



AP English Language and Composition

Course Description: This writing-intensive course prepares students for college-level writing and introduces American literature. Students will write for various audiences and purposes and will read both fiction and nonfiction, analyzing writers' rhetorical styles. The course is recommended for students planning to enroll in AP Literature their senior year, and passing the AP exam earns a writing credit that most colleges require for all students.

Attendance: Students are required to be in school every day. Students are responsible for communicating with their teachers to make up missed learning.

Essential Skills: Below are the four essential standards for English 11. All standards for grades 11-12 can be found at <https://doe.sd.gov/>

RL.1/RI.1: Cite evidence and inferences from the text.

W.4: Produce coherent writing with development, organization, and style appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

SL.3: Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric identifying any false, exaggerated or distorted evidence.

L.1: Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

Course Expectations: Although not everything is graded, everything is important. In order to demonstrate growth and learning, students will need to:

1. Participate in class activities (take notes, work in a group, complete in class tasks, ask questions) without distractions (cell phones, games, etc.)
2. Use morning time and teacher to seek help outside of class when needed.
3. Complete all assessments within teacher timelines.

Grading

Learning (Practice) includes instructional activities in and outside of class and are not used in grade determination.

Skyward Assessment (Grades) may include quizzes, labs, learning checks, tests, speeches, performances, projects, and various kinds of writing activities.

Final Grade	
A	100% - 90%
B	80% - 89%
C	70% - 79%
D	60% - 69%
F	0% - 59%

Calculations:

Semester Grade	
Semester Grade	95%
Semester Exam	5%
Final Grade	
Semester 1	50%
Semester 2	50%

Central High School Courses:

- Will determine grades based on student learning and growth.
- Will not include practice and behavior in grade determination.
- Will give all students regardless of absence an opportunity to demonstrate learning.
- Will not include extra credit.

Instructional Resources:

- *The Road* by Cormac McCarthy
- *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave* by Frederick Douglass
- *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* by Maya Angelou
- *Warriors Don't Cry* by Melba Patillo Beals
- *Coming of Age in Mississippi* by Anne Moody
- *The Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne
- *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain
- *They Say, I Say* (Graff/Birkinstein)
- *On Writing Well* (Zinsser)
- *Elements of Style* (Strunk/White)
- Essays and contemporary shorter works as assigned (see below for a sample list of required and optional reading—reading beyond this list will be used)
- Short stories as assigned (Sample list below, though material is not restricted by it)
- Poetry—one poem a day (too many to list)

- **Essay anthology table of contents:** Death of a Pig (White); Why I Write (Didion); Toy Children (Daum); Don't Eat Before Reading This (Bourdain); Me Talk Pretty One Day (Sedaris); The Ballad of Luther and Johnny (Vowell); Bad Taste, and on Such a Large Scale (Schmich); America's Bad Jeans (Will); Curvy or No, Barbie Is Still a Mean Girl (Daum); All Can Be Lost (Carr); A Yellow Card (Phillips); For \$1 per Big Mac (Kingsbury); What is to be done about schooling? (Belz); A Wounded Boy's Silence (Noonan); Us and Them (Sedaris); Walking While Black (Cadagon); Letter from a Birmingham Jail (King); The Boy Who Got Stuck in a Tree (Key); A Sudden Illness (Hillenbrand); Junk Food Heaven (Bryson); The Nature of the Fun (Wallace); This is Water (Wallace); Megaphone Man (Saunders)

Essay anthology drawer:

- Alexander, Caroline – Epic of Survival: Shackleton; Alexie, Sherman – What Sacagawea Means to Me; Berry, Wendell – The Pleasures of Eating; Bourdain, Anthony – Don't Eat Before Reading This; Boyle, Rebecca – Light Pollution Is Destroying the Environment; Bryson, Bill – The Toilet, the Stairs, and the Lawn; Cassidy, Cody – How to Outrun a Dinosaur; Catron, Mandy Len – To Fall in Love with Anyone, Do This; Christman, Phil – How to be Married; Cofer, Judith Ortiz – The Myth of the Latin Woman; Collins, Paul - 22,000 Seedlings; Crosley, Sloane – 35.09, the Exact Age at Which Beauty Begins to Fade; Daum, Meghan – My Misspent Youth; de Botton, Alain – Why You Will Marry the Wrong Person; Didion, Joan – Goodbye to All That; Dillard, Annie – Total Eclipse; Doyle, Brian – selections from *Hoop*; Ehrenreich, Barbara – Serving in Florida; Epstein, David – Roger vs. Tiger; Faust, Drew Gilpin – Gen Z Never Learned to Read Cursive; Frazier, Ian – Coyote v. ACME; Gioia, Ted – Is Old Music Killing New Music?; Gioia, Theodore (Ted) – Bach at the Burger King; Gladwell, Malcom - The Sports Taboo; Golding, William – Thinking as a Hobby; Gourevitch, Philip - After the Genocide; Halberstam, David – Jordan's Moment; Hartnick, Christopher – Medicine Face to Face; Heti, Sheila – On the Importance of Finding Trusted Readers; Holley, Claire – The Wisdom of Goodnight Moon; Hugo, Richard – Writing Off the Subject; Jamison, Leslie – In the Shadow of a Fairy Tale; Key, Harrison Scott – The Wishbone; Kidder, Tracy – Facts and the Nonfiction Writer; King, Stephen – Reading to Write; Lebovitz, David – My Paris Kitchen (Introduction); Lim, Lousia – The People's Republic of Amnesia (introduction); Mairs, Nancy – On Being a Cripple; Marshall, Colin – You Must Change Your Writing Style; Mauldin, Laura – Care Tactics; McClay, B.D. – It's Very Unlikely Anyone Will Read This in 200 Years; McPhee, John – The Search for Marvin Gardens; Mooney, Michael J. – The Most Amazing Bowling Story Ever; Onion, The – Amicus Brief for the case of Novak v. City of Parma, Ohio; Orwell, George – Shooting an Elephant; Phillips, Brian – A Fighter Abroad; Phillips, Brian – The Man-eaters; Rakoff, David – The Invisible Made Visible; Rennie, Jeff – Trapped! The Mike Turner Story; Robinson, Marilynne – When I Was a Child; Strebeigh, Fred – The Wheels of Freedom, Bicycles in China; Touré – Forty Million Ways to Be Black; Vowell, Sarah – The Ballad of Luther and Johnny; Wallace, David Foster – How Tracy Austin Broke My Heart; Whitehead, Colson – The Loser Edit; Wilson, N.D. – Why I Write Scary Stories for Children; Zinsser, William - College Pressures

Short story possibilities

- Hop Frog (Poe); The Devil and Tom Walker (Irving); Minister's Black Veil (Hawthorne); Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge (Bierce); Devil's Dictionary (Bierce); Outcasts of Poker Flat (Hart); To Build a Fire (London); Hills Like White Elephants (Hemingway); Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber (Hemingway); The Life You Save May Be Your Own (O'Connor); A Good Man Is Hard to Find (O'Connor); A Rose for Emily (Faulker); Health of the Sick (Cortazar); Clean Well Lighted Place (Hemingway); Tenth of December (Saunders);

Course Calendar/Pacing:

This calendar is subject to change as the teacher tweaks and improves the course.

Quarter 1 (Weeks 3-10)

Our instruction regarding our own writing will focus on basic argumentation. Students will practice developing an awareness of an argument's nuances, addressing counter arguments and forming a thesis that addresses the full range of a particular issue. Students will also work on obtaining the best possible evidence to prove a point and will learn to argue such a point with a vigorous and sincere voice. The minor writing assignments provide opportunities for students to focus upon these elements.

Minor writing assignments

Assignments 1-2: Timed responses

In single class sessions, students will write two essays responding to past AP English Language and Composition prompts (selections typically include "Muckraker honor" or "Function of humorists" or "Charity incentives"). The essays will require students to build effective arguments from their own experiences and readings. Instruction will particularly encourage students to develop firm thesis claims, to consider counter-arguments, and to set up their essays as their own entrance into a broader conversation.

Assignment 3+

Students will select essays from the 'anthology drawer' of essays provided to them and respond to the ideas with their own ideas. The assignment will put into practice lessons on summarizing a writer's argument and responding with our own opinions.

Major writing assignments, first quarter

Major writing assignment 1: Driven by a Question

Students will write a compelling argument that is driven by a question or tension.

Quarter 1 Texts

Writing Text of focus

- *They Say, I Say* - the first four chapters, read and discussed during the rotating writing tips instructional times.

Books to be read:

- *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave* by Frederick Douglass
- One title chosen from the following list:
 - *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* by Maya Angelou
 - *Coming of Age in Mississippi* by: Anne Moody
 - *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* by Malcolm X with Alex Haley

- *Black Like Me* by John Howard Griffin
- *Warriors Don't Cry* by Melba Patillo Beals

Nonfiction articles

- “Of Our Spiritual Strivings” by W.E.B. DuBois
- *Brown v the Board of Education*, 1954 majority opinion
- “Song of Solomon” by Wesley Morris (additional focus in *Rhetoric Reader*)
- Kwame Anthony Appiah's introduction to *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*
- from [William Moore's slave narrative](#) (available through Library of Congress)
- from [John Fields slave narrative interview](#) (available through Library of Congress)
- from *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano* by Olaudah Equiano

Poetry

- Gwendolyn Brooks: *The Bean Eaters*; *When you have forgotten Sunday: the love story*; *We Real Cool*; *The Coora Flower*; *A Bronzeville Mother Loiters in Mississippi. Meanwhile a Mississippi Mother Burns Bacon.*
- Paul Laurence Dunbar: *Sympathy*; *We Wear the Mask*
- Claude McKay: *If We Must Die*
- Langston Hughes: *Mother to Son*; *The Negro Speaks of Rivers*; *I Too, Sing America*; *Dreams*; *Dream Deferred*
- Nikki Giovanni: *Nikki-Rosa*; *basketball*
- Maya Angelou: *Caged Bird*; *Still I Rise*
- Dudley Randall: *Booker T. and W.E.B.*

Images

- Van Gogh's “The Potato Eaters” (connected to Brooks's “The Bean Eaters”)
- Civil Rights photo gallery at [America.gov](#)
- Emmett Till casket photo
- “Jordan's Last Shot” by Fernando Medina (to accompany “Jordan's Moment”)

Quarter 2 (Weeks 11-18)

Writing instruction during the second quarter begins to focus upon analysis of rhetoric, examining the nuances of stylistic moves writers use to craft their messages more convincingly, with the end goal always for students to attempt to apply such moves to their own writing. The study will begin by using the traditional rhetorical lenses of invention, disposition, and style. Since students will have achieved a greater familiarity with new rhetorical terms by this point, they will break down a number of nonfiction texts from their *Rhetoric Reader* in greater detail. Coinciding with this level of analysis, students will begin to explore the historical trends in American literature and will examine the American age of reason and early documents in American history through the framework of rhetorical analysis.

In this quarter students will be introduced to American romanticism and will study in depth Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*. They will also choose a novel from a given list and

respond to the literature in eight journal entries, four for each novel they read during the quarter.

Students will attempt in their own writing to utilize the skills discussed, most prominently through two formal literary analysis essays and a set of four essays analyzing other writers' rhetorical strategies.

Minor writing assignments, second quarter

Assignments 1-3

In these shorter assignments (300-500 words) students will formally articulate their analysis of a writer's rhetorical strategies. They will begin by examining a selection from the *Rhetoric Reader* and then move on to sample questions from previous AP Language and Composition exams, attempting to complete them in a timed setting. They will continue to apply their ability to craft a clear thesis and coherent discussion through a piece of writing.

Major Writing Assignments, second quarter, may include

- Tangling with a columnist – capitalizing on the *They Say, I Say* material, each student will find a newspaper columnist of their choice and read a column to which they can reply. In a short response (300 words) they will summarize and respond to the writer's argument.
- Cobbler Review – a work of artistic criticism

Quarter 2 Texts

Writing text focus

- *They Say, I Say* - chapters 5-10, read and discussed during the rotating writing tips instructional times.

Nonfiction texts to be read:

- The Declaration of Independence
- "Speech at the Virginia Convention" by Patrick Henry
- "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" by Jonathan Edwards
- "The Gettysburg Address" by Abraham Lincoln

Novels to be read

- One novel of particular literary merit, chosen from the list issued by the teacher
- *The Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne

Short stories

- "The Devil and Tom Walker" by Washington Irving
- "Hop Frog" by Edgar Allan Poe
- "The Minister's Black Veil" by Nathaniel Hawthorne

Short Session: Writing with a unique voice (Weeks 19-20)

In the short period between Christmas and the end of the semester, students will explore what it is to write in a unique voice, reading closely the style of contemporary essayists in the *Rhetoric Reader* and considering what their own stylistic strengths and leanings are as writers. Direct instruction during this unit will focus upon sentence structure and vocabulary, helping students to recognize how choices of structure and vocabulary create a writer's voice. Students will write four to five articles, chosen from a list of options, that will give them an opportunity to express themselves in personal ways, free of the typical academic restraints. Their audience will be their peers, as each piece can be submitted for publication in the school's newspaper and we will structure time into class to share the articles with one another, allowing opportunities to revise and helping each other recognize what we most value about each writer's voice.

Topic choices may include: Speak your piece (an article describing pet peeves); The funniest time (a memory rehashed for an audience); Childhood memoir (a memory told with an angle of purpose for an audience); An Encomium; What is the purpose? (a defense of something important to the writer); "Moth Experiences" (wild experiences, inspired by a Don Marquis poem); a short story.

Quarter 3 (Weeks 21-32)

For most of the third quarter, students will concentrate on drawing more upon outside sources to support and form their own thesis, building their arguments while synthesizing other's work into their own. Instruction will include stylistic considerations when including formal MLA documentation, and the students' extended research paper will require them to utilize the rhetorical skills acquired through the year, acting as a kind of capstone achievement.

In their study of literature, students will explore the American movements of realism and naturalism and how the movements were a reaction to romanticism. In doing so, they will increasingly interact with the work of critics and outside sources, seeing how such sources can augment our reading of a text and provide helpful models of literary analysis. Students will respond to their reading and criticism through classroom discussion and in writing.

Writing assignments, third quarter

Major writing assignment: a research paper

Using Modern Language Association (MLA) style as a standard, students will research a topic of their choice in depth, developing a unique thesis and expanding that topic into a 6-8 page paper.

Minor writing assignments

Students will write three types of smaller essays attempting to pull together various sources' information to create a coherent thesis and paper. These timed essays will utilize previous free response questions from the AP English Language and Composition exam.

Texts for Quarter 3

Books

- *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain
- One novel of particular literary merit, chosen from the list issued by the teacher

Nonfiction articles to read

- “The Youngest Brothers Tale” by Alan Jacobs
- “How to Tell a Story” by Mark Twain
- “Fennimore Cooper’s Literary Offenses” by Mark Twain
- “Huckleberry Finn” by Lionel Trilling
- “The Code of Honor” by Claudia Johnson

Writing Text of focus

- Strunk and White’s *Elements of Style*

Quarter 4 (Weeks 33-40)

During the last quarter of the year students will continue to expand their opportunities to write for different purposes and potential audiences, writing literary reflection and analysis concerning their reading for the quarter. Students will have an opportunity to write personal statements of purpose at the close of the year, where they can consider the value of what they have learned in this class and others.

In students’ study of literature they will encounter American modernism and read a number of short stories to experience what it is like to assemble meaning from this style of story. They will study a series of paintings representative of each of the three major artistic movements in American arts, examining how the paintings reveal the artistic theories behind the movement. They will also connect the stylistic approaches of modernism with the style they’ve discovered in contemporary essayists and poets, seeing the influence of the movement upon writers across the spectrum. These pursuits will rely particularly upon class discussion and informal reflective responses.

Likely writing projects

- What is your philosophy?
-

Quarter 4 Texts

Images

- “Lady Liberty Leading the People” by Eugene Delacroix

- “Snap the Whip” by Homer Winslow
- “Violin and Candlestick” by Georges Braque

Short stories read

- “A Rose for Emily” by William Faulkner
- “The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber” by Ernest Hemingway
- “Hills Like White Elephants” by Ernest Hemingway
- “A Clean Well-Lighted Place” by Ernest Hemingway
- “A Good Man Is Hard to Find” by Flannery O’Connor
- “The Life You Save May Be Your Own” by Flannery O’Connor
- “Tenth of December” by George Saunders

Novel students will read

- A book entirely of the student’s choosing

Poetry - specific poems may vary, but students will be introduced to the following poets

- Emily Dickinson
- Walt Whitman
- Robert Frost
- Ezra Pound
- William Carlos Williams

Additional nonfiction articles read

- “This is Water” by David Foster Wallace

