

## Advanced English Literature & Composition Course Syllabus

### Course Description

This online course is designed to teach learners to become skilled readers and writers through the study, analysis, and evaluation of literature. The course will teach learners how to perform close readings of literature, as well as develop and strengthen their writing skills. Advanced English Literature & Composition follows the curricular requirements described in the AP English Course Description.

Each unit of the course will address some aspect of writing and will provide representative samples of literary works. In some units, the learner will engage in greater in-depth analysis of a literary work, as the focus of the Advanced English Literature & Composition course is to provide both breadth and depth of coverage in the readings. Learners will deepen their understanding of the ways authors use language to bring meaning and entertainment to their readers. Learners will also consider the structure of a work as well as its themes and literary devices. Readings in this course will be active and extensive.

The types of writing in the course are varied and include writing arguments, analysis, interpretations, evaluations, and even college application essays/letters. Writing is an essential part of this course, and the writing instruction will include elements of style as well as elements of precision and correctness. The writing students do in this course will reinforce and support the learner's reading.

### Course Goals

#### Essential Questions for the Course

What is literature? How does literature impact our lives? How can literature express universal themes?

By the end of this course, you will be able to do the following:

- In-depth study of representative works from a variety of genres and periods.
- Readings accompanied by thoughtful analysis and writing.
- Experience, evaluation, and interpretation of literature.
- Writing assignments that are focused on the critical analysis of literature, as well as on some creative writing.

## General Skills

To participate in this course, you should be able to do the following:

- Complete basic operations with word processing software, such as Microsoft Word or Google Docs.
- Perform online research using various search engines and library databases.
- Communicate through email and participate in discussion boards.

*For a complete list of general skills that are required for participation in online courses, refer to the Prerequisites section of the Student Orientation, found at the beginning of this course.*

## Credit Value

Advanced English Literature and Composition is a 1.0-credit course. It includes semesters A and B.

## Course Materials

- Notebook
- Computer with internet connection and speakers or headphones
- Microsoft Word or equivalent
- Some course readings may require a visit to the school library or public library

## Teaching Strategies

### Structure

This online course is organized into units and lessons. Each lesson incorporates multiple learning activities designed to develop, apply, and assess specific learning objectives. (See *Course Outline*, below.)

### Concept Development Activities

In order to generate skills for lifelong learning and to employ the most appropriate learning approach for each topic, twenty-five percent of the lessons will use student-driven, constructivist approaches for concept development. The remaining lessons will employ direct instruction approaches. In either case, students will take full advantage of the online learning environment, linking to rich online, multimedia, and interactive resources. Developing critical of 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills is an important secondary goal of this course.

### Application

Practice and creative application will be an integrated part of the lessons, with frequent

writing activities, either student self-checked or teacher graded. Students will submit written work online for review, comment, and grading.

### Discussions

For each unit, students will be asked to post their opinions and thoughts on a work of literature or a literary issue. Discussion topics provide the chance to dig deeper into the reading selections.

<b>Online Discussion Rubric</b>				
	D/F 0-69 Below Expectations	C 70-79 Basic	B 80-89 Proficient	A 90-100 Outstanding
<b>Relevance of Response</b>	Responses do not relate to the discussion topic or responses are inappropriate or irrelevant	Some responses are not on topic or are too brief or low level; responses may be of little value (e.g., yes or no answers)	Responses are typically related to the topic and initiate further discussion	Responses are consistently on topic and bring insight into the discussion, which initiates additional responses
<b>Content of Response</b>	Does not present ideas in a coherent or logical manner; has many grammar or spelling errors	Unclear presentation of ideas with little evidence to back them up; errors in grammar or spelling	Ideas are presented coherently, although there is some lack of connection to the topic; few errors in grammar or spelling	Ideas are expressed clearly, with an obvious connection to the topic; rare instances of grammar or spelling errors
<b>Participation</b>	Does not make any effort to participate in the discussion	Participates in some discussions but not on a regular basis	Participates in most discussions on a regular basis but may require some prompting to post	Consistently participates in discussions on a regular basis

### Writing Assignments

Writing as a process is the emphasis in this course. Writing assignments will include short critical essays, explications of poetry, and interpretations of poetry, fiction and drama, timed writings, and formal essays.

1. Informal writing – Students will be asked to write responses to readings and other informal writing assignments on a weekly basis.
2. Timed essays – Every unit will include at least 1 timed essay chosen from the informal writing assignments or graded writing assignments in each unit.

3. Formal essays – A minimum of one formal essay per unit will be required (10 units for the course). These essays are based on AP questions and will be evaluated based on an AP-style rubric. Students will submit drafts of formal essays to the instructor before submitting for a final grade.
4. Grammar and usage – For this course, you should already have a solid understanding of Standard English usage. However, there will be lessons dealing with a variety of grammar and usage issues, common mistakes in writing, unity, coherence, sentence structure, and effective use of transitions. Students will be expected to apply these grammar lessons in their writing.

## Student Evaluation

Multiple evaluation tools will be used to assess understanding at all appropriate cognitive levels and to reflect AP assessment methodology:

- **Lesson-Level Mastery Tests:** Each lesson will be accompanied by an AP-style multiple-choice mastery test to assess mastery of the basic lesson concepts.
- **Self-Assessment Lesson Activities:** Especially useful in constructivist-leaning lessons, self-assessment activities will provide sample responses against which learners can assess their own learning.
- **Teacher-Graded Essays:** These lesson activities will require teacher assessment, employing AP-style objective rubrics. Students will be provided with the rubrics for each assignment.
  - Essays will be examined for effective organization, well-formed and supported arguments (including clear, detailed evidence from texts – quotes, lines from the work), connection of ideas throughout the argument, solid thesis statements, topic sentences, sentence variety, and effective transitions. Essays will also be examined for writing style – tone, diction, sentence structure, choice of examples.
  - Students will have the opportunity to submit essays for teacher review as part of the revision process prior to final grading.
- **Unit-Level Posttests:** Each unit will have a multiple-choice assessment to confirm that all the material within the unit has been retained and can be applied in a larger context than a single-lesson format.
- **Unit-Level Essays:** Learners are required to apply their knowledge of the concepts that cut across the lessons within a unit. All units will include a formal essay and will be graded using an AP-style rubric
- **End-of-Semester Tests:** At the end of each of the two semesters, learners will take a multiple-choice test to assess mastery of lesson concepts and provide additional practice for a long-form exam like the AP exam.

# Course Outline

- **Units**

This course will be structured in two 18-week semesters with the following units:

## Semester A

Unit 1 – Writing Academic Arguments about Literature

Unit 2 – Reading and Writing about Essays

Unit 3 – Reading and Writing about Poetry

Unit 4 – Close Analysis of Poetic Form and Content

Unit 5 – Writing an Extended Interpretation of a Poem

## Semester B

Unit 1 – Writing Academic Arguments about Literature

Unit 2 – Close Analysis and Interpretation of Short Fiction

Unit 3 – Close Analysis and Interpretation of the Novel

Unit 4 – Reading and Writing about Plays

Unit 5 – Writing a Research-Based Literary Interpretation

- **Required Readings**

The course features a study of representative works in both British and American Literature, including works from many genres and centuries. See a [complete list](#) of the works you will read throughout the course. Some readings are not provided. Those readings are clearly marked on the reading list to help you plan ahead. Below is a sample of some of the required readings.

### **Fiction (Novel and Short Story)**

*The Yellow Wallpaper* by Charlotte Perkins Gilman

*The Ambitious Guest* by Nathaniel Hawthorne

*The Sound and the Fury* by William Faulkner

*Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley

### **Expository Prose**

*Rhetoric* by Aristotle

*I Have a Dream* by Martin Luther King Jr.

*Letter from Birmingham Jail* by Martin Luther King Jr.

*Atlanta Compromise Speech* by Booker T. Washington

### **Poetry (representative poets)**

W.H. Auden, William Blake, Elizabeth Bishop, Gwendolyn Brooks, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Emily Dickinson, John Donne, Robert Frost, Robert Hayden, A.E.

Housman, Langston Hughes, Randall Jarrell, Amy Lowell, Andrew Marvell, Wilfred Owen, Marge Piercy, Sylvia Plath, Ezra Pound, Theodore Roethke, William Shakespeare, Dylan Thomas, Walt Whitman

## Drama

*The Importance of Being Earnest*, Oscar Wilde

*The Tragedy of Hamlet*, William Shakespeare

## • Schedule, Topics, and Objectives

# Advanced English Literature & Composition - Semester A

## Unit 1 – Writing Academic Arguments about Literature (4 Weeks, 8 Lessons)

**Unit 1 Discussion:** At what point do children’s stories or poems become literature? Choose examples and discuss what makes them literary while still being comprehensible to young readers. Or why does their comprehensibility mean they are light on or lacking literariness? Are some aspects of "literariness" too hard for children to comprehend? Does this vary if the child is being read to?

**Arguments in Literature** - Describe the relationship between arguments and writing about literature

- Define argument
- Define genre
- Recognize the differences in literary genres
- Informal Writing Assignments
  - What is your definition of literature?
  - Think about the fairy tale you read in the lesson. What central claim is the fairy tale making? What evidence does the text offer to back this up?

**The Experience of Reading** – Describe the role of a “reader as writer” and the experience of reading

- Define voice
- Explain the relationship between reading and writing about literature
- Describe the purpose of a reading response paper or journal entry
- Exemplify 1-2 effective reading response papers or journal entries
- Write a response paper after reading a representative essay

**Analyzing Literature** - Identify common types of academic arguments: close reading: explication; close reading: analysis

- Recognize the purpose of close reading/explication and identify an example
- Identify aspects of an effective explication
- Recognize the purpose of an analysis and identify an example
- Identify aspects of an effective analysis
- Informal Writing Assignments
  - Close read the poem “I, Too, Sing America” and explicate it with special emphasis on the opening and closing lines of the poem.

- Read Liam O'Flaherty's "The Sniper" and explicate the text.
- Graded Writing Assignments
  - Analyze the use of imagery in the poem "Hope is the thing with feathers." You can use the Internet for research. Support your analysis with at least two examples from the poem.
  - Read the short story "The Gift of the Magi" by O. Henry and explore the Internet to help you write an essay analyzing the two characters in the story. Are the characters unique individuals or stereotypes? Support your analysis with evidence from the text.

**Evaluating Literature** - Identify common types of academic arguments: evaluation, interpretive argument

- Recognize the purpose of evaluation and identify an example
- Identify aspects of an effective evaluation
- Recognize the purpose of interpretative argument and identify an example
- Identify aspects of an effective interpretive argument
- Informal Writing Assignments
  - Translate Carl Sandburg's poem "Grass" into your own words.
  - Write an interpretation of e.e. cummings' poem "anyone lived in a pretty how town."

**Thesis Statements** - Recognize and describe the role of the thesis statement in an academic argument

- Define thesis
- Identify the thesis statement in 2-3 essays
- Recognize the impact of an unclear thesis statement in sample student writings

**Developing and Strengthening Your Paragraphs** - Recognize elements of an effective paragraph

- Define unity
- Describe paragraph coherence
- Define topic/comments
- Define logical bridges
- Describe adequate development (claim/support)
- Identify types of claims (interpretive and evaluative)
- Analyze several paragraphs to determine their overall effectiveness
- Explain how to improve ineffective paragraphs
- Recognize the role of evidence in supporting an argument
- Informal Writing Assignments
  - Analyze the given paragraph, and write, in the table below, your comments pertaining to its problems with the following elements, and also include your suggestions for finding solutions to these problems.
    - unity and coherence
    - transitions to link sentences to one another
    - topic sentence
    - supportive evidence



**Common Mistakes in Writing** - Identify and explain common sentence structure mistakes in college-level writing

- Recognize fused sentences
- Recognize comma splices
- Recognize run-on sentences
- Recognize "ambiguous this"
- Explain how to correct common sentence structure mistakes

**Effective Revision Techniques** - Describe effective revision techniques

- Identify sentence structure errors or paragraph problems
- Identify effective revision techniques (e.g., the "how so?" and "so what?" check) in preparation for the unit writing assignment

**Unit Writing Assignment**

- Formal, argumentative essay - on why a text should or should not be considered literary and what genre it should belong to.
- Decide how you are defining literature.
  - What elements of a text support calling it literary?
  - What standards will you use as you look at the text's use of those elements to decide if the text qualifies?
  - Does multiplicity of meaning and argument determine if it's literature? How would you quantify this with your text?
  - Does the tradition of what gets called literature play a role in your choice, and how?
- Evaluation - This analysis takes a clear stance on whether the work discussed is or is not literature and supports that stance with a well-articulated discussion of diverse literary qualities. It displays a strong sense of what constitutes a genre to support the claim that this work belongs to the designated genre. Its claims are arguable and not absolute. The paragraphs are well formed and support the principal argument. The writing is strong, clear, detailed, and within the specified word limit.

## Unit 2 – The Experience of Reading (2 Weeks, 5 Lessons)

**Unit 2 Discussion:** Pretend you have a friend who has lost interest in high school and may not graduate this year. She thinks that she will be able to support herself by working at a local restaurant as a waitress. She says that she'll eventually get her GED, but it's not important to her right now. How would you persuade her to stay in school and graduate? Incorporate Aristotle's three means of persuasion ethos, logos, and pathos into your argument.

**Actively Reading Essays** - Describe active reading techniques

- Describe types of essays (e.g., reflective, persuasive, expository, narrative)

- Identify active reading techniques (e.g., highlighting/underlining, side margin notes, summarizing, paraphrasing, asking questions)
- Evaluate the effectiveness of active reading techniques when applied to reading a representative essay
- Informal Writing Assignment
  - Read the sample essay provided. Use the chart below to practice your active reading strategies for reading the essay.

**Writing Critical Annotations of Essays** - Describe how to write a critical annotation of an essay

- Describe the purpose of a critical annotation
- Examine several effective critical annotations
- Write a critical annotation of a representative essay
- Informal Writing Assignment
  - Write a critical annotation of a sample essay.

**Rhetorical Elements in Persuasive Essays** - Identify and explain key rhetorical elements in persuasive essays

- Define ethos, pathos, and logos
- Identify and analyze ethos in persuasive writing
- Identify and analyze pathos in persuasive writing
- Identify and analyze logos in persuasive writing
- Define Aristotle's common topics
- Analyze the use of common topics to advance an argument
- Analyze representative persuasive essays on the same topic
- Informal Writing Assignments
  - Analyze "Letter from Birmingham Jail" and write about how King uses ethos in his letter.
- Graded Writing Assignments
  - Find a copy of Michael Moore's *Sicko* or the 2006 documentary *Border War: The Battle over Illegal Immigration* to watch. Write an essay, providing two examples each on how ethos, pathos, and logos have been used in the documentary you watch.
  - Now think about how you would use Aristotle's ethos, pathos, and logos, as well as the topics of invention, in your own persuasive essay. Write an essay on one of these topics: whether you think vegetarianism is a healthy life choice or whether you think recycling can help our planet. Use the common topics as strategies to support your argument. Highlight in yellow where you have used common topics. Remember that good persuasive essays balance pathos, ethos, and logos.

**Evaluating Persuasive Essays** - Recognize elements of an effective evaluation of a persuasive essay

- Review the purpose of evaluating persuasive essays
- Define lines of argument
- Define logical fallacy
- Examine an effective evaluative essay

- Write an evaluation of a persuasive essay
- Informal Writing Assignment
  - Read the essay “Do Not Use Animals for Experimentals!”; identify the lines of argument as well as the rhetorical elements. Then, write about how each line of argument and rhetorical element added to the persuasive appeal.
- Graded Writing Assignment
  - Evaluate the student essay, “Game On The Newest Way to Socialize,” and write on how it is an effective persuasive essay.

**Rhetoric and College Entrance Essays** - Recognize how to apply basic principles of rhetoric in a college entrance personal essay

- Recognize how to write an effective college entrance essay
- Apply effective elements of argument in a draft of a college entrance essay
- Identify the use of basic elements of argument in the draft
- Weigh ways to revise the draft of the college entrance essay to improve it
- Informal Writing Assignments
  - After reading a sample essay, describe how the writer has organized the essay’s introduction, body, and conclusion.
  - Analyze the essay given [here](#) for use of ethos, pathos, and logos. Describe how the writer has used these forms of rhetoric.
  - Read the essay “[While the World Sleeps](#)” and identify several premises, a conclusion, and an inference.
  - Use any of the prewriting strategies to write about one of the following topics:
    - If you had a chance to meet someone from history, who would you choose to meet and why?
    - If you were to name your favorite movie, book, or TV series, which one would you choose and why?

**Unit Writing Assignment**

- Formal, persuasive essay - What issues do you feel passionate about? Maybe it’s the environment or education, or maybe you have strong opinions on an issue in your community, such as the need for a community center. Through persuasive writing, you can communicate your thoughts and opinions to an audience. If you read important historical documents such as Martin Luther King’s “I Have a Dream” speech or the “Declaration of Sentiments” from Elizabeth Cady Stanton, you will find the writers used elements of rhetoric that helped present their views in a strong and effective way. These elements include Aristotle’s means of persuasion: ethos, pathos, and logos. They also include Aristotle’s strategies of argumentation called topics of invention and lines of argument. Whether you are writing a speech, an editorial for the newspaper, or an essay, you can use these elements to build your argument and persuade your audience. In this activity, you will explore how to use the elements of rhetoric in a

persuasive essay arguing why the school board should include a book in the library that has been removed previously.

- Evaluation - This persuasive essay includes a strong central thesis statement that leads to the development of arguable claims. The paragraphs include several elements of rhetoric that support the central thesis. There is a definite conclusion statement that ties into the central thesis.

## Unit 3 – Reading and Writing about Poetry (4 Weeks, 9 Lessons)

**Unit 3 Discussion:** How can William Carlos Williams' poem, "This Is Just to Say," and William Shakespeare's Sonnet 18, "Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?" belong to the same broad genre called poetry?

**Poetic Structure and Meaning** - Describe internal and external poetic structure

- Define stanza
- Recognize the role of line breaks
- Describe several representative external forms (e.g., sonnet, villanelle, sestina)
- Identify the relationship between poetic form and meaning
- Describe the form of several representative poems
- Informal Writing Assignments
  - Choose from one of the forms you have studied thus far in the lesson: sonnet, villanelle, sestina, haiku, ghazal. Using the rules for the form you select, write an original poem.

**Poet vs. Speaker** – Recognize the role of a poem's speaker

- Describe the difference between the poet and the speaker of the poem
- Identify the speaker of several representative poems
- Define dramatic monologue
- Describe the differences between lyrical and narrative poetry
- Informal Writing Assignments
  - Now that you have read Louise Glück's "Gretel in Darkness," you will examine the role of speaker in the poem.
  - Write a dramatic monologue.

**Poetic Language: Tone and Diction** - Recognize the effect of tone in relation to a poem's meaning and a poem's diction and its relationship to tone and speaker

- Define tone
- Analyze several different tones in poetry
- Evaluate the impact of tone on a poem's overall meaning in several representative poems
- Define diction
- Describe variances in word choice (e.g., formal, casual, plainspoken, pretentious)

- Analyze how substituting certain words (e.g., "forehead" instead of "brow") changes a poem's overall tone, style, and meaning
- Analyze diction in several representative poems
- Informal Writing Assignments
  - Using what you know about analyzing a poem for its tone, choose a word that best describes the tone of Marge Piercy's "What's That Smell in the Kitchen." Then compare this poem to her poem "Barbie Doll." While both poems deal with women, how is the tone different? Explain your answer with examples from both poems.
  - Write an essay in which you choose three or four examples from Andrew Marvell's "To His Coy Mistress" that show how diction adds to the poem's meaning. Then replace those words to illustrate how that changes the diction, and thus the tone of the poem.
  - Paying special attention to diction, write a short poem to express what you think college life will be like.
  - Rewrite Gwendolyn Brooks's poem "We Real Cool" by changing the diction to show how substituting certain words can change the poem's overall tone and meaning.
- Graded Writing Assignments
  - Read Frost's poem "The Pasture." Then write an essay that answers these questions: Which word best describes the tone of Frost's "The Pasture"? How do his word choice and arrangement determine the tone? How do the tones in "The Pasture" and "A Patch of Old Snow" differ? What effect does the tone have on the meaning in "The Pasture"? Give examples from both poems to support your answer.
  - Read Edgar Allan Poe's poem "A Dream Within a Dream," and write an essay answering these questions: Which word best describes the tone of the poem? Give details from the poem to support your answer. How would you change the diction to change the poem's tone? What effect would this have on the poem's meaning?

**Poetic Devices: Allusion** - Identify allusion as a device for creating meaning in a poem

- Define allusion
- Recognize the use of allusion in several representative poems
- Analyze allusion in several representative poems

**Poetic Language: Denotative and Connotative Meaning** - Describe the difference between denotative and connotative meaning

- Define denotation
- Define connotation
- Recognize the use of connotative meaning in several representative poems
- Analyze the use of connotative meaning in several representative poems

- Informal Writing Assignments
  - Write an essay about connotative meanings that you can identify in Frost's "Mending Wall." Why do you think he chose these words for the title?
  - Identify five words from Dickinson's poem "There Is No Frigate like a Book" that help convey how the poet feels about books. Type the five words in a table, write their denotative and connotative meanings, and provide some synonyms for each word. Then replace the five words you picked from the poem with synonyms that have different connotations from Dickinson's words. Try to use words with the same number of syllables as the original words to maintain the poem's rhythm. Notice how your changes alter the poem's attitude.
- Graded Writing Assignments
  - Read Elizabeth Bishop's "The Fish" and then write a 250- to 300-word essay about the use of denotation and connotation in the poem. Explain the examples of denotation and connotation that you find in Elizabeth Bishop's poem "The Fish." What do they contribute to the work? How do the denotative and connotative meanings affect the poem's meaning?
  - Write a short poem that has at least two rich, connotative words. Explain how the emotional or historical uses of your word choices influence the meaning of your poem.

**Poetic Language: Simile and Metaphor** - Identify metaphor and simile

- Define metaphor
- Define simile
- Recognize how the use of metaphor and simile conveys meaning in a poem
- Analyze the impact of metaphor and simile in several representative poems
- Informal Writing Assignments
  - Compare the form and theme of these two closely related poems: "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings" and "Sympathy."

**Poetic Devices: Imagery and Symbolism** - Describe the effect of symbolism and imagery in a poem

- Define symbol
- Identify common symbols for death, life, and love
- Identify the use of symbolism in several representative poems
- Analyze symbolism in several representative poems
- Define image

Analyze the use and impact of image in several representative poems

- Informal Writing Assignments
  - What do the two animals depicted in Blake's poems "The Lamb" and "The Tyger" symbolize? Explain how these depict the contradictions in nature with examples from the poems to support your analysis.

- Analyze the images used in Wordsworth's "Daffodils," and write about what these symbols can translate to in your own life or in our current times.
- Graded Writing Assignment
  - Identify and analyze the main symbol in Frost's poem "The Road Not Taken." How does the symbol in this poem relate to your own life?
  - Earlier you analyzed the main symbol in Frost's poem. Now identify and analyze the images in Frost's poem "The Road Not Taken." Support your analysis with examples.

**Poetic Language: Rhythm and Meter** - Recognize a poem's rhythm and its relationship to the poem's meaning

- Define meter
- Identify iambic pentameter
- Define blank verse
- Identify ballad meter
- Define free verse
- Analyze the use and impact of meter and rhythm in several representative poems
- Informal Writing Assignments
  - How does the ballad meter enhance the meaning in Wordsworth's Lucy Poems? Write a 250-300 word response to this question.
  - What is Whitman conveying through the poem? How does he use free verse to get his message across? Provide examples from the poem to support your answer.
  - Write a ballad using ballad meter.
  - Write a poem using free verse or blank verse.
- Graded Writing Assignment
  - Analyze the first part of the poem "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" and write about how Coleridge's use of ballad meter establishes the poem's meaning, with examples from the poem to support your answer.
  - Write a comparative essay about Sandburg and Whitman's use of free verse. How do they differ? How are they similar? Give examples from the poems to support your answer.

**Poetic Sound Devices and Their Contribution to Meaning**

- Define rhyme
- Define slant rhyme
- Define off rhyme
- Define refrain
- Define assonance
- Define consonance
- Define alliteration
- Analyze the use and impact of rhyme and repetition in establishing tone and meaning in several representative poems

- Analyze the use of poetic sound devices in several representative poems
- Informal Writing Assignments
  - Read the poem “Otherwise” by Jane Kenyon. In a paragraph, identify the refrain used in the poem and discuss how the refrain emphasizes the meaning.
  - Write a paragraph about how the assonance in the poem “The Lady of Shalott” by Lord Alfred Tennyson impacts the tone of the poem.
  - Identify the lines where consonance is used in Frost’s poem “Looking for a Sunset Bird in Winter” and then write a paragraph about how consonance affects the tone of the poem.
- Graded Writing Assignments
  - Read “The Solitary Reaper” or “The World Is Too Much with Us.” Select one of these poems and identify the rhyme scheme that Wordsworth uses and how this rhyme scheme contributes to the meaning of the poem.
  - Read Judith Nicholls's poem “Lord Neptune” and answer this question: How do the rhyme and refrain contribute to Lord Neptune's tone and meaning?
  - Read Owen's poem “Dulce Et Decorum Est” closely and then answer this question: How does Wilfred Owen use sound devices to add to the poem's tone and meaning?
  - Read Hayden's “Those Winter Sundays” and write an essay on how Hayden uses sound devices to express how the speaker feels about his father. Explain how his feelings changed over time.

### **Unit Writing Assignment**

- Formal, analytical essay – What is it about a poem that captures your imagination and stays with you? Just like a favorite song, a well-loved poem may stick with you because it has an engaging rhythm or interesting images and symbols. Poets use a variety of poetic devices and language to enhance the meaning and depth of their writing. Sometimes a poet uses one or more of these elements to advance a theme in the poem. A poet may also use the elements to help you imagine the person, place, or moment that is described in the poem. By understanding these elements, you gain access to layers of meaning when you read a poem (or listen to a song!).
- Select two poems. Define the elements used in the poems and describe how they are expressed.
  - Questions to consider
    - How does the writer use tone to express meaning?
    - Explain why the author may have used a simile or metaphor.
    - How does imagery add to the meaning of the poem?
    - Can you identify the meter? Does it stop or change during the poem?



- Evaluation - The essay defines each one of the elements with an accurate explanation. The student selected apt examples from the poems for each of the elements.

## Unit 4 – Close Analysis of Poetic Form and Content (3 Weeks, 7 Lessons)

**Unit 4 Discussion:** Find a prose poem and discuss how it is like and unlike a non-prose poem.

**Poems about Love** - Recognize the relationship between poetic form and content in poems about love

- Define universal theme
- Compare and contrast two poems about love
- Analyze a selected poem closely to illustrate how elements of form establish and advance the poem's theme
- Informal Writing Assignments
  - Compare how the theme of love is presented in E. E. Cummings's two poems "i carry your heart with me" and "it may not always be so."

**Poems about Death** - Recognize the relationship between poetic form and content in poems about death

- Define elegy
- Compare and contrast two poems about death
- Analyze a selected poem closely to illustrate how elements of form establish and advance the poem's theme
- Informal Writing Assignments
- Read the poem "Death, Be Not Proud" again and look for instances of apostrophe, metaphor, and personification in the poem. Write an essay on how these figures of speech convey what the poem says about death.

**Poems about Fathers** - Recognize the relationship between poetic form and content in poems about fathers

- Compare and contrast two poems about fathers
- Analyze a selected poem closely to illustrate how elements of form establish and advance the poem's theme

**Identity in Poetry** - Recognize the relationship between poetic form and content in poems about identity

- Compare and contrast two poems about identity
- Analyze a selected poem closely to illustrate how elements of form establish and advance the poem's theme

**Poems about War** - Recognize the relationship between poetic form and content in poems about war

- Compare and contrast 3-4 poems about war
- Analyze a selected poem closely to illustrate how elements of form establish and advance the poem's theme
- Informal Writing Assignments
  - Read "Eighth Air Force," another poem by Randall Jarrell. Then write a 200- to 250-word essay comparing how Jarrell conveys the theme of war in this poem and in "The Death of the Ball Turret Gunner." In your comparison, include an analysis of the different forms of the poems and how those differences contribute to the antiwar theme expressed in each. Here are some questions that might guide you in your analysis: How is the "drunk sergeant" different from the ball turret gunner as a figure involved in war? How are guilt and victimhood handled differently in the two poems? In "Eighth Air Force," what is the significance of the two song titles, "O Paradiso!" and "O Murderers!"? Which meaning or meanings of the verb "to lie" does the poem use, and to what effect?
- Graded Writing Assignments
  - Write a comparative essay about Whitman's "O Captain! My Captain!" and Melville's "Shiloh: A Requiem." Include ways in which the use of elegy extends the meaning in each poem, as well as any other poetic forms or devices the poets use.
  - Write an essay comparing "Dulce Et Decorum Est" with "Pro Patria." What images do these poets use to convey their different meanings? How does the form help convey the theme? Or does form have no impact on the theme? Provide examples from both poems to support your argument.

**Poetry in Its Place** – Recognize the relationship between poetic form and content in poems about place

- Compare and contrast 3-4 poems about place
- Analyze a selected poem closely to illustrate how elements of form establish and advance the poem's theme
- Informal Writing Assignments
  - Write an essay comparing the theme and form of Blake's "London" with Wordsworth's "London, 1802." Explain each of the poet's attitudes toward London, providing examples from the poems to support your claims.
  - Think about some place in which you have observed nature, perhaps immersing yourself in it, perhaps returning at a later age. Are you more like Wordsworth or Arnold in your relationship to nature? What aspects of your social, religious, or personal life might this contact with the power and the beauty of nature evoke? Write a 150- to 200-word answer to these questions.
- Graded Writing Assignments
  - Describe the image Whitman creates of New York City in "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry," including which aspects of its form shape that image. You might discuss his focus on visual details

about the city, on human and political issues, and on natural phenomenon and how the sweeping, lofty sentences paint the city in certain ways. Having read this poem, what picture have you formed of New York as it was in Whitman's time? Write an answer that includes examples from the poem.

- In an essay of 300–350 words, compare and contrast two of these three poems. Describe the formal qualities of each poem and how those qualities form a conception of place and make an argument. Include examples from the poems in your analysis.

### **Improving Your Analysis of Poetry** - Recognize how to improve a close analysis of a poem

- Identify one close analysis to revise
- Recognize problems in thesis statement, paragraphs, sentence structure, support of key claims
- Identify 6-8 ways to improve the close analysis
- Informal Writing Assignments
  - Write down observations about a sample close analysis, identifying problems or shortcomings in these aspects of the analysis: Its central thesis and the evidence used to support its thesis
  - Revise the sample essay below in the following ways:
    - Create an effective introduction with a clear thesis.
    - Provide supportive evidence from the poem to support the thesis.
    - Revise the sentences and paragraphs for better clarity, coherence, and effectiveness.
    - Write a strong and effective conclusion.
- Graded Writing Assignments:
  - Write and revise your own close analysis. Read Paul Laurence Dunbar's poem "Blue." Then write a close analysis of this poem in about 150 to 200 words. You will need to submit these items:
    - an initial draft of a close analysis of the poem
    - a revised version of the same analysis
  - After completing your initial draft, check that your essay includes all these elements of an effective analysis. Then revise your essay as needed.
    - an engaging introduction with an effective thesis
    - a claim that serves as the topic sentence for supporting paragraphs
    - concrete evidence from the poem to support the thesis and the claim in each paragraph
    - paragraph transitions that link your ideas
    - coherent sentences and paragraphs
    - an effective conclusion

### **Unit Writing Assignment:**

- Formal, analytical essay - Choose a poem and a song (one that has lyrics you can get in print or electronic form) that share a theme or some themes. Write a comparison analysis that shows how the two texts express a common theme.
- Evaluation - This analysis should compare the poem and the song with a nuanced understanding of the poetic elements present (or absent) in both texts. The primary claim similarly addresses nuances of the two texts' takes on the common theme, bringing out a rich and broad range of content and formal differences and similarities. The paragraph structure, overall organization, and word choices are of high quality.

## Unit 5 – Writing an Extended Interpretation of a Poem (3 Weeks, 6 Lessons)

**Unit 5 Discussion:** What's the most difficult aspect of a poem to write about? Why?

**Theme in Poetry** - Identify a poem's theme (poem selected from a list)

- Describe the poem's tone and speaker
- Examine the poem's word choice
- Examine the poem's use of poetic sound devices throughout the poem
- Describe the poem's rhythm
- Recognize how the poem's form advances its meaning
- Informal writing assignments
  - Correct the organization in the following three paragraphs and state what you think is the problem with each paragraph
- Graded writing assignment
  - Write an interpretive essay on Matthew Arnold's "Dover Beach."

**Interpretive Essays on Poetry: The Thesis Statement and Introductory Paragraph** - Recognize how to develop a strong thesis statement for an interpretive essay

- Write an interpretive thesis statement
- Write an introductory paragraph for the interpretive essay
- Informal Writing Assignments
  - Read Robert Graves's poem *The Naked and the Nude*. Choose a topic for an interpretive essay on the poem and write an introductory paragraph keeping in mind the guidelines.

**Interpretive Essays on Poetry: Supporting Evidence** - Recognize how to advance a thesis with supporting evidence

- List 4-6 paragraph topics to support the thesis
- List 2-3 specific ways to support each paragraph topic
- Recognize how to write an outline of an interpretive essay
- Graded Writing Assignment

- Write an interpretive essay on Matthew Arnold's "Dover Beach."  
All drafts of the essay will be turned in.

**Making Interpretive Essays on Poetry Coherent** - Recognize how to write a coherent paper

- Recognize how to write effective paragraphs
- Recognize how to write strong transitions between paragraphs

**Improving Interpretive Essays on Poetry** - Recognize how to improve writing

- Analyze the use of varying sentence structures to improve writing
- Identify common mistakes in college-level writing
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the essay in answering "So what?" and "How so?" throughout the paper

**Revising Interpretive Essays on Poetry** - Identify ways to revise an essay to make it stronger

- Analyze sample effective interpretive essays
- Describe ways to revise the "interpretation of a poem" essay in preparation for the unit writing assignment.
- Informal Writing Assignments
  - Evaluate interpretive essays based on the following criteria
    - Engagement of introduction
    - Evidence from the poem to support the thesis
    - Explication of imagery and other stylistic devices used in the poem
    - Effectiveness of the conclusion
  - Read Thomas Hardy's poem "The Man He Killed." Then, analyze the given interpretive essay on this poem. Write your observations and then provide suitable quotes from the essay to support your observations. Also, note down your suggestions to make this essay more effective.
- Graded Writing Assignment
  - Read Robert Frost's poem "Mending Wall" (link provided in the Exploration) and an interpretive essay on the poem.

**Unit Writing Assignment**

- Formal, analytical essay - Choose a poem that has not been extensively discussed in class. Analyze it closely and expand your understanding of it by researching it.
- Evaluation - This essay will analyze the poem with a nuanced understanding of its poetic elements and a well-integrated discussion of how its formal qualities create the poem's meaning. The essay will specify a clear, arguable, and focused claim that is well supported in the body paragraphs that break out relevant formal qualities of the poem. The paragraph structure, overall organization, and word choices are of high quality.

# **Advanced English Literature & Composition - Semester B**

## Unit 1 – Reading and Writing about Fiction (4 Weeks, 8 Lessons)

**Unit 1 Discussion:** Compare your experience of casually reading a short story or novel and reading one to analyze for your English class. Do they always involve different kinds of novels or stories? Is the time spent reading significantly different between the two? Do the two experiences yield different kinds as well as different quantities of enjoyment?

**Reading Fiction** - Describe the genre of fiction and active reading techniques for reading fiction

- Identify types of fiction
- Recognize the purpose of a reading journal/notebook
- Describe techniques for "active reading" of a representative work
- Recognize how to collect literary evidence to support a thesis
- Informal Writing Assignment
  - Strategies for keeping your reading journal.

**Writing about Fiction** - Recognize effective approaches to writing critical essays on works of fiction

- Describe the goal of writing an essay
- Identify major stages in critical thinking and writing (e.g., discovering ideas, writing drafts, and writing the essay)
- Describe the role of argument in literary criticism
- Recognize ways to discover ideas about a work
- Informal Writing Assignment
  - Read "The Open Boat" carefully and think about what "evidence" you are uncovering. What ideas jump out at you from the language and events in the story? Select pieces of text that interest you and write down what essay idea each one brings to mind. Consider things like the setting--could you translate the events in this setting to a larger context? Does the setting have an impact on characterization? What conflicts are evident in the text?

**Elements of Fiction: Character and Dialogue** - Describe character and dialogue as elements of fiction

- Define character
- Define trait
- Define protagonist
- Define antagonist
- Recognize the difference between circumstance and character trait

- Describe ways in which authors bring characters to life
- Identify types of characters (round and flat)
- Define dialogue
- Recognize the relationship between dialogue and characterization
- Recognize effective ways to write about character
- Informal Writing Assignments
  - Read “A Good Man is Hard to Find,” using active reading strategies to explore the story’s characters. Write a reading journal entry based on your active reading.
  - Use your answers to the guiding questions and the supporting evidence you have collected to answer the question, How is the grandmother in “A Good Man is Hard to Find” a misfit herself? Write a three- to four-paragraph response to this question, providing at least three pieces of textual evidence, with explanations, to support your claims.

**Elements of Fiction: Point of View** - Describe point of view as an element of fiction

- Define narrator
- Define persona
- Recognize the different types of point of view (e.g., first- person, second-person, etc.) and different kinds of each category (e.g., reliable vs. unreliable first-person point of view; omniscient third-person point of view)
- Define stream of consciousness
- Recognize effective ways to write about point of view
- Informal Writing Assignments
  - How does changing a story’s point of view affect the narration and, in turn, the reader’s understanding of the story?
  - How does the point of view in Chapter 1 influence the narration and meaning of *The Sound and the Fury* at large?

**Elements of Fiction: Plot and Structure** - Describe plot and structure as elements of fiction

- Recognize types of conflicts
- Define the elements of conflict (i.e., exposition, complication, crisis, climax, resolution)
- Recognize effective ways to write about plot and structure
- Informal Writing Assignments
  - Read additional excerpts of [Aspects of the Novel](#). Use these questions to reflect on Forster's ideas about plot.
    - What does Forster mean by "causality"?
    - Which example does he use to illustrate the concept of causality?
    - Can you think of another metaphor to advance your understanding of plot?
  - Identify the main conflicts in William Faulkner’s *The Sound and the Fury*. For each conflict, identify which of the five types of conflict it is and give evidence to support your selection.

**Elements of Fiction: Setting** - Describe setting as an element of fiction

- Recognize types of settings
- Describe the role and function of setting in fiction
- Identify the relationship between setting and a work's theme
- Recognize effective ways to write about setting
- Informal Writing Assignments
  - Read a sample essay about how setting supports meaning in *The Sound and the Fury*. Then answer these questions.
    - How does the historical timeframe in which *The Sound and the Fury* is set influence the meaning of the story?
    - How does setting advance the plot of *The Sound and the Fury*?

**Elements of Fiction: Irony and Tone** - Identify tone and irony as elements of fiction

- Identify ways to recognize a work's tone
- Define irony
- Recognize types of irony
- Recognize effective ways to write about tone
- Informal Writing Assignments
  - Rewrite the beginning of “Little Red Riding Hood” (up until the part at which the grandmother first responds to the wolf) in your own words to convey one of the following three different tones: ominous/haunting; humorous; or detached/nonchalant.
  - Revise a sample essay on tone and irony in the “Jason Chapter” of *The Sound and the Fury*.

**Theme in Fiction** - Recognize the role of theme in fiction

- Identify several universal themes
- Describe the difference between a universal and a particular theme
- Recognize how to determine a work's theme or major idea
- Recognize effective ways for writing about a work's theme

**Unit Writing Assignment**

- Formal, analytical essay - Select a short story. List and analyze every element of fiction found in the story. For each element, describe how it is expressed in the story and what it contributes to the story.
- A key piece of any literature analysis is being able to look at how each element individually contributes to the story. For this activity, you can use a chart to organize your analysis of each element.
- Questions to consider (more will be provided in your unit 1 activity)
  - Considering the theme of the story first. Then you can look at how each of the elements contributes to that theme.
  - Does the tone of the story match its serious theme? Is irony used to emphasize an important truth the story is trying to convey?



- Reread if needed to explore how each element contributes to the story. In a good story, each element will work together to make a unified piece, even though the reader might not be aware of it during a casual read.

## Unit 2 – Close Analysis and Interpretation of Short Fiction (3 Weeks, 7 Lessons)

**Unit 2 Discussion:** Gather some common well-known stories from fables, fairy tales, or nursery rhymes and analyze the plot and conflict structure of them. Explain how they are markedly different from full-fledged short stories. (Example: "The Itsy Bitsy Spider," or "Cinderella")

**Active Reading Techniques for Short Fiction** - Explain techniques for reading short fiction closely

- Describe types of essays (e.g., reflective, persuasive, expository, narrative)
- Identify active reading techniques (e.g., highlighting/underlining, side margin notes, summarizing, paraphrasing, asking questions)
- Evaluate the effectiveness of active reading techniques when applied to reading a representative essay

**Character in Short Stories** - Recognize the literary effect of character in a representative short story

- Recognize character as a source of textual evidence to support an academic argument about a literary work
- Describe two to three characters and their traits in representative short stories
- Analyze the relationship between character and the work's theme in a representative short story
- Informal Writing Assignment
  - Read the sample essay on "Sonny's Blues." And the end, list five lessons you can take away from reading this essay. In other words, what would you be sure to incorporate in a future essay you might write on a similar topic?

**Point of View in Short Stories** - Recognize the literary effect of point of view in a representative short story

- Recognize point of view as a source of textual evidence to support an academic argument about a literary work
- Describe the point of view of two to three representative short stories
- Analyze the relationship between a story's point of view, characterization, and structure in a short story

**Plot and Structure in Short Stories** - Recognize the literary effect of plot and structure in a representative short story

- Recognize plot and structure as sources of textual evidence to support an academic argument
- Analyze plot and structure in a representative short story
- Informal Writing Assignment
  - What is the literary effect achieved by the structure of “An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge”?

**Theme in Short Stories** - Recognize how to identify and analyze a short story's idea or theme in a representative short story

- Analyze the theme of a representative short story
- Informal Writing Assignment
  - What is D. H. Lawrence’s commentary on each of the themes he presents in “The Rocking-Horse Winner”?
  - Write a short essay in which you explain how to write an academic argument about a work of short fiction using the story’s theme as textual evidence. Use the list you created and the sample essay you read to help you.

**The Historical and Cultural Context of a Short Story** - Recognize how to read and analyze a representative short story's historical and cultural context

- Recognize historical and cultural context as a source of textual evidence to support an academic argument about a literary work
- Analyze the historical and cultural context of a representative short story
- Graded Writing Assignments
  - *Why do we care about the historical or cultural context of a short story?*
  - Before beginning your draft, spend some time brainstorming your ideas for a response to the question above, and be sure to cite all primary and secondary source textual evidence—an example of which should be in each body paragraph.

**An Academic Argument** - Identify effective elements in an academic argument about a representative short story

- Evaluate the effectiveness of a sample thesis statement
- Describe the strengths and weaknesses of a sample student paper
- Recognize ways to improve the sample student paper
- Identify ways to improve paragraph coherence
- Informal Writing Assignment
  - Write an academic argument about an aspect of the short story you chose. Remember: you are making a comment or formulating an insight about an aspect of the short story. And though there is safety (and word count) in relaying the plot, you must avoid doing so. You can assume your reader (your teacher) has read the short story you selected. Don’t forget to include textual evidence in your body paragraph. Properly cite all primary and secondary source textual evidence and provide a Works Cited section.

## Unit Writing Assignment

- Formal, analytical essay - Ralph Waldo Emerson said of fiction that it “reveals truth that reality obscures.” Because fiction is concerned with exploring truths through characters and stories that aren’t real and didn’t really happen, readers can often find more than one meaning in the text. Meaning in fiction is created through the use of elements such as plot, structure, character, setting, dialogue, conflict, symbol, irony, tone, and point of view. Each of these elements contributes to the story’s overall theme. The short story is a distilled and focused form of fiction, but short stories can often be layered with many complex meanings and rich layers of elements that contribute to those meanings.
- Literary analysis is often concerned with how the elements of the story work together to create meaning. You will write an essay analyzing a story to see how the elements of fiction in the story create meaning for the reader.
- Questions to consider (more will be provided in your unit 2 activity)
  - What role do plot, structure, character, setting, dialogue, conflict, symbol, irony, tone, and point of view play in building meaning in the story?
  - Is there one element that you think contributes to the theme more than others?
  - Is there one element that particularly interests you?
- Evaluation: This essay should include a strong central thesis statement that leads to the development of the argument. The selection of textual evidence will show great insight into the short story. All textual evidence is analyzed and linked to the thesis. The element of fiction chosen for analysis is of high importance in building meaning in the short story. The role of the element in building that meaning is clearly explained. There is a definite conclusion statement that ties into the central thesis. The writing is clear and detailed.

## Unit 3 – Close Analysis and Interpretation of the Novel (4 Weeks, 8 Lessons)

**Unit 3 Discussion:** Find a highly experimental novel. (One type is Boom Fiction from Latin America. Some examples are Julio Cortazar's *Hopscotch*, Guillermo Cabrera Infante's *Three Trapped Tigers*, Manuel Puig's *Kiss of the Spider Woman*, or Luis Rafael Sanchez's *Macho Comacho's Beat*. Or, try a more well-known novel like James Joyce's *Finnegan's Wake* or John Garth's *Goat Boy*.) Read the first and last pages from it, plus at least five other pages of your choice. Describe how it is different from a more traditional novel.

**Major Literary Periods: The Novel** - Identify key literary eras from the rise of the novel to the postmodern novel

- Review major literary periods from the rise of the novel to the present
- Review realism
- Review literary naturalism

- Define plot of decline
- Review modernism
- Define postmodernism
- Identify representative works from major literary periods
- Recognize the literary context of a novel chosen for analysis
- Informal Writing Assignment
  - Write about your favorite novel.

**The Evaluative Argument: The Novel** - Recognize effective tactics of evaluative arguments

- Recognize the purpose of paraphrasing and summarizing as preparation tools
- Recognize the purpose of comparison as a preparation tool
- Describe how to write an effective comparison and contrast essay
- Informal Writing Assignment
  - Write a first draft of an evaluative essay on *Frankenstein*.

**Frankenstein: Identifying the Theme** - Identify a novel's main theme

- Describe the novel's main characters, setting, tone
- Describe the novel's plot and structure
- Describe the novel's point of view
- List the novel's main idea and additional ideas
- Informal Writing Assignment
  - Write a brief paragraph in which you write an argument about a theme in *Frankenstein* with evidence from the text as support. You can use any of the themes that you explored in the K-W-L-H chart or a new theme that interests you.

**Thesis Statements: Interpretive Essays on a Novel** - Recognize how to develop a strong thesis statement for an interpretive essay on a representative novel

- Write an interpretive thesis statement
- Write an introductory paragraph for the interpretive essay
- Informal Writing Assignments
  - Continue to revise your essay using strategies presented in this lesson.

**Supporting Evidence: Interpretive Essays on a Novel** – Recognize how to advance a thesis with supporting evidence from a representative novel

- List four to six paragraph topics to support the thesis
- List two to three specific ways to support each paragraph topic
- Recognize how to write an outline of an interpretive essay
- Informal Writing Assignment
  - Mary Shelley lived and wrote during a time when there were many advances in science and industry. One theme that occurs throughout the book is the role of science in society. Reread chapters 4 and 5 of *Frankenstein*. Write a paragraph that includes a specific claim and supporting evidence on the topic of the theme of science in the book.

**Coherence in Your Interpretive Essay** – Recognize how to write a coherent interpretive essay on a representative novel

- Recognize how to write effective paragraphs
- Recognize how to write strong transitions between paragraphs
- Informal Writing Assignments
  - Continue to revise your essay using strategies presented in this lesson.

**Improving Your Interpretive Essay** - Recognize how to improve the interpretive essay on a representative novel

- Analyze the use of varying sentence structures to improve writing
- Identify common mistakes in college-level writing
- Weigh the effectiveness of the essay in answering "So what?" and "How so?" throughout the paper
- Informal Writing Assignment
  - Continue to revise your essay using strategies presented in this lesson.

**Revising Your Interpretive Essay** - Identify effective ways to revise an interpretive essay on a representative novel

Analyze sample effective interpretive essays

Describe ways to revise the "interpretation of a novel" essay in preparation for your unit writing assignment

- Informal Writing Assignments
  - Review two interpretive essays and analyze the differences in tone, style structure, ideas, etc. Explain what makes an effective interpretive essay based on your analysis
  - Peer review a classmate's interpretive essay.
- Graded Writing Assignments
  - Revise one of your essays from a previous assignment (your choice) based on the revision techniques you learned in this lesson.

### **Unit Writing Assignment**

- Formal, analytical essay - What is literature? Though this is a simple question, the answer is decidedly not. What is and is not literature is always up for debate. Some define literature based on a set of criteria, while others use prototypes to show what literature looks like. The definition of literature differs from person to person, culture to culture, and time to time. Are oral stories literature? Is Shakespeare still literature if you don't like it? What about hypertext fiction or Flash poetry? Can literature be composed via text message? If Anne Frank's journal is literature, is yours, too? Is the romance novel you read over the summer literature? The difficulty in pinning down a definition for literature is exactly what makes it such an intriguing study for thought and a fascinating subject to write about. What does literature mean to you? In this activity, you will be able to jump into this ongoing debate with your own idea of what literature is.

- Select and read a novel from a popular genre—such as science fiction, romance, or horror—that is usually not considered literature. Analyze the novel and use your analysis to argue whether the piece is literature.
- Decide how you are defining literature.
  - How can literary devices and the elements of fiction in the text be used to determine its literary merit?
  - What role does characterization and theme play in determining if a work is literature?
  - Does the purpose for reading the text (i.e. for information, for pleasure, or for growth) affect what you consider literature? What role does that play in your analysis of the novel?
  - Does the tradition of what gets called literature play a role in your choice, and how?
  - What standards will you use to define literature?
- Evaluation - Thesis is clear, concise, and specific and states a claim that is disputable. Develops meaning beyond what is explicitly stated in the text. Both the claim made in the thesis and the selection of textual evidence show great insight into the novel. All textual evidence is analyzed and linked to the thesis. The standards used to determine if the novel is literature represent a superior level of thought about literature.

## Unit 4 – Reading and Writing about Plays (4 Weeks, 8 Lessons)

**Unit 4 Discussion:** Children watch plays and puppet shows designed for their enjoyment. And yet, written versions of plays are not as common for children's reading as stories and poems are. What is it about plays that might account for this lack?

### Reading Plays - Recognize types of plays

- Define tragedy
- Recognize elements of tragedy
- Define comedy
- Describe the experience of reading plays
- Identify strategies for critical reading of plays
- Informal Writing Assignment
  - Select a scene with Creon and Antigone. Reread the scene. Then, write a two-page modern-day version of the scene in which Antigone defies Creon. It should reveal what she has done (or said) and what Creon fears losing, and the dialogue should be strictly contemporary.
  - Write a two-page scene that you would have liked to see in *A Raisin in the Sun*. Before writing, create a two-sentence rationale for why you chose to create this particular scene.

**Key Elements of Plays: Theme, Plot, and Structure** - Recognize key elements of drama (theme, plot, and structure)

- Recognize how to identify a play's theme
- Analyze the role of theme in interpreting a play
- Recognize the role of plot and structure in advancing a play's theme
- Recognize dramatic elements as sources of textual evidence to support an analysis or interpretation of a play
- Informal Writing Assignments
  - Describe the plot and structure of *The Importance of Being Earnest*. For each of the five parts of the play, list any key events, and describe how much time seems to transpire during and between parts. Also include any other information that affects how the plot is structured, be they traditional elements of plot or more idiosyncratic qualities that apply only to this play.
  - After you've read *The Importance of Being Earnest*, find a copy of the 1952 or 2002 movie and watch it. Think about how it felt to read the play and then watch the movie based on the play. Then write elaborating on the similarities and differences in how you pictured the play in your mind while reading it and how it was portrayed in the movie. Did the characters seem different? Did the plot seem to move differently?
- Graded Writing Assignment
  - Pick a theme—not just a topic but a theme that articulates an issue—in *The Importance of Being Earnest*. Describe how some aspect of the plot and structure helps to deepen the expression of that theme in the play. You can include other elements of the play as well.

**Key Elements of Plays: Character, Gestures, and Setting** – Recognize key elements of drama (character, gestures, setting)

- Recognize the role of character
- Describe ways plays advance characterization
- Recognize the importance of setting in advancing a play's theme
- Recognize dramatic elements as sources of textual evidence to support an analysis or interpretation of a play
- Informal Writing Assignment
  - Describe the atmosphere of *A Doll's House* below.

**Analyzing Characterization in Plays** – Recognize how to analyze a play's character effectively

- Recognize key elements of an essay on characterization
- Weigh the effectiveness of a student essay on a play's character
- Informal Writing Assignment
  - Write an essay on characterization in *Hamlet*.

**Writing Critically about Plays** – Recognize ways to write critically about plays

- Recognize key elements of an analysis or interpretation of a play
- Weigh the effectiveness of a student interpretation of a play
- Informal Writing Assignment
  - Write a review of a film adaptation of *Hamlet*.

**Thesis Statements: Interpretive Essays on a Play** – Recognize how to develop a strong thesis statement for an interpretive essay on a representative play

- Write an interpretive thesis statement
- Write an introductory paragraph for the interpretive essay

**Supporting Evidence: Interpretive Essays on a Play** – Recognize how to advance a thesis with supporting evidence from a representative play

- List four to six paragraph topics to support the thesis
- List two to three specific ways to support each paragraph topic
- Recognize how to write an outline of an interpretive essay
- Informal Writing Assignment
  - Write a thesis and outline an essay on *Hamlet*.

**Writing a Coherent Interpretive Essay** – Recognize how to write a coherent interpretive essay on a representative play

- Recognize how to write effective paragraphs
- Recognize how to write strong transitions between paragraphs
- Graded Writing Assignment
  - Based on this lesson and the previous ones in this unit, complete your *Hamlet* essay and submit all drafts for grading.

### Unit Writing Assignment

- Fiction writing/playwriting - Like all of literature, plays are the product of the culture and historical era in which they are written. Some significant amount of the meaning of the play must transcend time and culture, though, or we would be unable to read them or enjoy watching them on stage. Think about *Antigone*, which is about 2,500 years old, and most often read in translation from the Greek. It no doubt feels far more distant from you as a reader than does *A Raisin in the Sun* (from 20<sup>th</sup>-century United States) or than *The Importance of Being Earnest* (from late 19<sup>th</sup>-century Britain). And plays by Shakespeare probably feel somewhere in the middle. What if you could take a play and reset it in a place and time that's more familiar to you, using your own nuances of speech or those of the people around you? Or would you rather set it somewhere not so familiar to you (maybe in the future or in a made-up place)? How would it be different? You'll take a play of your choice and rewrite it in a setting also of your choice. Who knows—maybe you'll make your own *West Side Story* out of *Romeo and Juliet*!
- Choose a play you are familiar with and revise the whole play or a part of it giving it a new setting in time and/or place. As you do so, pay attention to the ways in which it reflects its time and place of origin and decide how you will adapt it to a different time and place.



- Evaluation - This play revision is coherent as a play and adapts an existing play, or part of it, to a new setting in a way that makes good sense and retains the flavor (literary argument, tensions, etc.) of the original play while bringing a new context to the original. The dialogue is natural and appropriate to the context, and the stage directions are adequate to allow the reader to visualize the scene or scenes.

## Unit 5 – Writing a Research-Based Literary Interpretation (2 Weeks, 5 Lessons)

**Unit 5 Discussion:** Identify five pieces of literature (of any genre) and place them on a scale from most to least in terms of the amount of research you would need to do on the cultural/historical background. Why would one work need the least research for you to read it meaningfully? Why would another need the most such background information? Why would the others be in the middle?

**Literary Theory** – Identify common literary theories/approaches to critical literary interpretation

- Describe common literary critical theories/approaches to literary criticism
- Compare and contrast these theories
- Understand and evaluate these theories
- Identify one or two approaches or theories that are useful for a research-based interpretative essay on a representative work
- Informal Writing Assignment
  - As you read the essay on “The Yellow Wallpaper,” look for evidence to determine which critical approach the author is using in his or her analysis.

**The Writing Process and Research** - Review key elements of the writing process and of a research-based interpretation

- Describe ways to select a topic
- Recognize how to select external sources for the chosen topic
- Describe how to weigh the usefulness and merit of external sources
- Graded Writing Assignment
  - Choose a paper you didn't do research for that you've written for this course or another course. Using the strategies in this lesson, rewrite the paper making it research-based. Or write a paper on “The Ambitious Guest.” If you don't have any papers you've written previously, write a new essay that includes research. Remember to cite your sources.

**The Research Process** - Identify common elements of the research process

- Identify effective techniques for conducting research
- Recognize how to gather information during the research process
- Describe ways to paraphrase information during the research process
- Describe how to document information during the research process

**Quotations and Paraphrasing** – Recognize how to quote and paraphrase from literary works and reference materials

- Recognize when you need to document sources
- Identify when and how to integrate quotes
- Describe ways in which quotes can strengthen an argument
- Recognize how to integrate quotes in a grammatically correct way
- Describe how to correct "drop-quotes"
- Describe the process of paraphrasing
- Identify when to use quotes and when to paraphrase
- Recognize how to use MLA in-text citations for quotes and paraphrased information

**Citing Reference Materials** - Recognize how to cite quotes and reference materials

- Recognize MLA citation format
- Identify how to cite sources in footnotes or endnotes
- Recognize how to write a list of works cited

**Unit Writing Assignment** – *this assignment will be the culminating activity of all the work in Unit 5; students will develop their research topic at the beginning of the unit and work through the paper during each lesson as they draft/write/revise their papers prior to final submission*

- Formal, research paper - Do you remember the last time you got into a great conversation about a book? Maybe it was in English class or perhaps you talked to a friend about a series you are both into reading. Either way, when you're really interested in a piece of literature and its themes, you find a lot to think about and discuss. Researching and writing about literature is one way to have an extended conversation about a book and its author. It requires us to read the text carefully as we formulate an argument about a specific topic. To write a good research paper on a literary work, you need to select a topic, gather and evaluate sources, and then start writing. Here's your chance to go through those steps to write about a piece of literature and a topic that really interests you.
- Evaluation - This well-researched essay includes information from a variety of sources, each with complete bibliographic information using the MLA citation style. The paragraphs demonstrate an ability to paraphrase or quote an author's idea and to summarize the relevant material. There may be some errors, but they do not interfere with the content.