

Syllabus

English 8B

Course Overview

English is the study of the creation and analysis of literature written in the English language. In English 8B, you will analyze nonfiction texts to explore what they reveal about the process of growing up. You will also analyze elements of poetry such as theme, structure, meter, language, and sound to help you read poems and compose a poem of your own. You will read novels and analyze their literary elements and their use of literary devices. In the final unit, you will reflect upon and evaluate certain aspects of your past, present, and future while reading Charles Dickens's *A Christmas Carol*.

Course Goals

This course will help you meet these goals:

- Understand stages of human growth such as adolescence.
- Use nonfictional texts such as informative essays, scientific essays, and memoirs to explore aspects of growing up such as body image, screen time usage, and body changes.
- Analyze theme in poetry.
- Explain structures, metrical patterns, and sound patterns in poetry.
- Examine language and sound techniques required to compose a poem.
- Draft a persuasive essay based on a topic related to poetry.
- Investigate literary elements such as character, setting, conflict, and theme in one of the following novels: Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women*, Lois Lowry's *The Giver*, Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, or John Knowles's *A Separate Peace*.
- Analyze the use of symbolism in one of the following novels: Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women*, Lois Lowry's *The Giver*, Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, and John Knowles's *A Separate Peace*.
- Draft an argumentative essay based on how you relate to the characters of the novel you choose.
- Reflect upon and evaluate aspects of your past, present, and future life as a student by reading Charles Dickens's *A Christmas Carol*.

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.

- Complete basic operations with presentation software, such as Microsoft PowerPoint or Google Docs Presentation.
- 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 Plato Student Orientation document, found at the beginning of this course.

Credit Value

English 8B is a 0.5-credit course.

Course Materials

- notebook
- pencil or pen
- computer with Internet connection and speakers or headphones
- Microsoft Word or equivalent
- Microsoft PowerPoint or equivalent

Some course readings may require a visit to your school library or public library.

The Course Novel Unit

In Unit 3 of this course, you'll choose one of the following novels to read.

***Little Women* by Louisa May Alcott**

This coming-of-age story follows the lives of the March family members: a mother who is trying to make ends meet, a father who is serving in the Civil War, and four daughters who experience the ups and downs of becoming young women. The story focuses on the March girls—Meg, Jo, Beth, and Amy. Alcott takes readers through each of their lives as they face heartbreaks and hardships. These experiences help them grow as individuals. Yet, despite their differences, the love they share binds them together.

***The Giver* by Lois Lowry**

This novel is set in a futuristic society that appears to be perfect. The community has done away with all unpleasant emotions. Its people experience no pain, hunger, anger, or grief. The story's protagonist is a boy named Jonas who is assigned the job of Receiver. He must receive and store all of his community's good and bad memories. Jonas receives these stored memories from an old man known as the Giver. In the process, he begins to understand the terrible cost his society has paid for perfection. Together, he and the Giver must decide what to do with this secret knowledge.

Jane Eyre by Charlotte Brontë

In this tale, a courageous orphan faces challenges with honesty, passion, and courage. Brontë's protagonist, Jane, learns to overcome pain early in life. The story follows her as she grows into a strong but lonely young woman. Eventually, Jane becomes the governess in a mansion owned by the wealthy and mysterious Edward Rochester. There she encounters hardship, intrigue, and the meaning of true love. Will Jane's journey end happily?

A Separate Peace by John Knowles

This novel explores how our egos and insecurities get the better of our relationships. Knowles weaves a touching tale of two friends—Gene and Finny—who are opposites in many ways. While Gene has the intellect, Finny has the charm. While Gene is cautious, Finny is carefree. Their relationship changes when Finny falls out of a tree and breaks his leg. Gene knows something about what caused the accident, but will he ever admit the truth to Finny? Will his conscience ever be at peace?

Note:

You will be able to read *Little Women* and *Jane Eyre* online. Links to these novels are provided in the course novel unit. To read *The Giver* or *A Separate Peace*, you will need to get a copy from your school, a library, or some other source.

Course Pacing Guide

The following course description and pacing guide is intended to help you stay on schedule with your work. Note that your course instructor may modify the schedule to meet the specific needs of your class.

Unit 1: How Do Your Mind and Body Change as You Grow?

Summary

This unit focuses on the changes a growing adolescent's mind and body go through. To explore this topic, you will look at evidence from informative essays about body image and develop your own personal narrative. You will analyze structure and technical meaning in scientific texts about the role hormonal and chemical changes in the body have on mood. You will evaluate structure and reasoning in informative texts about screen time usage and its effects on adolescent development. At the end of the unit, you will explore techniques for writing your own short memoir and examine the benefits of peer review.

Day	Activity/Objective	Type
1 day: 1	Syllabus and Plato Student Orientation <i>Review the Course Syllabus and Plato Student Orientation at the beginning of this course.</i>	Course Orientation

Day	Activity/Objective	Type
4 days: 2–5	Growing Up: Maintaining a Healthy Body Image <i>Identify the main idea and supporting evidence in informative essays.</i>	Lesson
5 days: 6–10	The Ups and Downs of Adolescence <i>Analyze structure and technical meaning in texts about the role hormonal and chemical changes in the body have on mood.</i>	Lesson
4 days: 11–14	Effects of Screen Time on Adolescent Development <i>Evaluate structure and reasoning in texts about screen time usage in adolescent development.</i>	Lesson
5 days: 15–19	Documenting Change: Memoirs Revisited <i>Explore techniques for writing your own short memoir and examine the benefits of peer review.</i>	Lesson
3 days: 20–22	Unit Activity and Discussion—Unit 1	Unit Activity/ Discussion
1 day: 23	Posttest—Unit 1	Assessment

Unit 2: How Can You Change Your Perspective?

Summary

This unit focuses on various elements of poetry. You will investigate theme and structure in Robert Frost’s poem “The Road Not Taken” and examine the impact of meter and punctuation in Emily Dickinson’s poem “I’m Nobody! Who Are You?” You will explore the language and sound techniques used in Claude McKay’s “America” and Carl Sandburg’s “Theme in Yellow” to compose a poem. Finally, you will prepare and revise a persuasive essay on a topic related to poetry.

Day	Activity/Objective	Type
5 days: 24–28	Decision Making, Theme, and Structure in Poetry <i>Investigate theme and structure in Robert Frost’s poem “The Road Not Taken.”</i>	Lesson
5 days: 29–33	Meter, Punctuation, and Self-Understanding in Poetry <i>Analyze the impact of meter and punctuation in Emily Dickinson’s poem “I’m Nobody! Who Are You?”</i>	Lesson

Day	Activity/Objective	Type
4 days: 34–37	An Introduction to Poetry Writing <i>Explore the language and sound techniques used to compose a poem.</i>	Lesson
4 days: 38–41	Writing Persuasively about Poetry <i>Prepare and revise a persuasive essay on a topic related to poetry.</i>	Lesson
3 days 42–44	Unit Activity and Discussion—Unit 2	Unit Activity/ Discussion
1 day 45	Posttest—Unit 2	Assessment

Unit 3: Who Are You?

Summary

This unit explores literary elements such as character, setting, conflict, and theme in Louisa May Alcott’s *Little Women*, Lois Lowry’s *The Giver*, Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre*, or John Knowles’s *A Separate Peace*. You will select one of these four novels and explore how novelists add meaning to their works by referring to other pieces of literature. You will examine the use of symbols in novels. You will also explore how you relate to the characters in a novel by writing an argumentative essay.

For further details, see the section **The Course Novel Unit** above.

Day	Activity/Objective	Type
4 days: 46–49	Characters and Setting in Novels <i>Identify the characters and setting in novels.</i>	Lesson
3 days: 50–52	How Novelists Reference Other Works <i>Explore how novelists add meaning to their works by referencing other pieces of literature.</i>	Lesson
4 days: 53–56	Key Conflicts in Novels <i>Examine key conflicts in novels.</i>	Lesson
4 days: 57–60	Themes and Symbols in Novels <i>Investigate themes and symbolism in novels.</i>	Lesson

Day	Activity/Objective	Type
4 days: 61–64	Writing about Characters in Novels <i>Explore how you relate to the characters in a novel by writing an argumentative essay.</i>	Lesson
3 days: 65–67	Unit Activity and Discussion—Unit 3	Unit Activity/ Discussion
1 day: 68	Posttest—Unit 3	Assessment

Unit 4: Who Do You Want to Be?

Summary

This unit focuses on Charles Dickens’s narrative approach with regard to the past, present, and future in *A Christmas Carol*. You will read the novel and evaluate your identity as a student. You will reflect upon your past, present, and future reading, study, and writing habits.

Day	Activity/Objective	Type
5 days: 69–73	Who You Were: Learning from Your Past <i>Examine Charles Dickens’s narrative approach to considering one’s past in A Christmas Carol and apply that type of self-exploration to an investigation of your past study, reading, and writing habits.</i>	Lesson
5 days: 74–78	Who You Are: Assessing Your Present <i>Explore Charles Dickens’s narrative approach to assessing one’s present in A Christmas Carol and reflect on your current identity as a student.</i>	Lesson
3 days: 79–81	Who You Will Be: Predicting Your Future <i>Analyze Charles Dickens’s narrative approach to predicting one’s future behavior in A Christmas Carol and consider how your past and present behavior can help you determine the type of student you will be.</i>	Lesson
4 days: 82–85	Who You Want to Be: Shaping Your Identity <i>Investigate Charles Dickens’s narrative approach to shaping one’s own identity in A Christmas Carol and brainstorm ways that you can change your behavior to become the type of student you want to be.</i>	Lesson
3 days: 86–88	Unit Activity and Discussion—Unit 4	Unit Activity/ Discussion

Day	Activity/Objective	Type
1 day: 89	Posttest—Unit 4	Assessment
1 day: 90	End of Semester Test	Assessment