unit (Unit VI) for specific examples.) We use essays in <i>The Bedford Reader</i> to discuss transitions, repetition, and emphasis. A good example of this would be Martin Luther King’s “I Have a Dream” speech. Details about this unit are included in this document under XVII, B. This essay is a great example of transitions, repetition, and emphasis. After analyzing King’s technique, students will write an essay on the topic “Intellectual Property: Who Owns King’s Words.” In their essays they must highlight (with a highlighter) transitions (as they do in several essays). They must select a key word or phrase to use for emphasis. Their choices must support their purpose and audience.</p>
<p><b>Style</b></p>	<p>Style is a focus of the written assignments with units on various stylistic choices, like syntax and diction. Short exercises serve as drills to practice taught skills and essays serve as an assessment for those skills.</p>
<p><b>Argumentation</b></p>	<p>While “everything is argument, it is in the winter that the course turns toward argumentation and rhetorical analysis. Current events and issues are brought into the class for discussion throughout the year as they tie into the text we are reading, and we often use Socratic seminars. Students are required to take sides, often assigned, and complete research that will be used during class debates. Apart from the use of the textbooks (listed above), clips from periodicals and news’ websites are used. There are usually two major argumentative units for the entire class to address. For example, one year the unit was on eminent domain to focus on a local situation. Two representatives from both sides (a city alderman and a developer) were recruited for lectures. The legalities of the situation were researched, etc. The end result (an essay) demonstrated students’ comprehension and analysis of a serious local situation. Every year there are units based on current and/or local issues.</p>
<p><b>Visual Elements</b></p>	<p>Political cartoons and pictures supplement some units. For example, during an analysis of emotional appeals (<i>Everything’s an Argument</i>) several emotionally intensive ads, pictures, and video feeds are used to illustrate the elements of emotional appeals. When studying this unit, for example, TV ads from PETA’s website are used in addition to the powerful ads in <i>Everything’s an Argument</i> to demonstrate emotional appeals.</p>

**Assessment:**

For writing assignments, students are assessed and assisted throughout the process (as mentioned above) by peers and the instructor. Detailed written feedback (by the teacher) is always given on essays. In-class essays are more frequent than out-

of-class assignments, and both are required frequently, about every three weeks. Essays are 25% of their grade at the beginning of the year. Essays are a larger percentage later as students hone and perfect skills as required for the AP exam. Smaller writing assignments are frequent in addition to the daily journals. During the writing process, all parts of the process are assessed by the teacher. Students must provide prewriting has been done before starting a writing assignment. Some are assessed on completion but other practices are often given so that the teacher has the opportunity to assess comprehension and analysis of specific works. Before the end of a final essay, a student will have prewriting and at least two rough drafts before the final draft is submitted. All will be assessed in an informal or formal manner by the teacher to guide the students through the writing process.

Homework includes reading assignments, often assessed with unannounced quizzes. Homework typically makes up 25-30% of the students' grades. Vocabulary tests can weigh as much as 10-15%. Other grades come in the form of projects and in-class assignments. All of this depends on the units, how many essays are assigned, homework assignments, etc.

### **AP Prompts:**

- A. The teacher will show the students multiple prompts and student responses. The class will discuss all aspects of the essays including the organization of ideas and technique, transitions, emphasis (if important), repetition (if evident), and cohesion.
- B. Short & long writing activities on those prompts in the form of outlines and written paragraphs (often the introduction with a thesis and a list of main points that are briefly delineated in a rough outline). I call these assignments "Brain Gyms" and they are basically outlines of an essay that we don't have time to write. They are designed to encourage metacognition. The quantity of these activities will be determined based on time constraints. The teacher **always** provides feedback to the students regarding the organization of the outline, the thesis (arguable?), and the supporting details. The teacher will assess other skills if applicable to the given prompt.
- C. Vocabulary: More Tone & Attitude Words (and a review of past words)
- D. Multiple Choice Practices (short and long) with an analysis of the different types of questions that AP exams often have. Group discussions about these different types of questions.

### **The Course Syllabus:**

- I. Reviewing the Requirements for AP Language & Composition
  - A. Identify the differences between AP Language and AP Literature through research of the course descriptions on the AP Central website. This essay assesses the comprehension of the differences between the courses.
- II. Summer Reading assignment – Students were assigned to select and read a nonfiction work detailing events from 1700-1900 in United States' history. (This book had to be approved by the teacher.)

- A. Students will turn in an essay on the book they read over the summer.
- B. Students will deliver a formal presentation on the book and its contents.
- C. Students use the teacher's feedback (from the assessment mentioned above) to analyze and write about their own writing habits.
- D. With this book as a tool, students will begin discussing audience and purpose.
- E. Analyze the differences between fiction and nonfiction. (Supplemental works of fiction provided)
- F. Essay: The lessons will be on how to formulate an arguable thesis without personal pronouns. Other discussions will revolve around writing basics, such as eliminating "to be" verbs, etc.

### III. Colonial Literature

- A. Native American Literature - Origin Myths – Why are myths and folktales told?
- B. Early narratives by Wm. Bradford, Olaudah Equiano, and Mary Rowlandson to discuss audience and purpose.
- C. Discuss narrative writing as a form of argumentation. (Bradford wanted to inform his audience about the events. Equiano wanted to convince his audience that slavery was unjust, etc.)

IV. Graduation Project Research Paper (Johnston County School district requires students to write and successfully complete a senior project over the period of two years. The first part of this project is a research paper that is written during the junior year. Students follow the research paper with a related project that is completed during their senior year. The paper and the project are presented to a committee of teachers and community members for assessment. In addition to earning the required credits, students must pass this Graduation Project in order to graduate with a diploma. Since the students spend so much time working with this topic (two years), teachers start discussing the project immediately and working on the research portion of the assignment in August. For AP Lang, this assignment is treated as a sophisticated synthesis essay on a topic of the students' choice.) While listed together, this unit and its objectives continue throughout the entire course until the research paper is "passed" by the Graduation Project Committee.

- A. Understand the essential question and formulating a thesis
- B. Research Skills – Finding reliable sources, evaluating websites, recognizing bias, etc.
- C. Complete a bibliography of sources to start the writing process
- D. Learn note taking skills
- E. Practice outlining
- F. Prewrite
- G. Write a draft and revise (and revise!) with MLA (with teacher supervision)
- H. Edit
- I. Peer Edit
- J. (Peer Editing also completed by Graduation Project Advisor, an adult)
- K. Write a final draft for submission and approval – If the paper does not pass all of the requirements, the student has to revise the paper until it meets all of the objectives

## V. Age of Reason

- A. Read to appreciate Benjamin Franklin's attempts to achieve personal perfection from his autobiography
- B. Develop personal goals for a self-improvement activity (for personal narrative, see VI)
- C. Vocabulary: SAT Words
- D. Write a personal narrative exploring the purpose in self-improvement and reflection. Discuss the successes (and failures) of these attempts
- E. Writing Lesson – Writing a personal narrative
- F. Read, analyze, and discuss the 2011 Question 3 prompt on Thomas Paine
- G. Learn more about AP's writing requirements by studying sample prompts and scores
- H. Introduce the scoring guideline and evaluate select essays from the 2011 exam

## VI. Personal Narrative

- A. Writing Process: Students will discuss Franklin's autobiography to consider the importance of self-assessment and improvement. Students will pre-write (in a journal) about this. Students will write an in-class essay on the topic. Peers will edit the second draft. Revision (with teacher feedback) will follow **before** the final draft is due. The teacher will grade the final draft and provide additional feedback.

## VII. Romanticism

- A. Read and discuss works from this era, including Emerson, Thoreau, Poe, Hawthorne, Dickinson, and Whitman
- B. Determine characteristics and elements of Transcendentalism and Anti-Transcendentalism
- C. Compare and contrast the works and how they fit in this era
- D. Essay: Compare/Contrast elements of Romanticism and two major works. Students must incorporate quotes from the works they select and use MLA documentation. Students will synthesize information to produce this essay. Students will provide this product after rewriting, drafting, editing, revising and publishing. Teacher will monitor the students' work throughout this process and provide feedback.
- E. Vocabulary: SAT words
- F. Essay will be assessed using the 9-point scoring guideline. Students will be encouraged to revise the essay to get a higher grade (if necessary).

## VIII. Twentieth-Century Texts

- A. Read and discuss works from this era, including the writers of the Harlem Renaissance.
- B. Analyze key works for characteristics of Modernism and Post-Modernism.
- C. Read and discuss Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*. Define the American Dream according to Miller's perspective. Compare and contrast to Walt Whitman's dream. Discuss other American "dreams," including the Dream Act.

- D. Essay: What is the American dream and how has it changed since the foundation of this country? Students will synthesize information from various works to produce this essay. Students will provide this product after rewriting, drafting, editing, revising and publishing. Teacher will monitor the students' work throughout this process and provide feedback.
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#### IX. Unit: *In Cold Blood*

- A. Determine author's craft & purpose by discussing "The Raven" first and then looking at Poe's "The Philosophy of Composition" to determine Poe's purposeful selection of diction, syntax, symbols, etc. Students will be directed to analyze Poe's use of repetition and emphasis and his purpose for each. This will be the students' first examination of author's purpose and intent. The study of purpose and intent will continue the entire year. Students will have to write a short paragraph about an imaginary cat in the poem and the students must use emphasis and repetition mimicking Poe's style. The teacher will read and provide feedback on his or her success. We will share the best ones. Decide the author's purpose, style, attitude, tone, intention, and organization throughout the reading process. Discuss these concepts over the course of three weeks.
- B. Evaluate the author's credibility throughout the reading process and demonstrate analysis through three paragraphs, each completed after Parts I, III, and IV.
- A. Contrast the fiction and nonfiction in this "nonfiction fiction" book
- B. Analyze and discuss style, purpose, etc.
- C. A look at tone and how it's created by emphasis and repetition by Capote. The author frequently comments on Perry Smith's innocence as a way to "endear" the reader to this killer. The teacher will select one portion of the book (probably in Part III) to look for this emphasis and repetition.
- D. Video clips of Capote (2005) to contrast written and visual characteristics
- E. Essay: An in-class timed essay in which students evaluate and write about Capote's credibility as illustrated in *ICB*. Students can incorporate quotes from the text, but this is not a requirement. There must be a mix of concrete details (specific, illustrative detail) and commentary (generalized details) in their essays. The teacher will look for this and provide feedback to the students regarding their success at "weaving" the two together effectively. The organization of ideas must be effective, coherent, and purposeful.

#### X. Comparison/Contrast Essays

- A. Analyze and examine these comparison/contrast essays with group discussions. The focus is on the organization methods of each author and his/her purpose in opting for that organization. With one essay ("Grant and Lee") students will highlight the sentences that provide transitions between paragraphs and/or ideas. This will help them when they go to write their own essays later.
- a. "Neat People vs. Sloppy People"
- b. "Batting Clean-Up and Striking Out"

- c. "Grant and Lee: A Study in Contrasts"
- B. Analyze and annotate two AP prompts that are C/C essays. Write introductory paragraphs for the:
  - a. "Okefenokee Swamp" prompt
  - b. Fisher & Angelou prompt
- C. Vocabulary: Words from the selected essays
  - A. Writing Skills: Write a comparison/contrast in-class essay on an AP prompt (Austen & Dickens "marriage" prompt)
    - a. Teacher feedback will focus on the organization of the comparison/contrast essay that they will write. The teacher will teach them about point-by-point and subject-by-subject options, and students will select one and tailor it to their own purposes when answering this prompt. The teacher will assess transitions and make comments for the student regarding his or her success.
    - b. Self-assessment – The student will read my comments and determine if the organization method is appropriate
    - c. The students must re-write, revise and edit before submitting a final draft. The teacher will provide feedback on that draft.

## XI. Cause and Effect Essays

- A. Socratic Seminars on these essays to generate discussion and provoke analysis:
  - a. "Safe-Sex Lies"
  - b. "Drugs" by Vidal
  - c. "The Case for Slavery" by Rosenthal
- B. Writing activity (a persuasive paragraph on a cause-effect essay – think/pair/share).
- C. Essay: Students will write an essay to prepare for a c/e prompt after reviewing past AP essays. The students must communicate their ideas clearly and will be scored according to the AP Scoring Guideline. The teacher will provide feedback and allow re-writes.

## XII. Definition Essays

- A. Students will be directed to note words/phrases that are used for emphasis and repetition. Students will read and assess several definition essays including:
  - a. "The Meanings of a Word" (A great essay for teaching transitions since the author, Gloria Naylor, links multiple definitions for the word "nigger" in her essay. Her emphasis when describing how a person will change his or her vocal tones when saying the words or phrases is purposeful and effective.)
  - b. "Being a Chink"
- B. How To: The method, process and purpose of the definition essay. The multiple ways to organize a definition essay and how to provide effective transitions. Also, there will be a discussion regarding "tone" and how it's created.

- C. Vocabulary: Words from the selected essays
- D. Writing Skills: Write an outline of a mock definition essay on an assigned concept or abstract idea. Teacher and peer feedback in a class discussion will focus on “how will you organize your ideas” and “what tone would be the most effective.”

XIII. Unit: Who Owns What? Read and discuss Rebecca Skloot’s *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*

- A. Body parts – Debate and minor writing assignments to make sure that students understand and think about the topic. These will be graded for content.
  - a. “Two Advertisements Soliciting Egg Donors”
  - b. “Should Physician-Assisted Suicide be Legalized?”
- B. Words – Students will write an essay on this topic in which they argue who owns King’s words. This will be a complete essay that I will grade and then return with feedback for a final draft. The emphasis on this unit will on good transitions, organization and the use of repetition for the purpose of communicating effectively through words.
  - a. Arguing the Ownership of Martin Luther King’s words after reading two essays on the topic and doing some research. There are two essays in the textbook.
  - b. “Intellectual Property in April 2000”
- C. The teacher will grade the rough draft and provide comments on students’ work. An emphasis will be on transitions, repetition, and emphasis. Students must highlight transitions on the first draft. Students must use repetition in their essays in an effective manner. Students must use emphasis of a key word or phrase for a specific purpose. Teacher feedback will be provided and then students will have to turn in a final draft.

XIV. *Fast Food Nation*

Students will learn the types of arguments, occasions, purposes through assigned readings in the textbook and miscellaneous writing assignments (as proposed by the textbook at the end of each chapter).

- A. Learn about the appeals (emotional, ethical, rational) and study examples from periodicals, news feeds, etc. The focus for 2011/2012 will be on political ads from the November election. (TV and print ads will direct and enable the discussions to occur.)
- B. Study claims, support, and warrants (Students will write examples.)
- C. Compare inductive and deductive thinking
- D. Examine logical fallacies, the language of argument, classic arguments, and classic persuasive essays. Students in groups of 2-3 will be assigned a logical fallacy and have to present a skit that demonstrates the fallacy.
- E. Describe the Toulmin argument
- F. Discuss the organization of an effective argument. Analyze different essays and discuss the organization for each. The teacher will show students how different authors organize ideas using transitions.

- G. Evaluate audience & evidence & credibility; the steps to guarantee all of these
- H. Complete a rhetorical analysis of several essays that offer an examination of a different appeal. For example, students will answer questions that demonstrate their ability to complete a rhetorical analysis of “Stripped of More Than My Clothes” (MonDesire) and the argument’s focus on emotional appeals.
- I. Synthesize and write two or more essays with multiple sources on teacher-chosen topics that will vary according to current events and news items. The students will bring in the multiple articles for these topics. The students will organize and write coherent arguments that intertwine specific details and generalized details. Transitions must be evident for good organization. The teacher will grade and comment on the student’s successful organization while providing advice on how to improve transitions and organization. Students will select one essay to revise and resubmit for another grade.
- J. Vocabulary: Argumentative terms
- K. Writing: Students will analyze *Fast Food Nation* for fallacies in the argument.

XV. Unit: *Ghost Soldiers: The Forgotten Epic Story of WWII’s Most Dramatic Mission: A Close Analysis of Style, Purpose, Content*

- A. Decide the author’s purpose, style, attitude, intention, and organization throughout the reading process. Discuss these concepts over the course of three weeks.
  - A. Compare to *In Cold Blood* in regards to style, purpose, etc. Discuss the characteristics of this nonfiction work and Capote’s definition of nonfiction fiction.
  - B. Essay: An in-class timed essay in which students evaluate and write about a topic as it relates to the book. (To be determined.) Students can incorporate quotes from the text but this is not a requirement. Review elements of style as taught throughout the year (syntax, diction, etc.) Students will go through the writing process and receive teacher feedback throughout.

XVI. Nonfiction Book – Student Choice

- A. Evaluate the book (purpose, intent, success, etc.)
- B. Compare and contrast to other nonfiction works that have been studied in class.
- C. Research into the subject matter and write about the facts.
- D. A thorough rhetorical analysis of the author’s key argument. (Major Assignment)
- E. Vocabulary: ACT words
- F. Writing Skills: Write an argumentative essay on a selected topic related to the book. Students will have to bring in their own articles that must be cited within the essay using MLA citations. This in-class essay will take the entire hour to provide students will additional time to adequately use the additional sources.

XVII. The Research Paper: A Look and Analysis of Historical Fiction

- A. Students will submit a proposal to the teacher who will determine the selection's value (which will be subjective).
- B. Practice the "synthesis" question by thoroughly researching the history and comparing it to the fictional account. Students must produce external sources to support a chosen thesis (claim).
- C. Perform good researching skills and how to evaluate reliable sources since this assignment will vary from previous research and the topic lends itself to source analysis. Learn how to take notes, manage data, etc.
- D. Complete and demonstrate the writing process as it relates to a research paper.
- E. Students must mix their own ideas with cited information to support their arguable thesis.
- F. Polish writing skills as taught throughout the year by producing a 5-8 page essay with MLA documentation.

**A three-hour practice exam is offered and encouraged in April so the students can prepare for the lengthy exam in May. Students may attend more than one practice.**

**XVIII. Book to Movie Comparison (after the AP exam in May)**

- A. Read a worthwhile book which has been adapted for the screen
- B. Compare/contrast media with examination of effectiveness
- C. Present and **argue** for preference in groups of 3-5 with multiple sources and visual aids (including a movie clip)