



# **AP<sup>®</sup> English Literature and Composition**

## **Teacher's Guide**

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The Bay School  
San Francisco, California

connect to college success<sup>™</sup>  
[www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com)

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# Welcome Letter from the College Board

Dear AP<sup>®</sup> Teacher:

Whether you are a new AP teacher, using this AP Teacher's Guide to assist in developing a syllabus for the first AP course you will ever teach, or an experienced AP teacher simply wanting to compare the teaching strategies you use with those employed by other expert AP teachers, we are confident you will find this resource valuable. We urge you to make good use of the ideas, advice, classroom strategies, and sample syllabi contained in this Teacher's Guide.

You deserve tremendous credit for all that you do to fortify students for college success. The nurturing environment in which you help your students master a college-level curriculum—a much better atmosphere for one's first exposure to college-level expectations than the often large classes in which many first-year college courses are taught—seems to translate directly into lasting benefits as students head off to college. An array of research studies, from the classic 1999 U.S. Department of Education study *Answers in the Tool Box* to new research from the University of Texas and the University of California, demonstrate that when students enter high school with equivalent academic abilities and socioeconomic status, those who develop the content knowledge to demonstrate college-level mastery of an AP Exam (a grade of 3 or higher) have much higher rates of college completion and have higher grades in college. The 2005 National Center for Educational Accountability (NCEA) study shows that students who take AP have much higher college graduation rates than students with the *same* academic abilities who do not have that valuable AP experience in high school. Furthermore, a Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS, formerly known as the Third International Mathematics and Science Study) found that even AP Calculus students who score a 1 on the AP Exam are significantly outperforming other advanced mathematics students in the United States, and they compare favorably to students from the top-performing nations in an international assessment of mathematics achievement. (Visit AP Central<sup>®</sup> at [apcentral.collegeboard.com](http://apcentral.collegeboard.com) for details about these and other AP-related studies.)

For these reasons, the AP teacher plays a significant role in a student's academic journey. Your AP classroom may be the only taste of college rigor your students will have before they enter higher education. It is important to note that such benefits cannot be demonstrated among AP courses that are AP courses in name only, rather than in quality of content. For AP courses to meaningfully prepare students for college success, courses must meet standards that enable students to replicate the content of the comparable college class. Using this AP Teacher's Guide is one of the keys to ensuring that your AP course is as good as (or even better than) the course the student would otherwise be taking in college. While the AP Program does not mandate the use of any one syllabus or textbook and emphasizes that AP teachers should be granted the creativity and flexibility to develop their own curriculum, it is beneficial for AP teachers to compare their syllabi not just to the course outline in the official AP Course Description and in chapter 3 of this guide, but also to the syllabi presented on AP Central, to ensure that each course labeled AP meets the standards of a college-level course. Visit AP Central<sup>®</sup> at [apcentral.collegeboard.com](http://apcentral.collegeboard.com) for details about the AP Course Audit, course-specific Curricular Requirements, and how to submit your syllabus for AP Course Audit authorization.

As the Advanced Placement Program<sup>®</sup> continues to experience tremendous growth in the twenty-first century, it is heartening to see that in every U.S. state and the District of Columbia, a growing proportion of high school graduates have earned at least one grade of 3 or higher on an AP Exam. In some states, more

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than 20 percent of graduating seniors have accomplished this goal. The incredible efforts of AP teachers are paying off, producing ever greater numbers of college-bound seniors who are prepared to succeed in college. Please accept my admiration and congratulations for all that you are doing and achieving.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Marcia L. Wilbur".

Marcia Wilbur  
Director, Curriculum and Content Development  
Advanced Placement Program

# Equity and Access

In the following section, the College Board describes its commitment to achieving equity in the AP Program.

## Why are equitable preparation and inclusion important?

Currently, 40 percent of students entering four-year colleges and universities and 63 percent of students at two-year institutions require some remedial education. This is a significant concern because a student is less likely to obtain a bachelor's degree if he or she has taken one or more remedial courses.<sup>1</sup>

Nationwide, secondary school educators are increasingly committed not just to helping students complete high school but also to helping them develop the habits of mind necessary for managing the rigors of college. As *Educational Leadership* reported in 2004:

The dramatic changes taking place in the U.S. economy jeopardize the economic future of students who leave high school without the problem-solving and communication skills essential to success in postsecondary education and in the growing number of high-paying jobs in the economy. To back away from education reforms that help all students master these skills is to give up on the commitment to equal opportunity for all.<sup>2</sup>

Numerous research studies have shown that engaging a student in a rigorous high school curriculum such as is found in AP courses is one of the best ways that educators can help that student persist and complete a bachelor's degree.<sup>3</sup> However, while 57 percent of the class of 2004 in U.S. public high schools enrolled in higher education in fall 2004, only 13 percent had been boosted with a successful AP experience in high school.<sup>4</sup> Although AP courses are not the only examples of rigorous curricula, there is still a significant gap between students with college aspirations and students with adequate high school preparation to fulfill those aspirations.

Strong correlations exist between AP success and college success.<sup>5</sup> Educators attest that this is partly because AP enables students to receive a taste of college while still in an environment that provides more support and resources for students than do typical college courses. Effective AP teachers work closely with their students, giving them the opportunity to reason, analyze, and understand for themselves. As a result, AP students frequently find themselves developing new confidence in their academic abilities and discovering their previously unknown capacities for college studies and academic success.

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1. Andrea Venezia, Michael W. Kirst, and Anthony L. Antonio, *Betraying the College Dream: How Disconnected K-12 and Postsecondary Education Systems Undermine Student Aspirations* (Palo Alto, Calif.: The Bridge Project, 2003), 8.

2. Frank Levy and Richard J. Murnane, "Education and the Changing Job Market." *Educational Leadership* 62 (2) (October 2004): 83.

3. In addition to studies from University of California–Berkeley and the National Center for Educational Accountability (2005), see the classic study on the subject of rigor and college persistence: Clifford Adelman, *Answers in the Tool Box: Academic Intensity, Attendance Patterns, and Bachelor's Degree Attainment* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education, 1999).

4. *Advanced Placement Report to the Nation* (New York: College Board, 2005).

5. Wayne Camara, "College Persistence, Graduation, and Remediation," *College Board Research Notes* (RN-19) (New York: College Board, 2003).

### Which students should be encouraged to register for AP courses?

Any student willing and ready to do the work should be considered for an AP course. The College Board actively endorses the principles set forth in the following Equity Policy Statement and encourages schools to support this policy.

The College Board and the Advanced Placement Program encourage teachers, AP Coordinators, and school administrators to make equitable access a guiding principle for their AP programs. The College Board is committed to the principle that all students deserve an opportunity to participate in rigorous and academically challenging courses and programs. All students who are willing to accept the challenge of a rigorous academic curriculum should be considered for admission to AP courses. The Board encourages the elimination of barriers that restrict access to AP courses for students from ethnic, racial, and socioeconomic groups that have been traditionally underrepresented in the AP Program. Schools should make every effort to ensure that their AP classes reflect the diversity of their student population.

The fundamental objective that schools should strive to accomplish is to create a stimulating AP program that academically challenges students and has the same ethnic, gender, and socioeconomic demographics as the overall student population in the school. African American and Native American students are severely underrepresented in AP classrooms nationwide; Latino student participation has increased tremendously, but in many AP courses Latino students remain underrepresented. To prevent a willing, motivated student from having the opportunity to engage in AP courses is to deny that student the possibility of a better future.

Knowing what we know about the impact a rigorous curriculum can have on a student's future, it is not enough for us simply to leave it to motivated students to seek out these courses. Instead, we must reach out to students and encourage them to take on this challenge. With this in mind, there are two factors to consider when counseling a student regarding an AP opportunity:

#### **1. Student motivation**

Many potentially successful AP students would never enroll if the decision were left to their own initiative. They may not have peers who value rigorous academics, or they may have had prior academic experiences that damaged their confidence or belief in their college potential. They may simply lack an understanding of the benefits that such courses can offer them. Accordingly, it is essential that we not gauge a student's motivation to take AP until that student has had the opportunity to understand the advantages—not just the challenges—of such course work.

Educators committed to equity provide all students in a school with an understanding of the benefits of rigorous curricula. Such educators conduct student assemblies and/or presentations to parents that clearly describe the advantages of taking an AP course and outline the work expected of students. Perhaps most important, they have one-on-one conversations with the students in which advantages and expectations are placed side by side. These educators realize that many students, lacking confidence in their abilities, will be listening for any indication that they should not take an AP course. Accordingly, such educators, while frankly describing the amount of homework to be anticipated, also offer words of encouragement and support, assuring the students that if they are willing to do the work, they are wanted in the course.

The College Board has created a free online tool, AP Potential™, to help educators reach out to students who previously might not have been considered for participation in an AP course. Drawing upon data based on correlations between student performance on specific sections of the PSAT/NMSQT® and

performance on specific AP Exams, AP Potential generates rosters of students at your school who have a strong likelihood of success in a particular AP course. Schools nationwide have successfully enrolled many more students in AP than ever before by using these rosters to help students (and their parents) see themselves as having potential to succeed in college-level studies. For more information, visit <http://appotential.collegeboard.com>.

Actively recruiting students for AP and sustaining enrollment can also be enhanced by offering incentives for both students and teachers. While the College Board does not formally endorse any one incentive for boosting AP participation, we encourage school administrators to develop policies that will best serve an overarching goal to expand participation and improve performance in AP courses. When such incentives are implemented, educators should ensure that quality verification measures such as the AP Exam are embedded in the program so that courses are rigorous enough to merit the added benefits.

Many schools offer the following incentives for students who enroll in AP:

- Extra weighting of AP course grades when determining class rank
- Full or partial payment of AP Exam fees
- On-site exam administration

Additionally, some schools offer the following incentives for teachers to reward them for their efforts to include and support traditionally underserved students:

- Extra preparation periods
- Reduced class size
- Reduced duty periods
- Additional classroom funds
- Extra salary

## 2. Student preparation

Because AP courses should be the equivalent of courses taught in colleges and universities, it is important that a student be prepared for such rigor. The types of preparation a student should have before entering an AP course vary from course to course and are described in the official AP Course Description book for each subject (available as a free download at [apcentral.collegeboard.com](http://apcentral.collegeboard.com)).

Unfortunately, many schools have developed a set of gatekeeping or screening requirements that go far beyond what is appropriate to ensure that an individual student has had sufficient preparation to succeed in an AP course. Schools should make every effort to eliminate the gatekeeping process for AP enrollment. Because research has not been able to establish meaningful correlations between gatekeeping devices and actual success on an AP Exam, the College Board **strongly discourages** the use of the following factors as thresholds or requirements for admission to an AP course:

- Grade point average
- Grade in a required prerequisite course
- Recommendation from a teacher

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- Recommendation from a teacher
- AP teacher’s discretion
- Standardized test scores
- Course-specific entrance exam or essay

Additionally, schools should be wary of the following concerns regarding the misuse of AP:

- Creating “Pre-AP courses” to establish a limited, exclusive track for access to AP
- Rushing to install AP courses without simultaneously implementing a plan to prepare students and teachers in lower grades for the rigor of the program

### How can I ensure that I am not watering down the quality of my course as I admit more students?

Students in AP courses should take the AP Exam, which provides an external verification of the extent to which college-level mastery of an AP course is taking place. While it is likely that the percentage of students who receive a grade of 3 or higher may dip as more students take the exam, that is not an indication that the quality of a course is being watered down. Instead of looking at percentages, educators should be looking at raw numbers, since each number represents an individual student. If the raw number of students receiving a grade of 3 or higher on the AP Exam is not decreasing as more students take the exam, there is no indication that the quality of learning in your course has decreased as more students have enrolled.

### What are schools doing to expand access and improve AP performance?

Districts and schools seeing the greatest success in improving both participation and performance in AP have implemented a multipronged approach to growing an AP program. These schools offer AP as capstone courses, providing professional development for AP teachers and additional incentives and support for the teachers and students participating at this top level of the curriculum. The high standards of the AP courses are used as anchors that influence the 6–12 curriculum from the “top down.” Simultaneously, these educators are investing in the training of teachers in the pre-AP years and are building a vertically articulated, sequential curriculum from middle school to high school that culminates in AP courses—a broad pipeline that prepares students step-by-step for the rigors of AP so that they will have a fair shot at success in an AP course once they reach that stage. An effective and demanding AP program necessitates cooperation and communication between high schools and middle schools. Effective teaming among members of all educational levels ensures rigorous standards for students across years and provides them with the skills needed to succeed in AP. For more information about Pre-AP® professional development, including workshops designed to facilitate the creation of AP Vertical Teams® of middle school and high school teachers, visit AP Central.

Advanced Placement Program  
The College Board

# Participating in the AP<sup>®</sup> Course Audit

## Overview

The AP Course Audit is a collaborative effort among secondary schools, colleges and universities, and the College Board. For their part, schools deliver college-level instruction to students and complete and return AP Course Audit materials. Colleges and universities work with the College Board to define elements common to college courses in each AP subject, help develop materials to support AP teaching, and receive a roster of schools and their authorized AP courses. The College Board fosters dialogue about the AP Course Audit requirements and recommendations, and reviews syllabi.

Starting in the 2007-08 academic year, all schools wishing to label a course “AP” on student transcripts, course listings, or any school publications must complete and return the subject-specific AP Course Audit form, along with the course syllabus, for all sections of their AP courses. Approximately two months after submitting AP Course Audit materials, schools will receive a legal agreement authorizing the use of the “AP” trademark on qualifying courses. Colleges and universities will receive a roster of schools listing the courses authorized to use the “AP” trademark at each school.

## Purpose

College Board member schools at both the secondary and college levels requested an annual AP Course Audit in order to provide teachers and administrators with clear guidelines on curricular and resource requirements that must be in place for AP courses and to help colleges and universities better interpret secondary school courses marked “AP” on students’ transcripts.

The AP Course Audit form identifies common, essential elements of effective college courses, including subject matter and classroom resources such as college-level textbooks and laboratory equipment. Schools and individual teachers will continue to develop their own curricula for AP courses they offer—the AP Course Audit will simply ask them to indicate inclusion of these elements in their AP syllabi or describe how their courses nonetheless deliver college-level course content.

AP Exam performance is not factored into the AP Course Audit. A program that audited only those schools with seemingly unsatisfactory exam performance might cause some schools to limit access to AP courses and exams. In addition, because AP Exams are taken and exam grades reported after college admissions decisions are already made, AP course participation has become a relevant factor in the college admissions process. On the AP Course Audit form, teachers and administrators attest that their course includes elements commonly taught in effective college courses. Colleges and universities reviewing students’ transcripts can thus be reasonably assured that courses labeled “AP” provide an appropriate level and range of college-level course content, along with the classroom resources to best deliver that content.

## For more information

You should discuss the AP Course Audit with your department head and principal. For more information, including a timeline, frequently asked questions, and downloadable AP Course Audit forms, visit [apcentral.collegeboard.com/courseaudit](http://apcentral.collegeboard.com/courseaudit).

# Preface

We Advanced Placement Program (AP) English teachers revel in reading complex literature, mulling it over, and talking about it with friends, colleagues, and students. And since the College Board’s *AP English Literature and Composition Course Description* explains that “an AP English course in Literature and Composition should engage students in the careful reading and critical analysis of imaginative literature,” the match between teachers and the course seems made in heaven. Sometimes, however, our students do not, initially at least, share our enthusiasm for reading widely, for delving deeply, for critical analysis, for supporting assertions with appropriate evidence, or for moving from observation to mature interpretation.

This Teacher’s Guide offers concrete ideas and suggestions for the interaction between teachers’ enthusiasms and passions and the creation and implementation of a rich course that will engage students’ interest. Although this guide is designed for teachers new to AP English Literature and Composition, seasoned colleagues who are curious about how professionals all over the country are teaching their courses may find it useful as well. After all, even the most experienced teachers begin each year as “new” teachers with a fresh crop of students before them.

Information about the AP English Literature and Composition Exam offered each May appears in chapter 4 of this guide, but this is not a test-preparation book. Instead, it focuses primarily on ideas for fashioning a deep and wide-ranging college- or university-level course, one that reflects the genres of imaginative literature over the last four centuries even as it bears the imprint of each individual teacher who embarks on the adventure of teaching this rigorous and exciting class.

Students and teachers who together undertake the challenge of an AP course feel an enormous sense of accomplishment and satisfaction. According to the College Board, “the AP Program regularly conducts research studies to assess whether AP students perform as well as, or better than, their non-AP peers in higher-level college courses. A recent study that analyzed college grades of more than 72,000 college students at 20 different colleges from the fall of 1996 to the summer of 2001 illustrated that:

- Students who receive AP Exam grades of 3, 4, or 5, and bypass introductory courses, perform in upper-level classes as well as or better than those students who first complete the introductory course.
- Students who receive grades of 3, 4, or 5 on most AP Exams are more likely to receive an A or a B in a higher-level class than their non-AP peers.”

This study can be accessed by clicking on the “Higher Education” tab on AP Central, then selecting “AP Research.”

In other words, AP courses prepare our students for success in postsecondary education.

This guide will be helpful in designing your first or revised AP English Literature and Composition course, but you’ll need to access many other resources as well (see chapter 5). Your most important resource is AP Central ([apcentral.collegeboard.com](http://apcentral.collegeboard.com)), a College Board–sponsored Web site that provides, among other things, current information, sample syllabi, capsule reviews of texts you might use, and the

free-response questions from past exams. Registration at AP Central is free and allows you to participate as both a contributor and reader in its electronic discussion group (EDG). By joining the AP English EDG, you can connect with colleagues throughout the nation and the world.

Welcome to the start of a new phase of your teaching career!

Ellen Greenblatt  
The Bay School  
San Francisco, California

## Ellen Greenblatt



*Ellen Greenblatt, a consultant for the College Board and ETS, is a veteran teacher and accomplished author. She has received numerous awards, including a National Fellowship for Independent Study in the Humanities from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Her writing projects include creating educational materials for television documentaries and for literature teachers.*



# Chapter 1

## About AP English Literature and Composition

### Overview: Past, Present, Future

The English language is an extraordinarily malleable and adaptive creation, uniquely able to absorb words from around the globe and the neologisms that keep it timely. It forms some of humanity's greatest literary productions but sturdily serves the rudimentary speaker. The near impossibility of fixing in stone this protean body reaffirms that as teachers we draw on a wonderful resource (see *The Meaning of Everything: The Story of the Oxford English Dictionary*, Simon Winchester's delightful history of the *Oxford English Dictionary*).

If change characterizes the English language—just as innovation powers its literature—changes in English teaching may seem equally inevitable. The last few decades have witnessed sweeping trends: phonics versus whole language; expressive versus critical skills; writing from models and as process; “words on the page” or reader response; and debates over “theory in the classroom,” “cultural literacy,” and “the canon.” Add shifting student populations, government requirements, parental demands, and budget cuts, and the English instructor may feel compelled to behave like the comic hero of Stephen Leacock's story who jumped onto his horse and rode madly off in all directions.

Are there core subject-area practices and skills every student must master? The AP English Literature and Composition Exam assumes that, while there are core skills (attentive reading and analytical writing), there need be no core curriculum. Although the richness of writing in English, over time and across cultures, allows an infinite number of selections and combinations in the choice of works for your class, it is useful to refer to the past for approaches to literature that have been considered crucial. The following is a brief survey, using Shakespeare as an example, of how critical approaches evolve and shift over time.

- For much of the nineteenth century, the teaching of literature, when it happened at all, occurred within the study of rhetoric. (Declamation of Shakespeare)
- The “new nationalisms” in Europe and the Americas and advances in linguistic study led to a view of literature as the expression of peoples and cultures. (Shakespeare the national poet)
- In a related development, historical and antiquarian in its impulse, scholarship focused on authors' sources and influences. (Shakespeare the chronicler)
- A sense of literature as a unique authorial expression was accompanied by a validation of critical “taste” and a Deweyan valuation of personal response. (Cult of the Bard)
- The seemingly more objective “new” criticism was reinforced by demands for measurable educational results in the postwar period. (Ironic tensions in the sonnets)

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- In reaction to textual isolationism, texts were placed into greater literary or symbolic patterns. (Shakespeare the mythologizer)
- This line was extended by “theory” with texts viewed in a (sometimes inverted) relationship to other linguistic, psychological, social, and historical systems. (Rereading Shakespeare)
- A recent stage turns the lens onto literary study itself. (Why Shakespeare? Whose Shakespeare?)

Just as the language itself has acquired enormous tensile strength over time, literature teaching today is enriched by this overlaying of questions and approaches. Close, attentive, and appreciative reading is at the base of all we do, expressed through discussion and debate, performance, and especially through critical writing. But “close” does not mean “myopic.” The reintroduction of rhetoric into the classroom prompts us to relate texts to their intended audiences, then and now, and to consider concretely how the text makes its mark. As a new audience, our reader reactions are both valid and open for investigation. We are invited to similarly speculate on the biographical, historical, and social elements that bring authors into being and give texts their distinctive shapes. The study of works from many cultures and countries raises questions about the place of literature in forming identity and community, and exposes students to the multiplicity of English usage. Students should be encouraged to place their readings into an active nexus of interrelationship. And last, we need to raise in the classroom the most important literary question of all: How is literature a part of our lives?

Given the time and format limitations of the AP English Literature and Composition Exam, not all aspects of student understanding will be assessed. “Context,” for example, cannot be hastily supplied in an exam situation. Understanding of literary history and generic range cannot be directly examined given the enormous variations in AP classrooms, but these considerations and more will have shaped the nuanced text-reading abilities, and the clear critical writing, of a student who is well prepared for the exam—and beyond.

—Heather Murray  
Associate Professor of English  
University of Toronto

## Course Description Essentials

The heart of the Advanced Placement Program (AP) is in the thousands of classrooms across the United States and the world where teachers like you meet students with a wide range of skills and nurture them to the level of excellence that the AP English Literature and Composition course demands. In the best of situations, AP teachers share ideas and strategies with colleagues who teach younger grades and develop an integrated curriculum that offers many students, including those who had not thought it an option, the possibility of taking AP English Literature and Composition. But even with such a multiyear preparatory strategy (see Pre-AP professional development initiatives like AP Vertical Teams in chapter 5), the AP teacher faces a challenging task.

## Knowing a Few Works Well

The *AP English Literature and Composition Course Description*, available for download free of charge through AP Central, stipulates that students in a strong AP English Literature and Composition curriculum should read “works from several genres and periods—from the sixteenth century to the twentieth century—but, more importantly, they should get to know a few works well.” In the words of the Course Description, “reading in AP courses should be both wide and deep.”

The importance of getting to know a few works well cannot be overstated. Galloping through a novel a week, reading 10 plays in a quarter, or reading one poem by each of 25 poets serves students considerably less well than inviting them to immerse themselves in a few novels, plays, or poets, and then, with the critical insights and tools they have gained, turn to other works and authors. Getting the right balance can be tricky, however, especially for teachers just beginning to teach AP courses. How many books is enough? Rumors fly about teachers who assign eight books over the summer, testing students when school begins on each with a combination of quotation identifications and essay questions. Teachers new to the AP Program can't help wondering, "Should I do that? How can I possibly deal with all those papers?" Is reading more the best way to lead students to productive close reading that, again quoting the Course Description, "involves the following elements: the experience of literature, the interpretation of literature, the evaluation of literature"? And what about writing? How much is enough? Can students write imaginatively as well as analytically and critically? Teachers, new and experienced, wonder if students can still have a worthwhile learning experience when their writing is not read and assessed.

You will see, just from the sample syllabi in chapter 3, that successful approaches to teaching AP English Literature and Composition take many forms. Though the *AP English Literature and Composition Course Description* neither prescribes nor recommends particular texts, it does stipulate that students should read works that can bear close examination and re-examination. In addition, while different AP English Literature and Composition courses might have different emphases or themes, a yearlong AP English course should normally include poetry, prose, and drama and should range from the sixteenth century to the present.

### The AP English Literature Development Committee

Who, however, sets the policies that govern AP courses? Many teachers are unaware of how the AP English Literature and Composition Exam and Course Description come into being each year. The AP English Literature Development Committee, despite its name, discusses course policy in addition to writing the exams. The committee comprises six members from throughout the nation: three representing high schools and three representing colleges or universities, a balance that is crucial to maintaining both the integrity of the course and its teachability. If you were a fly on the wall during one of the committee meetings, you would hear intense, intellectually rigorous discussions on pedagogy and on what should be the appropriate literary focus—in a time when we admire and value the works of the past even as we recognize the importance and pleasures of expanding the canon. Committee decisions and up-to-date information on course changes are posted on the AP English Literature course pages on AP Central.

### Goals

The goal of the AP English Literature and Composition course is to encourage students to read, write, and discuss works critically and with energy and imagination. As they become familiar with the different literary approaches, students can develop and mold their own styles that reflect personal values and preferences. If students' knowledge and love of literature grows, you can leave them thinking, feeling, and inspired to read more.

The members of the AP English Literature Development Committee, like all teachers, want students to be engaged by the reading and writing tasks they present, but an individual teacher's course does not exist in a vacuum. In other words, students take other English courses before they reach us, and they arrive with different levels of preparation. By the end of the course, however, most if not all students in the class should feel prepared to take the AP Exam. Their performance on the three-hour AP Exam is assessed by people who know nothing about their personal struggles, their progress, or their course load. In addition, colleges and universities throughout the United States and Canada monitor the progress of students who

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“pass” the exam with a grade of 3, 4, or 5. Postsecondary institutions set their own policies for assigning credit and placement; the College Board does not award credit. (For more information on how colleges and universities assign credit, see the AP Research page in the Higher Education section of AP Central.)

This guide will provide effective teaching strategies, advice for developing a course syllabus, and a comprehensive list of classroom resources. Additionally, it will clarify the demands of the AP English Literature and Composition Exam as well as offer preparation strategies to sharpen students’ critical reading, interpretation, and writing skills. If we teach a rich, varied, and interesting curriculum and require writing that demands interpretation and evaluation, the exam (with a bit of practice to ensure that students are test-wise) will take care of itself. As an authentic and valid assessment of how well students read and write analytically and critically, the AP English Literature and Composition Exam measures the valuable skills that you will be teaching. Students will benefit from the journey on which you lead them.

### Key Concepts and Skills

By the end of the AP English Literature and Composition course, students should be able to approach a poem, a prose work, and a play and—proceeding beyond visceral and emotional reactions—respond to it analytically and critically, both orally and in writing. These well-developed responses will, at their best, use literary terms and key concepts to illuminate insights rather than simply to show students’ familiarity with them.

### Form Follows Function

The Course Description does not enumerate a list of terms that students should know. Instead, it emphasizes that students should “read deliberately and thoroughly, taking time to understand a work’s complexity, to absorb its richness of meaning, and to analyze how that meaning is embodied in literary form.” In other words, students should understand that form follows function, that *how* authors write is inextricably linked to *what* they are writing about. Here is where students’ familiarity with literary terminology can open the texts and help them to describe, analyze, and interpret what they are confronting.

### Style Analysis

As a starting point in their examination of any work of prose or poetry, students should be able to identify *speaker*, *audience*, *situation*, and *setting*. The following are questions with which you might begin a class discussion.

- In whose voice are we hearing the words?
- To whom is the speaker speaking?
- Where (in time, place, social context, class) is the speaker as he or she is speaking?

As students identify or begin to identify those elements, they can begin to examine the style of the piece. For example:

- What is the level of *diction*?
- Does the author depend upon particular *details* to achieve his or her effect?
- On what *allusions* might the piece depend?
- What kind of *syntax* does the author use?

- Does the *syntax* vary? If so, what is the effect of that *variety*?
- What is the effect of any *repetition* in the piece?
- And, perhaps most difficult for students, what is the author's attitude toward what he or she is writing about? In other words, what is the *tone* of the piece?

### Recognizing Literary Terms

Of course students must learn, if they have not already in previous courses, the meanings of literary terms. If teachers use them naturally in discussion, so will students, and, instead of being a “museum of terms” that students might visit only on the occasion of a quiz, the literary vocabulary will function to expand students’ analytical ability. Once students learn, for example, the concepts of *paradox* or *archetype*, or once they understand that *enjambment* generally does not occur by accident but serves a purpose in poetry, their analyses inevitably deepen.

Mentioning critical terms without appearing to prescribe a list is a delicate proposition in a guide like this. Some teachers will inevitably try to glean the secret code, finding the implicit list. There is no set list, but students should become aware that literary terms are wonderfully useful. Certainly students should become familiar with the uses of *irony* (dramatic, verbal, in situations), *hyperbole*, and *understatement*. Recognizing *allusions* requires knowledge about mythology and the Bible as well as about history and culture. How can students discuss poetry without an understanding of *meter* and *scansion*, *imagery*, and the various *poetic forms*? Knowing what a *foil* is helps to illuminate discussions of fiction and drama, while being able to recognize *stream of consciousness* or a soliloquy raises interesting questions about how authors represent the interior lives of their characters.

### Diction

Developing vocabulary is as important as learning literary terms. Although it may be difficult to find the time for formal vocabulary study, holding students accountable for the meanings of words in the works they are reading is crucial. In reading poetry, especially, students often find themselves struggling because they have neglected to look up the meanings of words that they don't know. One technique that works well for poetry is to stipulate that students must look up any word they don't know, then allow them to use their notes and definitions during a pop quiz. One or two unannounced assessments makes clear to students how important something as basic as knowing the meaning of words is to interpretation.

### Knowing Narrative Voice

Students should certainly become familiar with point of view, which some contemporary critics expand to include the subject position of both writer and reader. The notion of subject position is an interesting one for students since, to their delight, they discover that they, like characters, have a subject position that stems from characteristics such as their gender, class, age, religion. When they think, then, about a narrative point of view, they begin to realize not only what might inform a “first person” point of view but that even an “objective” or “omniscient” narrator carries some sort of authorial baggage—and that, of course, inevitably leads to a discussion of the social and cultural contexts from which a work springs. Although teachers of AP English Literature in the twenty-first century continue to demand that students read texts closely and carefully, they rarely prescribe students’ learning about an author's or work's background. Today, cultural criticism coexists with and complements the formalism of textual analysis that characterized literary studies in previous generations.

### Critical Reading and Analytical Writing

Reading, understanding, interpreting, and writing should coexist in the AP English Literature and Composition course. The ability to construct mature arguments and analyses using a variety of sentences is at the heart of what students should be able to do when they finish the course. Such ability does not simply follow naturally after a rich discussion. Chapters 2 and 3 contain specific advice for choosing texts and suggestions for creating a writing curriculum that both informs and is informed by what your students are reading and discussing. The sample syllabi in chapter 3 will give you more ideas. As you choose from the approaches you see in this guide, listen to colleagues, attend workshops and institutes, and contemplate the progress of your class, you will discover and sharpen your own strengths and steer your students toward strong, clear, analytical, critical, and interpretive prose.

# Chapter 2

## Advice for AP English Literature and Composition Teachers

Chapter 1 gave you a general idea about what an AP English Literature and Composition course is about. Here in Chapter 2, you will find specific, classroom-tested ideas for getting your course off the ground.

Some of you have waited for years to teach this course, while others learned just a few weeks before you were to start that you would be teaching an AP course. Borrowing shamelessly from *Twelfth Night*, whether you “achieved greatness” or had “greatness thrust upon you,” AP English Literature and Composition students will appear in your classroom and expect you to be ready.

Before we move on to the sample syllabi and commentaries from experienced AP English teachers in chapter 3, chapter 2 will provide several strategies and ideas that have worked for me, along with additional advice from colleagues from other schools. Our advice comes from years of experience, yet all of us continue to make adjustments to what we do. Sometimes even the most experienced teachers among us still assign too much reading or get overwhelmed by the paper load. Don’t demand perfection of yourself or of your students!

This chapter begins with a section on frequently asked questions about the AP Program and the College Board, including some ideas for teacher-training opportunities.

### Frequently Asked Questions and Answers

#### Where do I start?

You should start with the AP English Literature and Composition course home page on AP Central at [apcentral.collegeboard.com](http://apcentral.collegeboard.com). Register for free, create a personal profile, and begin to learn volumes. Click on “Professional Development” and you will find information about getting started, AP Summer Institutes and workshops, teachers’ resources, and online events. Additionally, you can access articles on teaching strategies, links to grammar resources on the Web, information pages on specific authors and their works, and the *AP English Literature and Composition Newsletter*.

### Can I prepare on my own? Should I attend an AP Summer Institute or a workshop? What's the difference between AP institutes and workshops?

Institutes generally last a week and take place during the summer at locations all over the United States. Workshops usually last one day and occur on Saturdays throughout the school year. If you are just getting started, a weeklong institute is a good idea. Some teachers attend weeklong institutes every year in order to learn new ideas, explore new texts, and share strategies. In addition, workshop leaders are often AP Exam Readers, and they can share their expertise with you. Search for AP workshops and institutes in your region at [apcentral.collegeboard.com](http://apcentral.collegeboard.com). (See the Professional Development section in chapter 5 for more information on AP Summer Institutes and workshops.)

### Can I get continuing education credits if I attend an AP workshop or summer institute?

Each institute sets its own policy for granting credit, acting in conjunction with a neighboring college or university. Earning credits usually involves an additional fee.

### Is there a fellowship program to defray costs?

The College Board Fellows Program provides stipends for secondary school teachers planning to teach AP courses in schools that serve minority students who have been traditionally underrepresented in AP classes or for teachers who teach in schools in economically disadvantaged areas. To find out more about the program, visit AP Central ([apcentral.collegeboard.com/apgrants](http://apcentral.collegeboard.com/apgrants)), where you'll also find information about

- College Board Pre-AP Fellows Program: “a competitive grant program that provides funding to AP Vertical Teams from schools in minority-dominant and/or economically disadvantaged areas with few or no AP courses”;
- AP Annual Conference Fellows Program: “a noncompetitive, invitation-only grant award program”; and
- Start-up grants and federal and state fee-reduction programs.

All of these programs acknowledge the special challenges and hard work attached to bringing underprepared students to AP classes. This challenge obviously demands extra effort not only from students but also from their teachers.

The College Board and the AP Program are committed to making a challenging and rigorous education available to all students. To that end, the AP policy is to admit all students who are willing to accept the rigors of AP courses.

Student participation in your AP English Literature and Composition class has positive ramifications that endure far beyond any single school year. Be sure to read Chesley Woods's essay “Making Do Isn't Good Enough” later in this chapter for a look at a teacher's experience teaching underrepresented students.

### How do I contact my College Board regional office?

You will find contact information for College Board regional offices on the inside back cover of this guide. College Board personnel at regional offices can help you register for AP workshops and institutes in your area. They can also explain the role of the AP Coordinator, the person at each school charged with coordinating the ordering and administration of exams, including fee reductions and waivers.

## What other print or electronic publications may be useful to me? What about electronic discussion groups?

When you register at AP Central and create your personal profile, you can elect to receive the twice-yearly e-newsletter, which will alert you to changes in the course and to new resources available on AP Central. The College Board–sponsored AP English Electronic Discussion Group (EDG) allows you to read and participate in exchanges with other professionals. You can ask about specific texts, seek help with writing issues, and offer your own expertise. To join the AP English EDG, follow the instructions at [apcentral.collegeboard.com/EDG](http://apcentral.collegeboard.com/EDG). (See the Professional Development section in chapter 5 for more information on AP EDGs.)

## AP Teachers and Their Colleagues

AP teachers, like all teachers, owe a collegial debt to colleagues who have prepared students to undertake the rigors of an AP course. When students do well in AP English, the credit belongs to the entire English department and to middle school teachers as well. Even the most superb AP teacher cannot go it alone.

I highly recommend bringing all teachers in a department into the planning process for specific AP courses, which helps teachers to appreciate each other’s efforts and contributions. Knowing and valuing what the teacher next door is doing, whether she or he is teaching ninth grade or AP English Literature and Composition, defuses potential rivalry and resentment over status. *All* members of the department are key players in the success of students.

Years ago, when I was teaching in a large public high school, my fellow English teachers and I had to invent a ninth- to eleventh-grade scaffold, a curriculum, that would help underprepared students get ready for twelfth-grade AP English Literature and Composition. My colleagues and I knew, as a department, that introducing *all* students to literary study would enable many to go on to AP courses, but we had no system in place to ensure that preparation. Fortunately, teachers came to realize that, especially for a group of students for whom English was not their first language, even four years of rigorous study was not enough—but at least it was a start. We developed a four-year curriculum guide, and our students experienced the benefits of their early preparation.

Now, the College Board’s Pre-AP professional development initiatives make reinventing this particular wheel unnecessary. The Pre-AP area of AP Central provides a series of concrete ideas for building a collaborative curriculum and spirit for preparing students from as early as sixth grade for the kind of sophisticated analysis that AP English Literature and Composition demands. Please note: Pre-AP is a professional development program that establishes and reinforces habits of thinking and learning, and introduces the importance of going beyond summary and observation to interpretation. It is not an early test-preparation program.

## Parents and AP English Literature and Composition

Parents want the best for their children, and AP teachers want the best for their students. Teachers and college advisers can help parents understand the advantages and disadvantages of taking a particular AP course based on the student’s course load and other activities during the school year.

Building relationships with parents of your AP students can greatly contribute to your program. There are several ways that you can reach out to parents. You can introduce yourself and your course to parents by sending a letter to each student’s home. Some schools host an “AP Night” where AP teachers provide information regarding the AP Program policies and communicate the expectations of their classes, as well as the opportunities AP can create for students. Be sure to emphasize to parents that the AP English

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Literature and Composition course develops critical and analytical reading and writing skills, which will be invaluable to students regardless of the academic or career paths they choose. You may also want to conduct parent–teacher conferences to discuss individual students and strategies for success. Additionally, posting information on your own or your school’s Web site is a good way to keep parents updated about course assignments and special projects.

Parents can be a great help to AP English Literature and Composition teachers. Once parents understand the expectations of your course, they can offer guidance to and better communicate with their children about homework, projects, and other course work. Parents can offer support in other ways as well. For example, recognizing the special needs of AP classes, parent associations or PTAs may offer small grants to purchase additional books to enrich the curriculum.

There may be times when parents are apprehensive about the rigor of the AP curriculum, especially about the effect that enrolling in demanding classes might have on their children’s grade point average. By working with their school’s college adviser, AP teachers can make parents aware of the grading policies in their particular state. (California, for example, offers students in AP classes who are applying to state colleges and universities an extra point in their AP grades—that is, a B in a non-AP class counts as a 3.0 while a B in an AP class counts as a 4.0.)

In some cases, students are not ready to undertake the responsibility of a college-level class, but their parents may be strongly encouraging them to enroll in an AP course. One way that I found to address the issue of the eager parent and the less-than-eager student was through a summer reading assignment on which I tested students within the first days of the fall semester. Students who did not do the summer reading had failed to show what I called an “earnest expression of desire” to be in the AP class, and I told the students and parents that this did not bode well for success in an AP course.

### Getting Started: There’s No Need to Reinvent the Wheel

Though you may be teaching AP English Literature and Composition for the first time, you have some experience in the high school English classroom. Use that experience! You do not have to invent a whole new course during your first year. Have you had success teaching *Hamlet*? Then use *Hamlet* in your AP course. If you really love *The Tempest* and have developed a unit using it and postcolonial literature, then don’t worry that you are not teaching *Hamlet*. You will, and probably should, change your course each year as you gain experience, but you should not try to change the whole course at once or try to teach all new texts the first time through. Remember that great pairing you did with *Oedipus* and Chinua Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart*? That would be a fine way to introduce a unit on the tragic hero. Have you always wanted to teach *Heart of Darkness*? Maybe reading *Things Fall Apart*, an African view of colonialism, would lead naturally into Conrad’s text and its reflection on the ambiguous nature of the European presence in Africa. One of the many joys of teaching AP English Literature and Composition is that, since there are no mandated texts, you can create a syllabus that reflects your own strengths and interests, and your syllabus can change as you continue to grow as a teaching professional.

### Get to the Heart of a Work

I remember when I first encountered AP students in my second year of teaching. The department head was away for the day and asked me to sit in on a class. The kids seemed so precocious. I remember them to this day. What would I ever teach such remarkable beings, I wondered? And I still hear this question from beginning teachers at AP conferences. Oddly enough, when I finally began to teach honors and AP courses, I discovered that at times these classes were almost too easy: the kids liked everything! They'd do anything!

The issue, always, is to challenge our students—from the weakest to the strongest. My approach is not to flood them with work but to study in depth a book or two a term. An ideal AP class for me would begin with information the students might never have had, then turn to a work of literature where they could investigate that element of the text in increasingly intricate detail. Finally, for homework, the students would write on an open-ended question that I would respond to aggressively, trying to get them to think even more deeply on the subject. Ideally, my AP students and I push each other as far as we can.

—David Youngblood, Sayre School,  
Lexington, Kentucky

Developing an AP course takes time, and you will adapt your course each year as you learn which approaches and teaching strategies work best for your class. Feel empowered to experiment with new texts and activities. As you become more experienced and talk with other AP English Literature and Composition teachers, you will discover new ideas and gain confidence. What follows are a few ideas to help you as you plan your AP course.

## Teaching Strategies and Suggestions

### Reading Aloud

Making class time interactive will help students connect to literature. Ask students to read aloud in class. Given the fact that we want them to read widely, they obviously cannot read everything aloud. But when students are studying drama, they should not just read selected scenes aloud, they should be up and moving and acting as they read. When they are studying poetry, part of each assignment should be to read the poems aloud at home as they are preparing, and at least two students should begin the class by reading aloud the poems they have prepared. If they need convincing about the power of reading aloud, refer them to the Favorite Poem Project Web site ([www.favoritepoem.org](http://www.favoritepoem.org)), which allows students to hear several voices reading the same poem and to appreciate how different each one sounds.

Novels and stories deserve the same treatment, for the acts of speaking and hearing fine prose, poetry, and drama train students' ears for recognizing both literary styles and strong versus weak writing. The logical extension is, of course, that they should read their own work aloud to peers so that they can hear both triumphs and problematic or awkward areas in their prose. (More specifics about peer review will come later in this chapter.)

### Student Participation

I do not normally assign students questions to answer following reading assignments since giving them questions implicitly frames and even limits the scope of the discussion. Instead, I ask students to come to class with questions for discussion. Sometimes, I will ask students to work in groups of three or four to address one of their own questions before we have a whole-class discussion. In small group activities, all students participate. On other occasions, I ask students to write their questions on the board. Often, several students have the same question, so that question quite naturally becomes a starting point for discussion.

### Students Take the Lead in Class Discussion

The AP English class works most effectively when knowledge of the material grows from student discussion and not teacher presentation. Teachers can encourage discussion by permitting the conversation in the class to be student centered rather than teacher dominated. Students will feel a greater commitment to the class and to the material if the conversation about a work is generated by their questions, by their sharing of short reader-response paragraphs at the beginning of the class or even during the discussion, and especially if they believe that what they have to say matters. Teachers can encourage students to take responsibility for the work of the class by acting as moderators, being keen and sensitive listeners, and by resisting the impulse to interpret the material. Students' creative energies are stirred when they have been a part of a collaborative effort that makes literary works revelations of truth.

—Harvard V. Knowles, Phillips Exeter Academy,  
Exeter, New Hampshire

## Writing and Assessment

How can we make sure that students read assignments carefully and respond to them thoughtfully without overwhelming ourselves with papers to grade? Here are some ideas.

### Thought Pieces or Short Reflections

Assign more “thought pieces” or short reflections and give fewer quizzes. Many teachers see the unannounced quiz as essential to keeping students accountable. It is my experience that when I give a pop quiz, the students who have done the reading answer the recall questions and earn an A; the students who are unprepared sit there for 5 to 10 minutes and earn an F; and I must grade all the quizzes. Often, no one learns much during this time-consuming exercise.

Here's a different approach. Ask students to write a thought piece or reflection before they come to class. These assignments are meant to help students focus on a question, an issue, a stanza, a line, a word, or anything that strikes their interest in the reading assignment. This one- to two-page exercise is not meant to be revised, but it compels students to think on paper before they come to class. Make it clear that you might ask a few students to read their pieces aloud. You may or may not grade a whole set of thought pieces, but whether you hear all or just a few, you will learn what students are thinking about, and, of course, the students will learn how to choose a rich passage, reflect, and write.

### The Question Paper

For this reflective paper, which, like the thought piece, is not meant to be revised, every sentence must be a question. Students may not write a list of questions—they must write paragraphs in which every sentence is a question. One question will, naturally, lead to another, and the questions may in fact become speculations or hypotheses, but every sentence must be a question. The question paper is particularly appropriate for works that have been difficult or vexing for students. I have used this strategy with works like *Rosencrantz & Guildenstern Are Dead* by Tom Stoppard and *The Metamorphosis* by Franz Kafka.

Students initially feel that this assignment is impossible, but they quickly discover that, as questions start flowing, interpretation is inevitably embedded in what they are writing. It turns out that asking questions is a good way to discover answers and hone critical thinking skills. In this process students come to realize that analyzing literature is more than answering a series of questions—their teacher's or their own. My students often tell me that when they are stumped about how to begin an essay, they write a question paper for themselves.

### Approaches to More Formal Papers

Writing is not easy. Most writers can tell you that getting started—facing a blank sheet of paper or computer screen—is usually the biggest obstacle. As students begin the writing process, it is helpful to remind them of the key ingredients of strong papers:

- Fluency (students should have something to say)
- Form (students should present ideas logically)
- Correctness (students should make sure writing is grammatically correct)

Although teachers occasionally want students to write about specific topics or questions from among three, four, or five choices, I have discovered that the very act of defining a topic of their own launches students into writing.

### Advice for Teachers: Steps to Helping Students Write Strong Papers (One Approach)

1. Working together with your students, brainstorm paper topics.
2. One or two days later, ask students to come to class with a prospectus paragraph. In the prospectus paragraph, they will announce what their papers will be about and cite some of the evidence they will use. This is not a thesis paragraph. In fact, the prospectus paragraph will not appear in the paper.
3. Students will read prospectus paragraphs aloud, and all students in the class (or in groups if the class is too large) will offer advice to the writer.
4. You have two choices, depending on your students:
  - Two to three days later, students will come to class with the first page of their papers. They will help each other (following step #5), then develop a full draft.
  - Two to three days later, students will come to class with a complete first draft of their papers.
5. Working together with students, brainstorm about what feedback from a peer editor/reviewer will help them most. (Some ideas: Do I have something to say? Is my thesis clear? Is my organization logical? Have I included evidence gracefully?)
6. Students will write at the top of the papers the topics the group identified during peer-review brainstorming.
7. Students will read their papers aloud to their partners before exchanging papers to give written feedback.
8. After the peer-review session, students will have approximately one week before a final version is due. During that week, they may continue to consult with each other or with you.
9. Students should always ask themselves and each other, SO WHAT? They must go beyond observation to interpretation.
10. Along with final versions, students must submit the peer-edited version(s) and prospectus paragraphs.

Peer review and editing is most effective when students have a goal. You can give them guidelines and rubrics if you wish, but, as a class, they can articulate what feedback from a peer editor/reviewer will help them most. The very act of reading their papers aloud makes students aware of issues like choppiness, word repetition, lack of clarity, and the need for sentence variety.

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Paper conferences between teacher and student are invaluable, but it is impossible to meet with every student about every draft of every paper. To alleviate this tension, I encourage students to identify a problem they want to discuss and to choose one paragraph from their paper that we will focus on developing and improving together. This strategy makes students think about the issue they want to address before they meet with me, and our meeting time is more productive.

Grading papers is time consuming and hard work, no matter what strategy we use. Once again, ask students to tell you in writing what they think is best about their papers and what they wish they might have done better. Their comments can then serve as the focus for yours.

### Adding New Texts to AP English Literature and Composition

One of the pleasant responsibilities of teaching AP English Literature and Composition is devising and planning the curriculum. Of course, state and local requirements and local community standards influence what we might choose to teach, but even with such restrictions, the curriculum is ours to develop, enrich, and change.

We may have inherited a wonderfully varied curriculum from the AP teacher before us, a teacher who was probably a revered veteran with generations of successful students. Our predecessor's texts, many of which we love, await us in the bookroom. But the texts that others and we have *always* taught are not necessarily the *only* texts we will or should teach.

The writing of excellent novels and plays did not end in the 1950s or 1960s, and some superb nineteenth- and twentieth-century works have been discovered or rediscovered in recent years. For example, although Zora Neale Hurston wrote *Their Eyes Were Watching God* in 1935, the novel only reached a wide audience after Alice Walker rediscovered it in 1975. Kate Chopin's *The Awakening*, published in 1899, entered AP curricula in the last decades. Conversely, some books that were mainstays of high school curricula in the middle of the twentieth century have become less popular.

But with the ability to stretch the curriculum comes enormous responsibility: How can we know what to add, what constitutes a work of "literary merit"? And how do we know what texts to rotate out when we want to include something new?

Of course, there are no absolute answers to either of these questions. Once again, as I have throughout this guide, I am going to urge you to trust your instincts and to talk to colleagues in your school and beyond. The AP English Electronic Discussion Group is one way to become part of a large group of active and informed readers.

One way to add a new text is to pair it with one you already teach. For example, one of the sample syllabi in this book pairs *King Lear* with Jane Smiley's *A Thousand Acres*, a 1990 novel that moves the unhappy story of an aging father and three daughters to the farmland of Iowa. Here's another example: in an American literature-based AP class, I have paired *The Great Gatsby* from 1925 with *Their Eyes Were Watching God* from 1935. Since there is practically *no* overlap in the worlds of these novels, together they seem to illuminate each other as well as our understanding of America. The worlds of *Gatsby* and of *Eyes* could not be more different in their points of view, settings, and thematic concerns. Yet together, they give us a view of two Americas between World War I and World War II. In addition, a pairing of *Eyes* with *Native Son* by Richard Wright shines a light on the tension between Wright and Hurston, a tension that led

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Wright to savage Hurston's novel when it first appeared. Here, the pairing illuminates different stylistic, thematic, social, and gender concerns in the African American community of writers between the two World Wars.

Erich Maria Remarque's 1930 World War I novel, *All Quiet on the Western Front*, has long been a staple of AP English Literature. Pairing it with Tim O'Brien's 1990 work, *The Things They Carried*, allows students to explore both the nature of and attitude toward war in two eras and the stylistic differences in early and late twentieth-century novels. Adding a contemporary Vietnamese American novel, for example *The Gangster We Are All Looking For*, lê thi diem thúy's 2003 work, moves the stylistic and thematic explorations into the ramifications of war and dislocation even further.

The richness of overlapping cultures in America and the world invites us to jump in with truly contemporary works. You might want to try Jhumpa Lahiri's magnificent 2000 volume of stories, *The Interpreter of Maladies and Other Stories*. Or Chang-rae Lee's gripping and complex 1999 novel, *A Gesture Life*, introduces students to an obtuse narrator who doesn't seem to realize what he is telling us, and who can only obliquely confront the horrors of his past life.

Stylistically and thematically, the world of literature continues to change and grow, and our courses can reflect new developments even as they honor the canon.

The possibilities are endless. That's the joy, and that's the not-so-bad problem.

## Student Evaluation

I evaluate my students on preparation, participation, and written assignments. All of our course work, oral and written, demands that students go beyond observation and recall to interpretation. Several times during the year, students work together on class projects to present to their peers. Whether the projects cover poetry, novels, or dramatic interpretation, all students participate. When it is time to assign grades, major papers are weighted most heavily since students write several drafts and receive feedback from me and their peers. Thought pieces count less than major essays since they are single-draft assignments that students generally write as an immediate response to a reading assignment. Students also write in-class essays, most often based on questions from previous AP English Literature and Composition Exams. In-class essays are weighted more heavily than thought pieces but do not count as much as major essays.

## Additional Resources

For more ideas, inspiration, and resources, read the articles that follow. Professor Linda Hubert, former Chief Reader for the AP English Literature and Composition Exam, provides tips for AP teachers on preparing students for the demands of a first-year college English class. Chesley Woods, a teacher at Avondale High School in Georgia, offers strategies for teachers of underprepared students. Finally, Limarys Caraballo, from St. Mary's College High School in California, proposes a way to help students and schools with inadequate resources by using summer reading as a yearlong path to success.

## Strategies for AP Teachers of English

*Linda Hubert, Ph.D.*  
*Agnes Scott College*  
*Decatur, Georgia*

How can new AP teachers best prepare their students for the first-year college English class and college writing in general? I've thought hard about what college instructors most want and what it is that sets a first-rate AP English student apart from other students. I will venture a few suggestions about how your course can best serve students, both now and later.

1. Probably the most important rule to remember when considering an AP program in English is that it is not all about the exam.

It's important to keep the grade in the course independent from the grade on the AP Exam. The AP course provides the scope and experience that gives the student an edge, and that course should not be summed up and the subject concluded by an exam taken one morning in May. We build on our belief that AP students have enjoyed a rigorous course. When they arrive singing praises of English and literary study and wax enthusiastic about their former English teachers, we are thrilled.

2. Emphasize to your students the virtues of continuing their English education, particularly if they are excellent students in the discipline.

Qualifying AP grades are best used to promote higher-level placement, not the avoidance of college English courses. Encourage your students to continue their study in a discipline in which they have demonstrated significant aptitude. Exploit their youthful romanticism and incite a passion for literature so that they won't bypass English studies, regardless of earned exemptions or career plans. They will want to continue in a discipline that allows them to consider the huge issues of life, a discipline that you have made central to their existence.

3. Teach students to read attentively and feelingly.

Ideally our students will revel in language! Good students learn to adjust the pace of their reading to the nature of the task and the demands of comprehension. They can scan material efficiently when an overview is useful; they can slowly savor poetic passages and be sensitive to nuances of tone—they can pick up on irony, for instance, and recognize when a writer is deadly serious or when metaphors are mocking. Encourage a respect for the complexity and ambiguity of creative texts, and warn that flattening poems or stories into morals or dogma can be the *reductio ad absurdum* of literary analysis.

4. Allow your students to think, challenge, create, and shape ideas independently.

I expect students to be respectful and courteous, of me as well as their classmates, but I like to see some fire. Encourage students to express their unique ideas and perceptions.

5. Instruction in the formal properties of literary texts is valuable, though only one of a number of ways to approach critical analysis.

Although formal skills and the accompanying vocabulary are an excellent route to close reading and an appreciation of a work, fiction or nonfiction, it is nonetheless helpful to make students aware of the recent perspectives on literary texts that they will encounter in college and university classes, from the biographical to the political to the sociological to the historical.

## Advice for AP English Literature and Composition Teachers

6. Regard essays written under the pressure of time as drafts.

The bulk of writing instruction in college or universities is process oriented, as it probably is in your classrooms. Of course drafting for all its merits has to cease at some point—it's a good idea to encourage revision of drafts. Seeing an improved essay take shape is exhilarating. The next first drafts that result from timed writings may well incorporate these insights.

Engaging students in holistic grading based on the rubrics supplied with AP Released Exams is wonderful practice for them in assessing their own work as well as the work of others.

7. Computer literacy is fundamental.

Few young people at this point lag behind their elders in computer use, but a student that has polished competency with a word-processing program will be at an advantage. It's almost hard to imagine how writing, particularly creative writing, ever existed without the computer. Knowing how to type well can be a real asset.

8. Emphasize the importance of academic honesty and respect for intellectual property.

Because of the computer skills that our students possess, plagiarism has escalated as a problem. It's important to educate students on their scholarly responsibilities with respect to research. Students need instruction in distinguishing between legitimate collaboration and inappropriate dependence, and they need help in developing a respect for intellectual property and copyright laws.

9. An AP syllabus needs to represent a diversity of literary voices.

Reading is an important tool for fostering world communion. The range of reading—classical and nontraditional texts from the sixteenth century to the present—makes an AP class exciting and not just another survey course. Reading works by writers from a variety of cultures provides a way to educate all students beyond their own narrow experience, no matter what their backgrounds. Similarly, confronting works from earlier times—and it seems that even nineteenth-century novels and poems can require substantial “translation” in the contemporary classroom—enlarges a student's comfort zone and sharpens reading skills.

10. Incorporate spontaneity and flexibility, and acknowledge the changing nature of life and letters.

Allow students to understand language as an evolving gift that is changing even as they develop their own “in” words and slang expressions. Acknowledge that certain grammatical rules have gone or are going away—the horror of the split infinitive, for instance—and that fads and fashions prevail in literary currents as much as they influence clothing.

11. Resist inflating grades, but recognize that students may come with great differences in their preparation with similar pressures to excel.

Despite grade inflation, first-year college English courses remain notorious for shocking students who have previously experienced rewards for their academic efforts. Be as honest as possible without discouraging them. A bad grade when deserved may be just the ticket to kick-start growth.

The diversity of students and vagaries in their preparation represent both a boon and a challenge. During my long tenure, I've seen largely homogeneous classes morph into classes that replicate the demographics of any major American city. Agnes Scott College is still a women's college; the only male faces that I encounter in my classes are in our graduate program, a carefully designed M.A.T. for teachers of secondary English. However, with minority students at 24 percent, an impressive population of international students, and an age range that cuts a swath through at least four decades, Agnes Scott College in greater Atlanta is well ahead of many private and selective public institutions in its diversity.

## Chapter 2

Consequently, we confront, particularly in first-year classes, the challenge of moving from a long ago lockstep world of similarly prepared young women to a breadth in skill levels belied to some extent by the overwhelming consistency of high grades and test scores touted on applications. Like students throughout the nation, many enter with the expectation of earning a stellar GPA. Students who have been through a rigorous AP English course probably have the best chance of retaining their scholarships and realizing their goals.

### 12. Leave them loving literature.

I can't explain the magic that makes students love literature and delight in words, but I am convinced that encouraging such enthusiasm is your biggest contribution to your students and their future teachers. It may seem impractical, even foolish, to say, but the world will be a better place if more of us are educated to honor and enjoy literature and perhaps even contribute ourselves to the creative dialogue that both defines our identity and emphasizes our shared humanity.

For complex reasons with which we are all familiar, many potentially good students are lost in the corridors of high school, but a dedicated AP English teacher can make the difference between failure and success in the important first year of college studies and thereafter. If we believe, as I think most of us do, that reading and writing well are the bedrock of almost any academic course or later employment and that literature is an essential component of any life well lived, then AP English Literature and Composition teachers may well be the key to it all. At least they have an opportunity to influence lives as much as or more than any other teacher a student will ever encounter.

## Making Do Isn't Good Enough

*Chesley Woods*  
*Avondale High School*  
*Atlanta, Georgia*

Avondale High is an urban school within Dekalb County. It had a short run as the Creative Arts Charter School servicing students from the far reaches of the county as well as inside the community. Since Avondale lost its charter in 1998, the student body has become 97 percent African American, with the other 3 percent being made up of immigrants from Somalia, Cambodia, Mexico, Ghana, and Bosnia. Our Bosnian students comprise our only white student population, and approximately 80 percent of our students are eligible for free and reduced-price meals. In April 2004 the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* featured Avondale in an article about the state of public education 50 years after the ruling of *Brown v. Board of Education* in Topeka, Kansas. We were highlighted as the classic resegregated school.

The question for me has never been whether or not my curriculum is comparable to others in the country. Instead, I worry about whether I can provide enough information and rigor for the students who gain admission to Ivy League schools as well as for those who are happy to attend the local community college.

No matter where they will go after high school, all these students need a chance to do rigorous work and be prepared for the challenges they will face in the future. The skill level in my AP classes is ever widening, and it will continue to do so as long as the number of underprepared students rises. AP curriculum has become the adopted standard for all children in Dekalb as a result of federal mandates, and my challenge is to welcome the 35 students (out of a senior class of 117), some shaking with disbelief as they enter my room. I must make them believe that they should be there, that they can do the work. It is no small task, but I am proud to maintain my reputation as the “hard” AP teacher, the one who won't accept less than a student's best.

Over the last four years, I have taught only 6 males in AP; while I thought this year would prove to be a banner year in male enrollment with an extraordinary 11 males, 4 were allowed to drop because they expect football and basketball scholarships.

The pressure for students to maintain a B average is intense because they wish to obtain the extremely valuable Georgia HOPE Scholarship, which allows them to attend the state college or university of their choice. Obviously, they must weigh their circumstances carefully. Which is more critical: learning in a strong environment for a year or being guaranteed an A in a course that requires much less from them? All too often, their parents cannot help in making that decision. All too often, the counseling department is overwhelmed with the needs of other students and the demands of running a public high school. Cliché or not, I must say that my colleagues and I share in the responsibility of raising these children.

I make it clear to my AP students that they will have access to me when they need me. I offer my e-mail address and my cell phone number as they leave to go home for summer vacation and again on the first day of school. I become the around-the-clock tutor when they are stumped, a role I must play in order to level the playing field. I doubt my own experience in high school would have amounted to much had I not had the support of my English professor mother, and I shudder every time I hear of the number of hours my students must work to support parents and siblings or even their own children. I hate to think of the more than noisy environments in which so many of them are forced to attempt to concentrate on homework each night.

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A section of my AP contract with my students explicitly states that everyone is expected to stay for a mandatory tutorial for at least one hour one day a week. They receive a weekly participation grade and the opportunity to have independent study, private instruction, or test practice. It means that I drive students home or give them public transit fares, but the tutorial is an invaluable time for them and I wouldn't give it up. Another after-school activity the AP students and I share is our monthly movie night. I invite the students and their families to view and discuss films I believe are critical for broadening their understanding and observation of life. Students sit around the big-screen TV in our media center, munching on popcorn, and sometimes taking notes without so much as a hint of a request to do so. We've enjoyed such films as *Whale Rider*, *In America*, *Frida*, and *Rabbit-Proof Fence*, and students often provide critiques for the school newspaper.

The most important mission for teachers in low-income schools with underprepared students is to make their students understand right now that they are responsible for their own learning. I demand accountability and rigor from my students. I do not accept late work—ever—even if it means I go to their homes and wait for them to complete an essay. I do not give extra credit—ever—because I want them to comprehend the necessity of making the adult decision to risk getting it wrong the first time rather than failing to try at all. We start at the beginning and work our way up to mastery; mastery can mean a grade of 2 instead of 1 on the AP Exam. It is more important for these students to value the process of learning and the pleasure of having the option to know, to be for the first time members of a community of thinkers.

Goethe explained to us that it is better to “treat people as if they were what they ought to be, and you help them to become what they are capable of being.” I put that quotation on the board for our introductory discussion of *Frankenstein*. My kids have plenty to say on the topic.

## Making the Summer Count—All Year Long

*Limarys Caraballo*  
*Saint Mary's College High School*  
*Berkeley, California*

When I first began to teach AP English Literature and Composition, I was drawn to the challenge of creating a syllabus that would awaken in students a deep appreciation for the humanities, give them the background and skills necessary for more advanced study of literature in college, and prepare them for the AP Exam. One of the first difficulties I encountered in creating such a course was the limitation of time—a year is simply not enough. A second difficulty is the need to level the literary playing field for students of very diverse backgrounds. Part of the solution, for me, lies in making good use of the summer months to prepare students for the rigor of the year ahead.

We begin with a class meeting; every student who registers for AP English must attend a meeting during which I introduce the goals and objectives of the course, answer basic questions about the AP program, and explain the summer reading and writing assignments. The summer assignment consists of three novels with corresponding writing assignments for each and a list of terms from Western mythology and the Bible. By the end of the summer, students have reviewed many of the mythological and biblical terms that they need in order to analyze works of literature. They apply this knowledge early in the fall semester in a review activity, the mythology pageant, and on a test of the material.

The works assigned during summer reading are long and complex, so to help them process their complexity, students are expected to read independently and then to record their impressions in their summer writing assignments. Long works, such as *Crime and Punishment*, are difficult to assign as reading during the school year because they require many weeks to cover in class. By assigning these novels to be read during the summer and requiring students to review them right before we discuss them in class, we can study a wider selection of material during the busy school year.

Most important, however, the approach students take toward the novels they read over the summer models their approach to literary analysis throughout the year. One of the key elements in their learning how to read closely is the Data Sheet. My version of this organizer, adapted from an idea acquired at an AP teachers' workshop many years ago, is a place for students to record their impressions and questions as they are reading, and it becomes a prompt for literary analysis. The Data Sheet, which usually amounts to a dense four pages, requires students to look up information on the author of the work and the period in which it was written; identify the characteristics of the genre; analyze key passages; identify and explain literary techniques, metaphors, and themes; and generate topics for discussion. Teachers can change, expand, or adapt the Data Sheet to fit specific novels or address particular course objectives.

Each Data Sheet requires that students read closely, apply their knowledge of literary terms, improve their vocabulary, and draw generalizations about the meaning of the work as a whole. Also, because students both read each text in its entirety and begin work on the Data Sheet before we discuss the text in class, they learn to develop independent interpretations of the texts and to formulate their ideas about the work before learning what others think. This leads to a more exciting exchange of ideas among the students.

Students complete one Data Sheet for each full-length work that we study during the year, but their first Data Sheet is based on one of their summer reading novels. Once I explain the purpose of the Data Sheet during our summer meeting, students realize there is no risk in trying out the process on their own because they know they will have an opportunity to modify and refine their responses during the school

## Chapter 2

year. I check the Data Sheets for completion on the preliminary deadline, either for summer reading or for reading during the school year, but I do not grade the content of the first drafts.

During the semester, students complete the Data Sheet in pencil first, so they can make adjustments and corrections as they discuss the text as a class. At least two class discussions during each unit come directly from the questions and topics in the Data Sheets. This is a great way to ensure student-generated discussion topics, and it is also a way to assess students' understanding of the reading as well as their ability to synthesize their own thoughts and those of critics and classmates. I keep a supply of blank Data Sheets in the classroom at all times, and I also e-mail the document template to those who have Internet access. They can draft as many versions as they wish while we discuss the text in class, but their evaluation is based on the accuracy, thoroughness, and quality of the final version they submit. Students keep their Data Sheets all year and use them to prepare several texts that they might be able to use on the AP Exam's free-response essay.

The Data Sheet is also a key factor in student presentations. At least once during the semester, students are required to lead class discussion. Using their Data Sheets as a starting point, students prepare a presentation on the assigned text, generate discussion questions, and serve as moderators for that day's discussion. The objective is for each group to become the "resident expert" on a given text. The presentation provides the group's own interpretation of the text (especially the explication of significant passages), explanation of themes/symbols/style, selected criticisms from reputable sources, and background on the author. To create a context for the overall significance of the text, students must research some of the following areas of relevance to the time: social/political/historical events, art and music, architecture, male and female roles, and philosophy. In addition to the research-based and analytical components, the group prepares a creative representation of some significant aspect of the text in a nontraditional venue such as a video, skit, dance performance, or food display or tasting. Students are evaluated based on the quality and accuracy of their research and analysis, organization, creativity, and delivery. Presentations are extremely important in the development of students' public speaking skills; therefore, part of the grade is based on the caliber of their performance.

Summer reading and writing is integral to AP work during the entire school year. Many of the skills and good habits that students need to succeed in AP English can actually be planted as seeds during the summer months, then nurtured, developed, and refined in the fall and spring. I think students reap the real advantage, though, when they gain the confidence to read and labor through a text on their own, then have something to contribute to the class from the very first day.

My sample summer assignment, templates for the Data Sheets, and resources for mythology all follow.

## Summer Reading Assignment: Reading and Writing

*Wisdom and Spirit of the Universe!  
Thou Soul that art the eternity of thought,  
That giv'st to forms and images a breath  
And everlasting Motion! not in vain,  
By day or star-light, thus from my first dawn  
Of Childhood didst thou intertwine for me  
The passions that build up our human Soul,  
Not with the mean and vulgar works of man,  
But with the high objects, with enduring things,  
With life and nature, purifying thus  
The elements of feeling and of thought,  
And sanctifying, by such discipline,  
Both pain and fear; until we recognize  
A grandeur in the beatings of the heart.*

—William Wordsworth, *The Prelude* (Book First, ll. 401–414)

In our intensive study of literature next year, we will try to capture the “passions that build up our human Soul” in the many works that we read. Every piece of fiction strives to be more than a “mean and vulgar” work. In fact, Wordsworth himself created many “high objects” and “enduring things” even as he considered his art a distant second to life and nature. *The Prelude* is one such “enduring thing.”

The world of literature is vast, and the more we read the more we thirst. Although we must prepare for the AP Exam, our main goals will be advanced study of literature, insightful analysis, and effective written communication. We will therefore be sampling a wide range of authors and genres throughout the year. This summer you are to prepare for a challenging course of study by reading the following texts and working on corresponding writing assignments. All summer reading and writing is due on the first day of classes.

### Summer Reading

<i>Crime and Punishment</i>	Fyodor Dostoevsky
<i>The Grapes of Wrath</i>	John Steinbeck
<i>Pride and Prejudice</i>	Jane Austen

“Mythology, Folklore, and Biblical References” handout

The following book you will need as a reference. You should have it from your freshman-year book list.

<i>Mythology</i>	Edith Hamilton
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You may buy the above books from any distributor or bookstore. Try to get the Constance Garnett translation of *Crime and Punishment*.

1. You are expected to read the books listed above, unabridged, during the summer and be ready to be TESTED on each one as of the first week of classes. The evaluation will be detailed and demanding.
2. Study guides (such as CliffsNotes and SparkNotes) may NEVER be used as a substitute for the reading assigned or as a resource, although you will often need to refer to outside sources for information related to the text for the Data Sheet.

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3. Although all of you should have read *Mythology* as freshmen at Saint Mary's, that was a long time ago. This information needs to be fresh in your mind, as literature is full of allusions to the classics. You will have an advantage on the AP Exam if you have a good working knowledge of mythology, folklore, and biblical allusions. Read the attached handout, which has some abbreviated entries on many mythological elements as well as biblical references you should know. You will have a specific and detailed test on the handout during the first week of classes in the fall. You will need to have *Mythology* on hand as a reference throughout the year (you can also use it to clarify things you read about in the handout).

### Summer Writing

1. Complete a Data Sheet for *The Grapes of Wrath*. The purpose of the Data Sheet is for you to create your own study guide for the novel. Each section is to be approached analytically, not literally. For example, the section on setting requires that you identify not only the physical location of the plot(s), but also the atmosphere and significance of that location. You may attach additional sheets of paper to the Data Sheet if necessary, but try to stay within the space provided. Write or type neatly and legibly.
2. Write a two- to three-page response/commentary (typed, double-spaced, 10–12-point font, etc.) on *Crime and Punishment*. Although not necessarily a thesis essay, your commentary on the novel must be a well-written response to the work as a whole. Remember to support all of your comments and arguments by referring specifically to the text and using passages from the novel wherever appropriate.
3. Choose ONE of the following options for your work on *Pride and Prejudice*. The piece must be one to two pages typed, double-spaced, 10–12-point font.
  - Quote, cite, and analyze three passages from the novel that represent or discuss gender, social, or class- and status-based ideas addressed in the novel.
  - Write an original letter from any character that reveals his or her personality, fears, desires, prejudices, and/or ways of dealing with conflict.
  - Write a skit or dramatic scene based on your own rendition of the customs and values of the time and place in which the novel takes place.
  - Write an original poem, with a minimum of 30 lines, about the ideals, values, or concerns of the Bennets or the society in which they live. Examples: the Gardiners, the soldiers, Lady de Bourgh, fate, religion, and the upper class.

### Upcoming Mythology and Folklore Pageant

You will each represent a god, goddess, person, or entity at the pageant (you will receive an entry card showing the name of the entity you are to represent). On that day, you must be dressed for the part and must have at least one significant or symbolic attribute. The presentation itself will consist of the most important details on the half-sheet study guide that you must provide for each member of the “audience.” You must (1) dress for the part, (2) provide a copy of the completed half-sheet for everyone, and (3) be able to identify the most important element of this person or figure. At the end of the period, there will be an opportunity to elect the winner of the pageant, who will be awarded five extra-credit points (students may not vote for themselves).

## Advice for AP English Literature and Composition Teachers

Your half-sheet study guide must be typed and include the following. Please use complete sentences.

Name (and origin) of entity: Attribute or defining characteristic: Function/significance in literature/culture: Summary of myth/legend/tale:
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**Happy Reading and Writing!!!**

## Bible and Mythology Resources for Students and Teachers

### Web Sites:

#### Oxford Classical Mythology Online

[www.classicalmythology.org](http://www.classicalmythology.org)

The online companion guide to *Classical Mythology, 7th edition*, by Mark P. O. Morford and Robert J. Lenardon is an excellent glossary that students and teachers can use directly from the Web. It can also be printed and photocopied.

#### Mythweb

[www.mythweb.com/index.html](http://www.mythweb.com/index.html)

This searchable encyclopedia of Greek mythology is a thorough source of information for teachers and students.

#### Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia

[www.fact-index.com/l/li/list\\_of\\_biblical\\_figures.html](http://www.fact-index.com/l/li/list_of_biblical_figures.html)

For biblical sources, I prefer this encyclopedic resource, which provides detailed and multiperspective entries on important biblical terms.

### Mythology Terms:

I assign the following terms for students to present in the pageant and then review for the first mythology test. The rest of the year we continue to use the glossaries to look up relevant terms that come up in the reading and class discussions.

#### Classical Mythology

Achilles	Cassandra	Elysian Fields
Adonis	Cerberus	fauns
Aeneas	Ceres/Demeter	Golden Fleece
Ares/Mars	chimera	Hades
Argus	Circe	Holy Grail
Athena/Minerva	Daedalus	Hector
Atlas	Damocles	Henry, John
Augean stables	Delphic oracle	Hera/Juno
Bacchus/Dionysus	Electra	Hermes

## Chapter 2

Hiawatha  
Judgment of Paris  
Jupiter/Zeus  
Laocoön  
Leda  
Midas  
Nemesis  
Odin

### **Bible**

Abraham and Isaac  
Annunciation  
Ararat  
Armageddon  
Babel  
Babylon  
burning bush  
Damascus

Pan  
Pandora's Box  
Paris  
Parnassus  
Prometheus  
Proteus  
Pygmalion  
Romulus and Remus

Esther  
golden calf  
Jacob's Ladder  
Jeremiah  
Job  
Leviathan  
Lot's wife  
Methuselah

Scylla and Charybdis  
Sisyphus  
Tiresias  
Titan  
Vesta  
Zephyr  
Venus/Aphrodite

olive branch  
pearls before swine  
Promised Land  
Prodigal Son  
Queen of Sheba  
Ruth

# Advice for AP English Literature and Composition Teachers

DATA SHEET 1

AP English

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Ms. Caraballo

## DATA SHEET

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Per. \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_  
Author: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Publication: \_\_\_\_\_  
Source of Information for Data Sheet: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Provide significant details about the author

Provide information about the period (literary, historical, philosophical, etc.)

Provide plot points (use bullets or graphic organizer)

Identify the genre & specify how this work fits its characteristics

Draw an image or write your impressions

## Chapter 2

DATA SHEET 2

AP English DATA SHEET

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Identify and explain the use and effect of **three** literary techniques

1.

2.

3.

Cite and quote one example of each

1.

2.

3.

Cite and quote **three** significant passages (use ellipses to abbreviate)

1.

2.

3.

Explain the significance of each passage or explain how it relates to the work as a whole

# Advice for AP English Literature and Composition Teachers

DATA SHEET 3

AP English DATA SHEET (use additional paper as needed)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of each <b>significant</b> character	Relationship to other characters	Three adjectives that describe character	Purpose/function in story (specify round or flat)?
1.	1.	1.	1.
2.	2.	2.	2.
3.	3.	3.	3.
4.	4.	4.	4.
5.	5.	5.	5.
6.	6.	6.	6.
7.	7.	7.	7.
8.	8.	8.	8.
9.	9.	9.	9.
10.	10.	10.	10.

AP English DATA SHEET

Name : \_\_\_\_\_

Describe the setting(s) and explain its significance.

Write and explain the theme(s) of the work.

Identify and explain key metaphors (M), symbols (S) or motifs (F) in the work.

Write at least five vocabulary words from the text and define them. Cite the page and passage in which you found them.

Write at least three questions or topics for discussion.

# Chapter 3

## Course Organization

### Syllabus Development

Remember the advice in Chapter 2 about using your strengths and the texts you already know to develop your first AP course? As you read through the sample syllabi that follow, bear in mind that you can modify them, substituting texts with which you are familiar or that are available to you. You might decide that you want to combine approaches from these syllabi or you might feel inspired to create one that is entirely your own.

First-time AP English Literature and Composition teachers sometimes have difficulty with pacing and with knowing how much time to devote to exam preparation. You should certainly challenge your students with a college- or university-level course, but don't forget to take into account the stresses and demands on high school seniors. Beware of overestimating or underestimating students as you plan a syllabus that includes poetry, prose, drama, and some exam preparation, and know that the best way to prepare students for the exam is to create and teach a rich and challenging class.

The freedom to choose what to read and how to organize the reading can be both intoxicating and daunting for the first-time AP teacher. Without a prescribed reading list but with the requirement that students read from all genres from the late sixteenth to the early twenty-first centuries, you might have trouble deciding where and how to start.

#### The Value of Poetry

My students of language and literature, like all humans, occupy familiar elements. They breathe the sweaty air of adolescence; they sneaker and flip-flop their way across polished floor and grassy field. They taste and touch everything. They also read and write and speak, sometimes with passion and flourish, but often with the same inattention and nonchalance they bring to the most pursuits. Until, that is, they begin to read and write and speak poetry. Poetry, language at its most primitive and its most refined, affords them the opportunity to enter an element that is at once intimately familiar and as exotic as a perfect kiss. They never fail to be smitten by its power—in short, they fall in love. In the process, they see language as they've never seen it before; magnified and fluid, both solid and liquid, like glass. They understand that on those rare occasions when the inexpressible is indeed expressed, poetry is the cause.

How can we encourage our students to see language as they've never seen it before? By focusing their attention on the details, by encouraging them, again and again, to probe the meanings and connotations of words, to understand the richness of allusions, to grasp the varieties of tone. As they recognize the rewards of reading closely, they will increasingly become their own best guides through the poems and, perhaps, better poets themselves.

—Kay Cavan, Sir Francis Drake High School,  
San Anselmo, California

As you will see from the syllabi that follow, you have the freedom to organize your course by genre or by theme, chronologically or not; yet I know that some of you crave a more specific plan for action. So, with an invitation to embrace wholeheartedly or to tinker with the guidelines that follow, let me suggest a template for your course syllabus. The order in which you do the work is not important, but I like to

## Chapter 3

start with poetry, the most economical form of writing, because through the study of a series of poets and poems, I can be certain that all students are comfortable with the language and terminology we use to discuss literature as a whole.

### *A possible course syllabus (30 weeks)*

#### Weeks 1–2: Course Introduction

Summer reading (probably at least two longer works), discussions, and writing.

#### Weeks 3–7: An Introduction to Poetry

Close focus on Renaissance lyrics followed by a survey of poetry through the later twentieth century. Several close reading exercises. Student presentations and papers.

#### Weeks 8–11: A Nineteenth-Century Novel

Several short writing exercises. Major paper (writing workshop).

#### Weeks 12–17: Drama

A play by Shakespeare and two to three contemporary plays. These may be thematically linked if you wish. Several acting exercises and shorter writing assignments based on close reading. Major paper (writing workshop).

#### Weeks 18–24: Contemporary Fiction

Two to three novels (depending on length). In this section in particular, strive to include traditionally underrepresented voices (women and people of color). Reflective writing, student-led discussions, major paper (writing workshop).

#### Weeks 25–27: Return to Poetry

Student group presentations on contemporary (last 30 years) poets. Individual major paper on the poet on which each student has focused (writing workshop).

#### Weeks 28–30: Review

Student-led review of reading from the year, including summer reading. Two to three practice sessions for multiple-choice questions. One full-scale practice examination (to be sure that students who might never have sat for a three-hour exam are prepared).

Read the sample syllabi that follow and get ready to devise an AP English Literature and Composition syllabus that reflects your and your students' interests and concerns.

### **Fostering Dialogue with a Thematic Approach**

One of the great benefits of teaching an AP English Literature and Composition course is that teachers are in charge of developing their own "must teach" list. In preparing my first syllabus, I reread several texts and read others for the first time, considering whether I liked them and whether students would—not that our predictions are always accurate.

With possible titles in mind, I grouped these major works according to themes built around essential questions that I thought would appeal to high school seniors. These four themes are Identity and Perception, Truth and Illusion, The Nature of Good and Evil, and Finding Purpose. To each unit I added essays and poems. Every year I add at least one new title to the course.

I prefer a thematic approach to teaching literature because it allows for various genres to converse with one another. It also demystifies, to some extent, the genre of poetry, which can seem nearly impenetrable. When linked to a passage from a novel or short story, however, the poem offers more entry points for students.

—Kathleen M. Puhr, Clayton High School,  
St. Louis, Missouri

## **Important note: The AP Course Audit**

The syllabi included in this Teachers Guide were developed prior to the initiation of the AP Course Audit and the identification of the current AP English Literature and Composition Curricular Requirements. These syllabi contain rich resources and will be useful in generating ideas for your AP course. In addition to providing detailed course planners, the syllabi contain descriptions of classroom activities and assignments, along with helpful teaching strategies. However, they should not necessarily be used in their entirety as models that would be authorized under the guidelines of the AP Course Audit. To view the current AP English Literature and Composition Curricular Requirements and examples of syllabi that have been developed since the launch of the AP Course Audit and therefore meet all of the Curricular Requirements, please see AP Central.

**<http://apcentral.collegeboard.com/courseaudit/resources>**

# Sample Syllabus 1

## Carlos Escobar

Felix Varela Senior High School  
Miami, Florida

## School Profile

**School Location and Environment:** Felix Varela Senior High School is located in Miami, Florida, and has the distinction of being Miami-Dade County's first new high school in the twenty-first century. While 59 countries are represented by the student body, most students have immigrated to Miami from countries throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. Although their socioeconomic backgrounds are also diverse, they generally come from lower-middle-class families.

**Grades:** 9–12

**Type:** Public neighborhood academy school

**Total Enrollment:** 4,672 students

**Ethnic Diversity:** Hispanic students comprise 81 percent of the student population; African Americans, 5 percent; and Asian, Indian, or multiracial students, 2 percent.

**College Record:** Approximately 73 percent of graduating seniors enroll in either two- or four-year institutions. Florida colleges and universities are typical destinations for graduates, although some attend public and private out-of-state schools, including Ivy League institutions.

## Personal Philosophy

AP English Literature and Composition endows students with the ability to read, think, analyze, discuss, and write with heightened insight and stronger control of language. These skills ensure student success in other AP courses and facilitate their transition into higher education. Moreover, teaching this class entails exposing them to the breadth of the human experience. This study ultimately leads students to recognize the bond between all people, thereby fostering the eradication of prejudice and ethnocentricity. AP English Literature also demands that I continually improve my pedagogy in order to better prepare students for college courses. In essence, while I witness extensive growth in my students throughout the course, I too expand my own understanding of society and teaching. While challenging for both, the value of AP English Literature for students and teachers is immeasurable.

## Class Profile

The beginning of my teaching career coincided with the opening of Felix Varela Senior High in the 2000-01 school year. I have taught tenth-grade regular and honors English; eleventh-grade honors English; twelfth-grade regular and honors English; and AP English Literature and Composition, which I have taught since its inception at Felix Varela in 2002. I am currently the lead teacher of the AP program at the school and teach five classes and two preparations: two regular tenth-grade and three AP English Literature and Composition courses. My teaching load is approximately 147 students, 72 of whom are AP students. The school administration currently seeks to limit regular classes to 31 students and AP classes to 25. The school operates on an alternating block schedule, with students attending three 100-minute periods daily. Additionally, I spend approximately six hours per week in out-of-class tutorials.

Felix Varela offers honors English courses in grades 9–12, AP English Language and Composition in grade 11, and AP English Literature and Composition in grade 12. There are currently four sections of AP English Language and seven sections of AP English Literature. The school’s mission is to provide each student with the opportunity to participate in the benefits and rigors associated with AP classes.

### Course Overview

AP English Literature and Composition is a one-year course in which students’ reading, writing, and oral skills are strengthened through the study of novels, plays, poems, and short stories from the sixteenth century to the present. Certain films are also used throughout the year in order to further the student’s understanding of the texts. Most of the authors represented are canonical, but Latin American and Caribbean writers also play an integral role in my curriculum because of the student population at the school. Students purchase their own novels and read poems and short stories from *The Norton Introduction to Literature*. I sometimes incorporate poems into my curriculum to complement major texts, but I usually teach poetry through isolated units between novels. I use short stories, on the other hand, to introduce students to the idiosyncrasies of certain authors. Paired texts from various genres and time periods having similar themes or characters are used to further the students’ abilities to compare, discuss, interpret, and write about imaginative literature. Felix Varela has a summer reading program for AP English Literature and Composition, which serves as the basis for instruction at the beginning of the school year.

The writing component of the course is developed through a myriad of timed essays, which are often rewritten several times, and longer essays that usually consist of comparing two novels or poems. Students generally write one essay each week. My curriculum also encourages the development of oral skills. Aside from classroom discussions, each student therefore delivers formal and informal timed presentations throughout the year.

In addition to the reading and writing instruction crucial to an AP course, students become familiar with the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* and literary research volumes such as *Contemporary Literary Criticism*. These two elements allow students to conduct research and then incorporate it into their essays in a conventional manner.

### Course Planner/Student Activities

#### Fall Semester—First Grading Period

***Crime and Punishment* by Fyodor Dostoevsky and *Heart of Darkness* by Joseph Conrad (three weeks)**

I allot only three weeks for the study of these two novels because I assign them as summer reading. Among other factors, they are chosen and paired in order to discuss the effects of setting on the psyche of characters. Their rigor establishes the tone of scholarship inherent in the AP English Literature and Composition course. It is important, however, to guide students through their reading of these novels. I therefore meet with them prior to the beginning of the summer to introduce them to topics such as Christianity and nihilism for *Crime and Punishment* and imperialism for *Heart of Darkness*. Front-loading is crucial at this stage in order for students to then successfully delve into the layers of philosophy, psychology, and symbolism inherent in Dostoevsky’s novel and the historical context of Conrad’s novella. During this session, I provide students with my e-mail address so they may contact me during the summer as questions regarding the texts inevitably arise.

For the first texts of the school year, I use an “assessment question” to determine how carefully students read the novels and to gauge the depth of their comprehension. After students write the

## Chapter 3

assessment question essay, I use the “cooperative learning activity” as the first of many formal and informal conferences. The other forms for conferences may include Socratic seminars, class presentations on various themes, and small- and whole-group discussions.

### **Assessment Question (1979 AP Open-Ended Question):**

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

### **Cooperative Learning Activity:**

This cooperative learning activity is designed specifically for *Crime and Punishment*. I divide the class into three sections (I use six in my largest class) and assign each group a different topic. After discussing within their groups, students must present their findings to the class.

Group One: Trace the Lazarus and Christ allusions throughout *Crime and Punishment* and determine their effects on the novel as a whole.

Group Two: Summarize the various dreams present in the novel and discuss the insight each reveals about the dreamer.

Group Three: Consider the theme of suffering in the novel by answering these three questions: (a) Who suffers? (b) Why do they suffer? (c) What is the effect of the suffering on each character? You must ultimately formulate a general statement regarding Dostoevsky’s use of suffering in the novel.

### ***The Awakening* by Kate Chopin (four weeks)**

In this unit, “The Story of an Hour” and “Desiree’s Baby” precede the study of Chopin’s novel to develop an understanding of the themes and societal conventions present in her writing. After reading the short stories, but prior to beginning the novel, I ask students to research living conditions during the nineteenth century. While they may create their own topic, I recommend that they focus on issues such as gender equity, etiquette, and women’s education. After sharing their findings, students possess a deeper understanding of Chopin’s society, which then serves to elucidate her purpose for writing the novel.

Students read *The Awakening* quickly, but they follow their reading by engaging in discussions about themes and characters’ motivations, writing the “internal events essay,” and participating in the “chalk talk activity.” The emphasis on female characters contrasts the male-driven plots of the two previous novels.

### **Internal Events Essay (1988 AP Open-Ended Question):**

Choose a distinguished novel or play in which some of the most significant events are mental or psychological; for example, awakenings, discoveries, changes in consciousness. In a well-organized essay, describe how the author manages to give these internal events the sense of excitement, suspense, and climax usually associated with external action. Do not merely summarize the plot.

**Chalk Talk Activity:** See Appendix C.

## **Fall Semester—Second Grading Period**

### ***A Doll’s House* by Henrik Ibsen (one week)**

Ibsen’s play *A Doll’s House* presents many of the same concerns that Chopin raises in her novel. Pairing them therefore allows for ample consideration of author’s viewpoint, character development, and theme.

The “comparative essay” and “debate” assignments, however, enable students to consider the differences between the two and thereby not mistake the characters and events that arise in each.

Since students often question the connection of their own lives to the literature they encounter, I play the movie *Kramer vs. Kramer* at the end of this unit to demonstrate the relationship between literary themes and contemporary dilemmas.

### **Comparative Essay:**

Compare and contrast the awakenings of Edna Pontellier and Nora Helmer.

### **Debate:**

I divide the class into six groups and assign one of the following viewpoints to each:

1. Edna Pontellier is a stronger woman than Nora Helmer.
2. Nora Helmer is a stronger woman than Edna Pontellier.
3. Léonce Pontellier is a better father than Torvald Helmer.
4. Torvald Helmer is a better father than Léonce Pontellier.
5. Kate Chopin’s novel provides a better argument for gender equity than Henrik Ibsen’s play.
6. Henrik Ibsen’s play provides a better argument for gender equity than Kate Chopin’s novel.

After allowing each group to prepare its case, I give each side three minutes to present it, two minutes to plan a rebuttal, and finally one minute to deliver the response.

### **Metaphysical Poetry: John Donne, George Herbert, Andrew Marvell (two weeks)**

This unit exposes students to challenging poetry in preparation for the AP Exam, post-Elizabethan religious conflicts and ideologies, and the relationship between structure and meaning. Students are at first daunted by the language and conceits of these poems, but they ultimately gain confidence in their abilities to interpret poetry. I incorporate Donne, Herbert, and Marvell but emphasize John Donne’s work by examining 10 of his poems.

I use the “structure activity” to introduce the topic because of the distinct shapes of “Easter Wings” and “The Altar.” Students respond well to this lesson and are then prepared to analyze the structure/meaning relationships in other poems. During these two weeks, students also paraphrase as well as compose and answer critical questions on specific poems. They ultimately write an essay on “Holy Sonnet I,” which assesses their ability to differentiate between poet and speaker while examining the manner in which literary elements convey meaning.

### **Holy Sonnet I Assessment Question:**

Carefully read “Holy Sonnet I” and write an essay in which you define the speaker’s attitude toward life and death. Discuss how such elements as diction, figurative language, imagery, and structure convey this attitude.

### **Structure Activity:**

This activity uses George Herbert’s “Easter Wings” to ensure that students note the relationship between structure and meaning.

1. Students read and annotate “Easter Wings” and then answer the following question: How does the poem’s structure echo its sense?

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2. They share their responses with a partner.
3. Each pair then reads Herbert's "The Altar" and determines which of the two poems merges meaning and structure more effectively.
4. The activity concludes with a whole-group discussion on the themes of both poems and the manner in which structure enhances the meaning of each.

### ***One Hundred Years of Solitude* by Gabriel García Márquez (five weeks)**

This novel is of great importance to the AP English Literature and Composition course at Felix Varela not only because the majority of the students are Hispanic, but also because many are from Colombia. The students' ability to identify with the culture, ideologies, and recurrence of names within the novel provides them with the unique experience of validating their own heritage. The students are therefore not overwhelmed by the magical realism of the novel since their upbringings were forged by similar narratives. The concept, however, is initially presented through García Márquez's "A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings." Furthermore, to understand the philosophical and political overtones of the novel, students read the author's 1982 Nobel Prize in Literature lecture, "The Solitude of Latin America."

The cyclical events and repetition of names in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, along with its length, may hinder the students' ability to recall the novel. Students therefore keep journals in which they trace the progression of each character, copy the Buendía genealogy onto large poster boards, write summaries of each chapter, create lists of pivotal images and symbolic components found throughout the novel, respond to the "distortion prompt," and complete the "magical realism activity."

#### **Distortion Prompt (1989 AP Open-Ended Question):**

In questioning the value of literary realism, Flannery O'Connor has written, "I am pleased to make a good case for distortion because I am coming to believe that it is the only way to make people see."

Write an essay in which you "make a good case for distortion," as distinct from literary realism. Analyze how important elements of the work you choose are "distorted" and explain how these distortions contribute to the effectiveness of the work. Avoid plot summary.

#### **Magical Realism Activity:**

This task capitalizes on my students' backgrounds to emphasize the universality of literary themes.

1. Students research nonscientific beliefs, rationales, or fables found within their families.
2. They submit a three- to five-page document summarizing these notions and delineating their effects on both children and adults within their families.
3. After reading *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, students must submit a five- to seven-page essay in which they elucidate the parallels between the anecdotes discussed in their original reports and the magical realism of the novel. They must also discuss the global role of these ideologies and their effects on human nature.

### **Spring Semester—Third Grading Period**

#### ***Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe (two weeks)**

Achebe's novel addresses concepts similar to those found within *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, namely, the effects of colonization on both individuals and entire civilizations. *Things Fall Apart* also introduces students to a foreign society and promotes the identification of the factors that bind all people. Students

begin this unit by analyzing William Butler Yeats’s poem “The Second Coming” and conclude by commenting on Achebe’s decision to include it as a preface to the novel. Throughout the two weeks, students discuss the parallels between *One Hundred Years of Solitude* and *Things Fall Apart*; analyze the roles of men, women, spirituality, and tradition within the Ibo community; and compare American and Ibo societies.

The “characterization essay” is used at the onset of the unit to closely examine the protagonist and prepare for the prose essay question on the AP Exam. After students read the novel, they complete the “legal system activity” to compare and contrast the convictions of the American and Ibo cultures.

**Characterization Essay:**

Read the first three paragraphs of *Things Fall Apart* and write an essay analyzing the literary techniques Chinua Achebe uses to characterize Okonkwo.

**Legal System Activity:**

Students delineate five Ibo “laws” found in the novel and compare each to the American legal system.

***Hamlet* by William Shakespeare (four weeks)**

Rather than supplying my students with interpretations and focal points, my goal when teaching *Hamlet* is to encourage *them* to generate insights. Prior to reading the play, however, we spend one week analyzing the structure and themes of Shakespearean sonnets. This practice familiarizes students with the language of Shakespeare, which then facilitates their understanding of the play. This unit differs from the others in that most of the reading is done in class. Listening to varying voices allows students to better recall details and ascertain the manner in which certain lines should be spoken. I play Kenneth Branagh’s and Franco Zeffirelli’s versions of *Hamlet* at the end of the unit because students have by then formulated their own interpretations and are prepared to critique the films rather than be steered by them.

This month is composed of daily discussions as students grapple with the complexities of the text; I also infuse the unit with the “madness essay,” the “soliloquy explication,” and questions spanning Bloom’s Taxonomy.

**Madness Essay (2001 AP Open-Ended Question):**

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

Much madness is divinest Sense—  
To a discerning Eye—

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

**Soliloquy Explication:**

1. I divide my students into groups for a subsequent visit to the media center.
2. Each group is responsible for researching the allusions present in Hamlet’s first soliloquy.
3. They then explicate the speech and the specific effect the allusions have on their understanding of Prince Hamlet.

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### Spring Semester—Fourth Grading Period

#### *Death of a Salesman* by Arthur Miller (two weeks)

This is the only text I cover during the fourth grading period because I reserve this time to review for the AP Exam by working on student writing portfolios and revisiting the novels and plays already studied.

I place *Death of a Salesman* immediately after *Hamlet* not only to discuss the many themes they share, but also to highlight the manner in which drama has evolved over 400 years. Students read both Aristotle's definition of tragedy and Arthur Miller's "Tragedy and the Common Man." I introduce the former prior to beginning the play and the latter once they conclude their reading. This allows students to assess whether the play satisfies Aristotle's definition before reading Miller's essay. The discussion of the similarities between the plays follows the "comparative essay," but exclusive attention is given to *Death of a Salesman* as students complete the "critical analysis activity."

Throughout this unit students also consider topics such as capitalism, happiness, loyalty, pride, and success.

#### **Comparative Essay:**

Compare and contrast the relationship of Polonius and Laertes to that of Willy Loman and Biff Loman.

#### **Critical Analysis Activity:**

After reading the play, students respond to the following:

1. How does setting contribute to Willy Loman's emotions?
2. To what extent does *Death of a Salesman* satisfy Aristotle's definition of tragedy?
3. Characterize Linda's development throughout the play.

## Teaching Strategies

In addition to the strategies I note throughout this syllabus, I also offer opportunities for students to read and analyze supplemental texts (see Appendix A). These after-school sessions are voluntary, and neither incentives nor rewards are provided. It is difficult for many of my students to attend because they must work or care for younger siblings after school due to their financial situations; approximately 25 percent of my students, however, usually partake in these conferences.

Student success in AP English Literature and Composition is based on efficient reading practices and a steadfast commitment to learn from accomplishments and errors in previous essays. To improve the quality of their annotations, I insist that students adopt the practice of George Bernard Shaw:

"As soon as I open [a book], I occupy the book, I stomp around in it. I underline passages, scribble in the margins, leave my mark . . . I like to be able to hear myself responding to a book, answering it, agreeing and disagreeing in a manner I recognize as peculiarly my own."

In reference to writing, I cite the American writer and journalist Gene Fowler: "Writing is easy. All you do is stare at a blank sheet of paper until drops of blood form on your forehead." Despite the seemingly defeatist message of this quotation, it serves as an opportunity to introduce sarcasm, instill a desire to persevere, and establish a sense of camaraderie since most of my students empathize with the presented image.

Note: Students complete the Major Works Form (see Appendix B) after each text to serve as a study guide for the AP Exam.

## Student Evaluation

Assessments serve various purposes in my AP English Literature and Composition class. At the outset of the course, for instance, essays and multiple-choice assignments are diagnostic tools that then guide my instruction. The grades attributed to these activities are therefore minimal; in fact, I assign grades based on effort rather than student performance. After the first two weeks, however, released AP multiple-choice questions are administered and scored according to AP guidelines and are worth three grades. The grading scale varies for these assignments, as I generally curve them based on the highest score achieved within the class. Essays are also worth three grades; I use the following scale to correlate rubric scores to letter grades: 9–A+, 8–A, 7–B+, 6–B, 5–C, 4–D, 3 and below–F. While essays and multiple-choice assignments present great difficulty for my students, I provide them with various opportunities to succeed.

Since nearly all reading of novels is completed at home, I administer daily quizzes worth one grade at the beginning of each unit. These brief assessments serve to check for comprehension and motivate students to follow the reading timelines provided. They also help students improve their grades, which are particularly affected by essays and multiple-choice assignments at the beginning of the school year. Major exams are given at the end of each novel. These normally consist of short-answer and essay questions and are worth three to four grades.

Other tasks assigned throughout the course include presentations, debates, poetry responses, and quick-writes. The weight of each of these assignments is based on their level of complexity.

## Teacher Resources

### Books

Beatty, Jerome, et al., eds. *The Norton Introduction to Literature*. 8th ed. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2001.

Davis, Robert Con, and Ronald Schleifer. *Contemporary Literary Criticism: Literary and Cultural Studies*. 4th ed. New York: Longman, 1998.

Gibaldi, Joseph. *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. 6th ed. New York: Modern Language Association of America, 2003.

Murfin, Ross, and Supryia M. Ray. *The Bedford Glossary of Critical and Literary Terms*. 2nd ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's Press, 2003.

### Web Site

AP Central: [apcentral.collegeboard.com](http://apcentral.collegeboard.com)

### Films Used in the Course

*Hamlet*. Directed by Kenneth Branagh. Columbia Tristar, 1996. Available on VHS at Amazon ([www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)).

*Hamlet*. Directed by Franco Zeffirelli. Warner Home Video, 2005. Available on DVD at Amazon ([www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)).

# Appendix A

## Optional After-School Reading Sessions

*A Streetcar Named Desire* by Tennessee Williams

*The Color Purple* by Alice Walker

*Rosencrantz & Guildenstern Are Dead* by Tom Stoppard

*Waiting for Godot* by Samuel Beckett

Plays are better suited for these conferences since they tend to be shorter than novels. While we read and even perform some parts in class, the majority of the students' work is done at home. We therefore meet to discuss central issues or to clarify questions that arise as students read independently. The following are examples of notes given to students prior to their reading. The essay, however, is optional; if students choose to complete it, I review their essays without assigning actual grades.

### *A Streetcar Named Desire* by Tennessee Williams

**Themes to Consider:** death, dependency, gender stereotypes, illusion versus reality, loneliness, passion, violence, and sexuality

**Essay Question (1991 AP Open-Ended Question):**

Many plays and novels use contrasting places (for example, two countries, two cities or towns, two houses, or the land and the sea) to represent opposed forces or ideas that are central to the meaning of the work.

Choose a novel or a play that contrasts two such places. Write an essay explaining how the places differ, what each place represents, and how their contrast contributes to the meaning of the work.

### *The Color Purple* by Alice Walker

**Themes to Consider:** education, female/male relationships, racism, religion, sensuality, sexism, and sisterhood. Also consider the structure and narrator of the novel.

**Essay Question:**

Choose two diary entries—one from the earlier part of the novel and one from the latter—and explain how each plays a pivotal role in the development of either characterization or theme. Avoid plot summary.

# Appendix B

## Major Works Study Form

Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Author: \_\_\_\_\_

Biographical Information: \_\_\_\_\_

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Author's Style: \_\_\_\_\_

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Plot Summary: \_\_\_\_\_

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Setting (describe each setting and its importance): \_\_\_\_\_

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Symbols (describe how they contribute to the characterization, conflict, or thematic concerns): \_\_\_\_\_

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Thematic Concerns: \_\_\_\_\_

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## Chapter 3

Significant Quotations:

Quotation	Situation	Importance	Page(s)

## Appendix C

### Chalk Talk and Related Activities

- A. Varying the approaches to the analysis of literature in an AP course is vital for maintaining student interest and involvement. Although discussions and essays are useful tools, chalk talks allow timid students to share their viewpoints and deter others from speaking on impulse. Chalk talks consist of taping large pieces of butcher paper along the walls of the classroom with one significant question posed on each. Students are then given markers and asked to walk around the room and respond to each question. They may also comment on the responses recorded by their peers. The protocol, however, demands that everyone remains silent. The following questions may be used for this activity:
1. What is Edna Pontellier's awakening?
  2. How would the original title, *A Solitary Soul*, affect your perception of the novel?
  3. What role does setting play in the novel?
  4. Are there any victims in the novel? If so, who?
  5. Is Edna Pontellier's suicide a failure, tragedy, or triumph?
  6. What is Chopin's attitude toward the various characters in the novel, particularly the female protagonist?
- B. After approximately 45 minutes, ask students to sit and have each one quickly relate a comment with which they strongly agree or disagree.
- C. Once all students have responded, they write an introductory paragraph for questions one, three, or five. This final step requires that they organize their thoughts and arrive at a conclusion.

# Sample Syllabus 2

**Dr. Anne M. Cognard**

Lincoln East High School  
Lincoln, Nebraska

## School Profile

**School Location and Environment:** Lincoln East is an urban school—just barely. For years it was considered the new kid on the block, but with the expansion of population and Lincoln’s ever outward movement toward suburbia, Lincoln East is now within urban boundaries, as defined by the city, especially since three new high schools have been built on the outer edges.

**Grades:** 9–12

**Type:** Public high school

**Total Enrollment:** 1,800 students (21 percent gifted, 10 percent special education, 1 percent ESL)

**Ethnic Diversity:** 9.2 percent minority (4.3 percent Asian American, 2.6 percent African American, 2.1 percent Hispanic American, and .2 percent Native American)

**College Record:** Of the total number of students, 60 percent go on to four-year colleges and universities, with another 20 percent going to technical–vocational, business, or nursing schools. Part of the reason why 80 percent of Lincoln East’s students attend some form of postsecondary institution is that Lincoln is a university town with the flagship state university, an active community college, and several private colleges, including one of national fame.

Lincoln East was founded as a school of high academic promise. Students come from other city high schools to take advantage of the breadth of advanced and innovative courses the school offers. Its niche in the community is one of adventuresome risk-taking in curricular offerings (many of which are available only at Lincoln East) and a continued high standard of education for all students, including at-risk students.

But numbers do not tell the whole story; they never do. Lincoln East English teachers have created Special Topics courses for students of all ability levels; have a nationally recognized, one-of-a-kind, team-taught program for at-risk ninth- and tenth-graders; and over the years have developed a plethora of classes for gifted students.

## Personal Philosophy

This class is not about grades, but about learning. I want students to have the experience of college-level learning, something most high school students do not have available to them. College-level learning is not primarily about rigor—though that’s part of college—but about responsibility and acceptance of one’s self as a more mature student. It is also about reading, thinking about, and writing about more mature texts. The difficulty of the texts is a stimulus for students to make their own decisions about published authors, about themselves as writers, about their colleagues as writers, and about the deep and ongoing questions that relate to what it means to be a responding, acting human being both individually and as part of a society.

I intend the course to be stimulating and demanding, a course in which students will grow in relation to who they are instead of in relation to established standards developed by state or federal mandates. True learning, I believe, comes from self-demand rather than society's expectations. School is the last stronghold in this regard, a place where experimentation occurs and ideas are generated to be considered and examined for their own sake.

Learning is an organic process. It is interactive, not predicated on my filling students with information as though they were empty vessels. My students and I will learn and create the parameters of this course together.

## Class Profile

There are seven to eight sections of AP English Literature and Composition each year, with enrollments per section of 27 to 29 students. It is a yearlong class and meets every day for 50 minutes. There is a schoolwide examination schedule at the end of each semester. These exams are 90 minutes long.

## Course Overview

### AP English Literature and Composition

*Again and again something in one's own life, or in the life around one,  
will seem so important that one cannot bear to let it pass into oblivion.  
There must never come a time, the writer feels, that people do not know about this.*  
—Murasaki Shikibu, *The Tale of Genji*

*Literature is news that stays news.*  
—Ezra Pound

*If writing is thinking and discovery and selection and order and meaning,  
it is also awe and reverence and mystery and magic.*  
—Toni Morrison, "The Site of Memory"

Let's look at literature and composition separately since they are both in the title of this course. Literature first. I have always felt that teachers in the humanities are exempt from having to justify their various courses of study. In other words, when members of other disciplines demand to know why studying literature is useful or important to society at large, people in the humanities are usually consigned to the age-old answer: "Studying literature teaches us about ourselves." This is not a fraudulent response; studying literature does increase our self-knowledge as human beings, our capacity to recognize and speak to a common human experience. Yet studying literature gives us insight into not only human emotion but also human thought processes and the magical blending of logic with imagination. Line, meter, rhyme, character, plot, spectacle, dramatic monologue—these are the tools of the writer that enable very ordered and extremely intricate art forms. Literature cannot exist without order. Like music, literary expression is as much a product of disciplined rules as it is, in William Wordsworth's terms, "the spontaneous overflow of powerful feeling . . . recollected in tranquility." Put another way, literature is a science of words and it is a painting of ideas. During this AP year, we will discover together how to read and understand literature as an art form guided by unified but sometimes competing rules, an art form at once translatable to all and subject entirely to individual interpretation.

So how does writing fit into this course? This AP course is meant to restructure students' preconceived assumptions about writing and what it means to be a good writer. In my experience, AP students often

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believe an A paper is one with no mechanical errors, yet the process and ultimate product of writing is not the achievement of perfect grammar, punctuation, and spelling. Rather, writing is an endeavor that never ends, an informational or artistic act of casting one's ideas into a form of meaningful communication. As such, I do not believe in a formulaic A paper; instead, students will be evaluated according to their individual progress and hard work.

So far, my remarks may sound familiar. What, then, is different about this course from others students have taken? How do literature and writing blend in this course? What makes it a college course?

This AP English Literature and Composition course is designed to teach beginning college writing through the fundamentals of rhetorical theory. Class discussion every day will touch on some vital aspect of writing, including invention and the artistic proofs (ethos, pathos, logos), disposition or structure, and style (diction, syntax, figurative language, mechanics). But this class is not a rhetoric manual but a workshop—a place where students will test certain kinds of writing and attempt to recover their own recollections as part of larger cultural experiences that eventually become a people's history, that is, a people's collective account of itself through its literature.

In order for this class to function as a true workshop, students will write a good deal, and they will revise certain pieces of their writing into polished final drafts. Students will also produce a final writing portfolio—a kind of individual writing archive. What I expect most of all is hard work on the part of the individual writer, and careful reading and discussion on the part of the class.

## Course Planner

### First Semester

#### Week 1: Introduction to the Course

##### What Is Literature? Reading, Responding, Recognizing Literature

Readying for reading and analyzing literature: students bring in some of their favorite children's poems and those they like as young adults; song lyrics; literature in connection with the other arts

##### What Is Composition and Language? Analyzing Literature (Lunsford and Connors, pp. 18–26)

Readying for writing (“Considering Rhetorical Situations”): genre study, language, audience, the nature of writing assignments in AP English Literature and Composition, online materials

##### Review of syllabus

In-class sample AP Exam (one question) with review of scoring guidelines and exemplars: why essay examinations, why scoring guidelines, why assessment versus grading

#### Week 2: Poetry

##### The Basics (Introduction)

What makes poetry poetry? Working with traditional poetry; readapting poetry through poetic prose, adaptations (advertisements); the relationship between poetry and photography, painting (the nonlinear arts)

Finding poetry in the world around us: a search for poetry; student-engendered “definition” of poetry

The Basics (Tone, Speaker: Hunter, *The Norton Introduction to Poetry*)

Background: Tone, pp. 33–43; Speaker, pp. 63–69

In-class reading aloud of poetry with discussion of tone and speaker; discussion of tone as metaphor for sound: the sounds we hear every day; conversion of sounds to words

Connection between poet, speaker, and audience: the interplay among these with poetry as “discourse,” “the best words in the best order” for an audience one does not know (noncontemporary)

In-class writing: converting words and photography/landscape into a “poem”

Week 3: Poetry

The Basics (Language, Imagery, Symbolism: *The Norton Introduction to Poetry*)

Background: Precision and Ambiguity, pp. 140–53; Metaphor and Simile, pp. 66–174; Symbol, pp. 82–189

In-class reading aloud of poetry with discussion of precision, ambiguity, metaphor, simile, and symbols. Terminology as concept and poetic choices: finding these in the world around us; finding them in one’s own clothing, presentation, persona; finding them in parable; finding them in Depression-era photographs

In-class writing: critical analysis of poem (reader-response theory)

Week 4: Poetry

The Basics (Rhythm, Sound: *The Norton Introduction to Poetry*)

Background: Sounds, pp. 198–208

In-class reading aloud of poems with discussion of sounds; Dr. Seuss and sounds; converting music to word-sounds; a study of the sounds of language (“the sound is an echo to the sense”)

Explanation of Explication Assignment (Lunsford and Connors, pp. 32–49, 70–98); “Exploring, Planning, and Drafting” in writing; “Thinking Critically: Constructing and Analyzing Argument” (the theory of new criticism: the significance of text)

Week 5: Poetry

The Beauty (Sonnet and Epigram: *The Norton Introduction to Poetry*)

Backgrounds: Sonnet, pp. 257–59; Epigram, pp. 373–74

Barrett Browning, “How Do I Love Thee?” p. 3; Chasin, “Joy Sonnet in a Random Universe,” p. 262; Coleridge, “What Is an Epigram?” p. 374; Gay, “My Own Epitaph,” p. 375; Harwood,

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“In the Park,” p. 261; Jonson, “Epitaph on Elizabeth, L. H.,” p. 374; Kennedy, “Epitaph for a Postal Clerk,” p. 376; Shelley, “Ozymandias,” p. 265

Explanation of Sonnet Assignment (Lunsford and Connors, pp. 622-42)  
“Understanding Disciplinary Discourse”; “Writing about Literature”

Form as function (critical approaches to literature complementing textual study)

DUE: EXPLICATION ASSIGNMENT BY THE BEGINNING OF CLASS

Workshopping this assignment

Developing group-based scoring guidelines: class-created nine-point, holistic scoring guidelines

### Week 6: Poetry

The Beauty (Villanelle, Sestina, Ode, and Elegy: *The Norton Introduction to Poetry*)

Backgrounds: stanza forms, p. 271; poetic “kinds,” pp. 371-73; and definitions of various poetic forms in the glossary

Auden, “Stop All the Clocks,” p. 20; Bishop, “Sestina,” p. 273; Keats, “Ode on a Grecian Urn,” p. 323; Thomas, “Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Night,” p. 272

The Beauty (Ballad, Lyric: handouts and *The Norton Introduction to Poetry*)

Handouts: Billy Joel, “The Ballad of Billy the Kid”; James Taylor, “Traffic Jam”; students also bring in ballade: the balladic traditions adapted

Arnold, “Dover Beach,” p. 104; Hardy, “The Convergence of the Twain,” p. 426

In-class writing their own song/ballad; group sharing

### Week 7: Poetry

The Beauty (Epic: handouts and *The Norton Introduction to Poetry*)

Handouts: Eliot, from “The Waste Land”; Whitman, from *Song of Myself*; Wordsworth, *The Prelude*

Milton, “I” from *Paradise Lost*, pp. 162-63

Explanation of Allusion Assignment (other poststructural criticism tied with new critical: how to read and reread through various critical lenses)

DUE: SONNET ASSIGNMENT BY THE BEGINNING OF CLASS

Workshopping this assignment

Developing scoring guidelines: class created with comparison and similarity of scoring guidelines for critical and for creative writings, trait scoring guidelines

Week 8: Poetry

The Banter (Allusion: handouts and *The Norton Introduction to Poetry*)

Backgrounds: literary tradition as context, pp. 362-63; echo and allusion, pp. 363-64

Handouts: Dickinson, "The Bible is an antique volume"; Harrison, "A Kumquat for John Keats"; Watts, "Our God, Our Help"; Keats, "On First Looking into Chapman's Homer," p. 318

DUE: ALLUSION ASSIGNMENT IN CLASS

Partner work on responding to allusion assignment based on Lunsford and Connors text

Week 9: Poetry

The Banter (Myth: *The Norton Introduction to Poetry*)

Backgrounds: cultural belief and tradition, p. 394

Donnelly, "Eve Names the Animals," p. 395; Hollander, "Adam's Task," p. 395; St. Vincent Millay, "An Ancient Gesture," p. 401; Tennyson, "Ulysses," p. 398

The Banter (Intertextuality: *The Norton Introduction to Poetry*)

Backgrounds: Imitating and Answering, p. 386

Marlowe, "The Passionate Shepherd to His Love," p. 371; Raleigh, "The Nymph's Reply to the Shepherd," pp. 386-87; Williams, "Raleigh Was Right," pp. 387-88; Cummings, "(ponder, darling, these busted statues," p. 388; Hecht, "The Dover Bitch," p. 392; Skirrow, "Ode on a Grecian Urn Summarized," p. 392

DUE: REVISED EXPLICATION ASSIGNMENT—FINAL COPY BY 3 P.M.

Weeks 10–11: Drama

EXAMINATION ON READING POETRY

The Basics (Spectacle, Song, Character, Plot, Soliloquy, Aside)

An introduction to drama: the "drama" of their AP lives; the "drama" of taking an examination on reading poetry; drama as text and as theater; writing a playette

The terminology of drama; dramatic poetry

Drama: The Traditions

Euripides, *Medea*

Introducing Euripides and *Medea*: tragedy and the concept of the possibility of human perfectibility

Male–female roles: the contemporary nature of *Medea* paralleling students' lives

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### Weeks 12–13: Drama

#### The Traditions Extended

Shakespeare, *The Taming of the Shrew*: comedy and the concept of the diminution of humanity through its potential to be ridiculed

Comparison and contrast with *Medea* regarding male–female roles; discussion of Shakespearean drama and its classical models

Explanation of analytic assignment (an analytic study: drama as literary text, writing about drama)

### Week 14: Drama

#### The Traditions Exploded

Tom Stoppard, *Arcadia*: realistic and nonrealistic drama (mimesis)

### Weeks 15–16: Drama

#### The Traditions Exploded

Shange, *For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow Is Enuf*: drama in the modern and postmodern age; responding to plays

Explanation of Choreopoem Assignment (Lunsford and Connors, pp. 645-71) “Making Oral Presentations”; “Designing Documents”; “Working with Hypertext and Multimedia”

DUE: CHOREOPOEM ASSIGNMENT AND PRESENTATION BY THE BEGINNING OF CLASS

### Weeks 17–18:

DUE: ANALYTIC ASSIGNMENT BY THE BEGINNING OF CLASS

Workshopping this assignment

Developing group-based scoring guidelines: class-created nine-point, holistic scoring guidelines

IN-CLASS CONFERENCES ON EACH STUDENT’S WRITINGS

Specific readings from Lunsford and Connors suggested for each student depending on his or her writing needs

DUE: REVISED ANALYTIC ASSIGNMENT—FINAL COPY BY 3 P.M.

EXAMINATION ON READING DRAMA

## Second Semester

### Week 1: Fiction

The Basics (Setting, Character, Plot, Dialogue, Point of View)

Reading fiction; the development of fiction and the short story (its American roots); telling their own stories and the conversion to Toni Morrison's concept of fiction as truth ("The Site of Memory")

Handout: Carver, "Popular Mechanics"

### Week 2: The Short Story

The Traditions

Setting: background as places, objects, imagination, culture (relationship to authorial purpose)

Handouts: Hemingway, "Hills Like White Elephants"; O'Connor, "A Good Man Is Hard to Find"

### Week 3: The Short Story

The Traditions Extended

Character and point of view: people and things; psychology; opposition and interactions; revealing character; setting and character (relationship to authorial purpose)

Handouts: García Márquez, "A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings"; Borges, "The Garden of Forking Paths"; Kincaid, "Girl"

### Week 4: The Short Story

The Traditions Exploded

Plot as ideas: structure and development, the concept of shape, balance, suspense and expectation (defying the expected); the emergence of ideas through plot (relationship of choice to authorial purpose)

Handouts: Atwood, "Happy Endings"; MacLeod, "A Very Short Story Begins on a Farm"; Le Guin, "She Unnames Them"; Baxter, "The Cliff"

Explanation of Sudden Fiction Assignment

### Weeks 5–6: The Novel

EXAMINATION ON READING SHORT FICTION

The Traditions—style as central to story

Shelley, *Frankenstein*

DUE: SUDDEN FICTION ASSIGNMENT BY THE BEGINNING OF CLASS

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Workshopping this assignment  
Developing rubric: class-created trait rubrics

### Week 7–8: The Novel

The Traditions Extended—tone as expression of attitude

Gabriel García Márquez, *Strange Pilgrims*

Explanation of Close Reading Assignment (Lunsford and Connors, pp. 50–69) “Revising and Editing”; “Reviewing a Draft”

DUE: CLOSE READING ASSIGNMENT BY THE BEGINNING OF CLASS

Workshopping this assignment  
Developing group-based rubrics: class-created nine-point, holistic rubric

### Weeks 9–10: The Novel

The Traditions Exploded—symbolism and allegory as keys to extending meaning

Morrison, *Jazz*

### Weeks 11–12: The Novel

The Traditions Exploded—theme or meaning as a search for insight and understanding through exploring authorial choices

Winterson, *Written on the Body*

Explanation of Final Analytic Paper and Research (Lunsford and Connors, pp. 430-65)

“Becoming a Researcher”; “Conducting Research”

### Week 13:

IN-CLASS CONFERENCES ON EACH STUDENT’S WRITINGS

Specific readings from Lunsford and Connors suggested for each student; questions and responses to the research-based phase of students’ analytic papers

### Weeks 14–16: The Novel

The Traditions Exploded—putting it all together by studying a contemporary novel (individual student choice)

Student Choice of Novels:

Sherman Alexie, *The Toughest Indian in the World*

Julian Barnes, *The History of the World in 10½ Chapters*

A. S. Byatt, *Possession*

Michael Cunningham, *The Hours*

Michael Dorris, *A Yellow Raft in Blue Water*

Barbara Kingsolver, *The Poisonwood Bible*  
John Lanchester, *The Debt to Pleasure*

Documentation (Lunsford and Connors, pp. 499–563)  
“Writing a Research Essay”; online sources; Modern Language Association (MLA)  
documentation; other forms of documentation

Week 17:

DUE: FINAL ANALYTIC PAPER—FINAL COPY BY 3 P.M.

Sharing: the discourse of literature (author, audience, occasion, and subject interaction)

Students who worked on the same novel share insights

The author’s style (diction, syntax, figurative language, rhythm and sounds tied to authorial purpose); conscious choice for needed effect (idea and meaning); symbolism; perspectives of author, character, audience (creating credibility at various levels)

Students “teach” their group-based novel to the rest of the class

The purpose of literature and its study: interpretation as conscious and critical; interpretation through various lenses; critical theories (cultural criticism, feminist, postcolonial, Freudian, historic, etc.)

Week 18:

EXAMINATION ON READING NOVELS

DUE: FINAL “INTRODUCTION” AND PORTFOLIO—DUE BY 3 P.M.

Writing an introduction to a literary anthology; final copies of writings as part of the “anthology”

## Teaching Strategies

### Reading Assignments

The most important requirement for this course is that students read every assignment on time and with care. Students unused to literature courses will need to plan time in their schedule for more reading than most courses require. Poetry, though usually not long, is dense and complicated and should always be read at least twice. Novels in particular require planning.

### Writing Assignments

Students will write a number of creative assignments in parallel with the critical writings completed per unit. Creative writing will include a sonnet, a group-authored and class-presented choreopoem, an ABC Fiction, and others. Students will also write several critical papers, including an explication of a poem and a play, and a close reading of a novel, plus a research-based novel analysis.

Writing Assignments—Critical:

Each student will write several short critical papers, explicating poetry and drama, and performing a close reading of novels, including one that is research based. I will be more specific on what I expect from these critical assignments later on, but in general each paper will use specific and well-chosen

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evidence to articulate an argument about poems, drama, and fiction. These critical papers must be typed, double-spaced, and proofread (especially spell-checked) and will be approximately two to three double-spaced pages, with the research-based paper around five to six pages. I will often require a rough draft for papers. Writing will be workshopped during class. As a result of group workshopping, that same group will determine criteria for assessing effective critical writing and will develop nine-point, holistic rubrics to identify the bases of evaluation.

### Writing Assignments—Creative:

Students will be asked to write creative assignments—poems, drama, and short stories—that take on the rhetorical forms and styles of the literature we’re studying. I will not grade these assignments on aesthetic criteria; rather, I will be looking for the student’s knowledge and application of appropriate structures and styles as outlined within the assignment’s parameters; that is, the student’s capacity to understand and then apply the techniques of art used in the literature we’re studying. Although we may begin these assignments in class, I will expect them to be typed and proofread (especially spell-checked) before being handed in to me. Often these, too, will be workshopped during class. As a result of group workshopping, that same group will determine criteria for assessing effective creative writing and will develop a six-point trait rubric (a different trait per group) to identify the bases for evaluation.

## Student Evaluation

### In-Class Writing, Quizzes, and Exams

I will, on occasion, give an essay examination that asks students to synthesize their understanding of our work. These exams are to help students respond to literary questions in a way much less restrictive than the AP-based “exams” that form the in-class writings on literature. In-class writings will primarily be AP-based examinations, though there will also be quick-response, in-class writings as a basis for discussion.

I will give a number of quizzes, both straightforward reading ones and ones that ask students to engage an idea, which I will not announce ahead of time. Reading quizzes will always be given during the first five minutes of class; if students come in late, they may not take the quiz. Questions on reading quizzes will be straightforward and simple as long as students have done the required reading.

Although semester grades reflect work turned in late or excessive student absences, the very good news is that grades in the class are actually based on improvement and hard work. If students do their best and work to capacity, then they will get an A in the class, even if the grades given on papers are not A’s. Grades for each semester do not reflect a straight percentage, but continued commitment on the students’ part to do the work to the best of their ability and to be in class. “Commitment” may include, but is not limited to, attention to self-knowledge and self-improvement in the study of literature; handing in work on time; attending class; and helping other students in the class by working cooperatively to gain knowledge and helping others become better writers. In other words, grading is an individualized process. Students are in competition with themselves and with no one else. The grade in the class is entirely predicated on the choices students make to do the best they can and not on an absolute standard of seeming excellence determined by a societal norm.

I have no qualms about giving every student an A if the grade is justly earned. Because of the nature of the ability level of students in this class—advanced and motivated—the class is not on a curve-grading system, nor do I feel it is my duty to fail a certain percentage of students. Grading is based on class discussion and activities during class, out-of-class reading and other assignments, and the papers written both in class and out of class.

## Grading Scale

Course Work	Percent of Final Grade
In-class writings, discussion, and activities	30 percent
Out-of-class writings and other assignments	40 percent
Completion of other class requirements (e.g., reading the material, attendance, commitment)	30 percent
Numerical Average	Letter Grade
90–100	A
80–89	B
70–79	C
60–69	D
Below 60	F
No work submitted	O

## Teacher Resources

### Reference:

Hunter, J. Paul, ed. *The Norton Introduction to Poetry*. 7th ed. New York: W. W. Norton, 1999.

Lunsford, Andrea, and Bob Connors. *The New St. Martin's Handbook*. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's Press, 1999.

### Fiction:

Euripides—*Medea*

Gabriel García Márquez—*Strange Pilgrims*

Toni Morrison—*Jazz*

William Shakespeare—*The Taming of the Shrew*

Ntozake Shange—*For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow Is Enuf*

Mary Shelley—*Frankenstein*

Tom Stoppard—*Arcadia*

Jeanette Winterson—*Written on the Body*

In-Class Handouts (see Course Planner)

## Student Activities/Assignments

Here are three assignments given to students in my class.

### (1) Poetry Explication Assignment: Position Paper

Choose among these six poems in *The Norton Introduction to Poetry*

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Dickinson, “My Life had stood—a Loaded Gun—,” p. 294  
Donne, “A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning,” p. 530  
Queen Elizabeth I, “When I Was Fair and Young,” p. 438  
Hughes, “The Negro Speaks of Rivers,” p. 402  
Thomas, “In My Craft or Sullen Art,” p. 583  
Yeats, “Leda and the Swan,” p. 600

### Your Job In Class

Read all six poems and choose one that interests you. Thinking about what we’ve touched on so far in class (word choice, speaker/tone, imagery and metaphor/simile, rhythm), write the first two paragraphs of what will become your explication paper, including your introductory paragraph and a paragraph taking on one specific poetic concept and applying it to your chosen poem.

This two-paragraph beginning explication, while an initial attempt, will be graded on its own, so do take it seriously. On the other hand, when I read it, I will be thinking of it as a piece in progress, so it does not need to be the be-all, end-all paper that it will be by the time we get through poetry.

### Your Job Out of Class—Your Full Explication Paper

Work with the poem you’ve chosen above and go back to your class discussion and my comments on your first two paragraphs; utilize these to write the rest of your paper.

Do not write a “list” paper in which you follow the poem chronologically (e.g., “in the first line, the poet . . .”; in the second line, the poet . . .”). The point is to think organically about the poem as a whole. Also, do not write a five-paragraph essay in which you plug your reading of the poem into this ready (and hackneyed) container. Finally, do not summarize the poem, telling me what it’s about. (I can do that for myself.)

Also keep in mind that a good explication is focused. This is your focused interpretation. Basically, using elements of good critical writing, you’re saying to your reader, “This is the way I ‘read’ this poem, looking at it intellectually and analytically. And I can prove my reading through the text of the poem. I’d like you to consider this way of reading the poem as well.”

Please type, double-space, spell-check, and proofread your paper. You do not need to cite your poem in a formal Works Cited sort of way, but if you’re quoting directly from the text, do put that in quotation marks. I’m looking for an explication that is two pages in length. Do your best to stick to that page limit; I’m purposefully expecting that you will have to make careful choices about what you include and what you do not include.

Enjoy.

### (2) Choreopoem Assignment

This assignment asks that you work both individually and with a group to write a collaborative choreopoem that you will present to the class.

What is a choreopoem? We’ll spend time in class talking about this question, but, in general, it is a play that is both poetic—in the form of poetic monologues—and yet choreographed as a collective (in terms of dance, rhythm, music, but also in terms of bodies interacting and speaking together on the stage). It is a form that takes certain elements of traditional drama (blocking, costume, monologues, lighting, music, action) and yet resists being traditional (the characters are symbols, not individual identities; the speech

is highly poetic—made up of images and rhythms and sound without traditional punctuation, grammar, or capitalization). More than anything, Shange’s choreopoem is attempting to give voice to those who (in the 1970s) were largely voiceless: black American women. Shange chooses an avant-garde form in order to mirror the “outsideness” this group felt (and continues to feel) against the American mainstream. What a provocative and experimental form she created—one choreographed, poetic, yet dramatized, too.

So, as you write your own monologues and collaborate on the choreopoem, you will be taking certain aspects of Shange’s form and revising them to fit a common idea: what is the “outside” experience of being a high school student in contemporary America? “Outside” here can mean any aspect of a high school student experience that is not mainstream: music, dance, relationships, sexuality, clothing, being dependent on others for finances (family, friends, the government, banks, out-of-school jobs), being “outside” the American dream, which may also include a teenage sense of not being listened to, not being valued, not having “rights.” The adult world expects a great deal from teenagers, but often teen voices are muted, unheard, unacknowledged.

What you are required to take from Shange’s form is the following:

- You must have a series of monologues given by characters who symbolize certain aspects of the high school experience (each of you will write two monologues);
- You must have at least two collective group moments in which everyone speaks (probably at the beginning and at the end, although you are not limited to that structure);
- You must attempt to connect the monologues and collective moments thematically (you might consider all-group choric responses that tie together the individual monologues, while allowing a unification of voices);
- You must incorporate the speeches into the play, and you should think about how to break down traditional forms of grammar, punctuation, etc., in order to accommodate your speeches;
- You should deal with music and/or dance in some way—by having music as part of your performance, or dance, or by using music lyrics and rhythms as part of the monologues and/or collective group moments; and, finally,
- Your performance should be about 20 minutes in length (no shorter than 18 minutes, no longer than 25 minutes).

You will be working in groups of four or (at the most) five people. The group needs to consider together the symbolic nature of the characters (teen types or individualized names created by the group to represent what’s important about teenagers for your group). This will occur in class. Part of your decision will also be to conceive of the connective thematic for the group.

Once these are decided, each person in the group selects one of the representative teen types or group-named individual teens. Out of class, each of you must write two poetic monologues. As with Shange, the poetry must fit the purpose: How a person speaks is indicative of what he or she wants to communicate. One of the poetic speeches will be specific to a situation in which the type/name finds self; the other will relate to the collective needs of teendom as part of the connective thematic chosen by your group. Finally, you’ll work together in class to meld the parts together, decide on movement, sound, rhythm, etc.

In terms of what must be turned in to me, each group member must have written two monologues (between four and five single-spaced pages total or two to two-and-a-half per monologue) and, collaboratively, the group must have cowritten two collective group moments (again between four and five single-spaced pages) that will be intertwined in the final project with each of the individual monologues. In other words, I’m looking for choreopoems between 16 and 20 single-spaced pages total.

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We will stick roughly to the following schedule:

Day 1: Discuss Shange's choreopoem as your model: Review each of her "ladies" and how they present themselves, where in the choreopoem, and what they symbolize.

Day 2: Finish discussion of Shange and spend time in class creating a connective thematic and deciding what types or individualized teenagers you wish to create. Assign each teen type to members of the group.

Day 3: Begin drafting individual monologues.

Day 4: Share what you're thinking about in terms of your individual monologues and begin thinking about the all-group choric moments and also how each of the teen types might be organized.

Day 5: Bring individual monologues to class and share with the class.

Day 6: Put the choreopoem together as a draft and finalize all-group choric writings and other all-group writing materials.

Day 7: Engage in individual group work on connecting finished monologues. Practice.

Day 8: Begin presentations.

### (3) Sudden Fiction Assignment

It's time for you to try your hand at this genre: the short story. Specifically, I'm asking you to write the kind of story MacLeod viewed with a certain amount of disdain, what is commonly called "sudden fiction" or one of the various synonyms: flash fiction, very short fiction, the short-short story.

Sudden fiction doesn't mean fiction that catches the reader unaware by using a lot of the construction "and then, suddenly" (which is a construction that always makes me feel as though I've stepped in something). Instead, sudden fiction means brief fiction—a story that's been honed down to no more than 1,000 words or so (roughly three double-spaced typed pages of 12-point-font prose). Think of the four sudden fiction pieces we've read: Raymond Carver's "Popular Mechanics" (two pages long), Jamaica Kincaid's "Girl" (basically one page long), J. Annie MacLeod's "A Very Short Story Begins on a Farm" (again, two pages), and Margaret Atwood's "Happy Endings" (once again, two pages).

In addition to the requirement that it be brief, sudden fiction should be troubling. Disquiet—humorous or sad—is the desired effect. (Hence all those disturbing endings.) Even if the story achieves resolution, it cannot be an easy one, and it should not give the feeling of permanence. Remember Raymond Carver's ambiguous denouement, "In this manner, the issue was decided," or Jamaica Kincaid's admonition, "You mean to tell me you're going to be the kind of woman the baker doesn't let near the bread?" In both of these examples the ending is left open: The ending closes the story at hand at the same time that the ending opens up the possibility of new stories. Another way to say this is that what's broken isn't going to be fixed by the end of these stories.

Unlike the traditional short story or its longer cousin, the novel, sudden fiction does not create a world but, rather, inhabits a larger world, which it must take care to evoke. What I mean is that sudden fiction does not have the time to invent an entire world—a whole family, a lengthy relationship, another planet or time period, an ongoing visitation from generations of ghosts, or an apocalyptic end-of-the-world scenario. Instead, sudden fiction assumes the world that it enters and then, through very careful choices, shows

but one tiny moment from that world. “Familiar material,” says Charles Baxter of sudden fiction, “takes the place of detail. Oh yes, the reader says: a couple quarreling in a sidewalk restaurant, a 9-year-old boy stealing a Scripto in Woolworth’s, a woman crying in the bathtub. We’ve seen that before. We know where we are. Don’t give us details; we don’t need them. What we need is surprise, a quick turning of the wrist toward texture, or wisdom, something suddenly broken or quickly repaired. Yes, we know these people.” Now, Atwood and I would add, tell us what they do, and why and how.

### Basic Requirements

At its most basic, then, the requirements of this assignment are to:

- Write a short story that’s no more than three typed, double-spaced, spell-checked pages; and
- Make sure that the story’s aim is to be troubling.

### Further Requirements

I am going to go a bit further and require that you use both traditional and nontraditional forms for telling this story. Of the following elements that must be a part of your story, two must be used in the “traditional” way (like the stories by Raymond Carver, Ernest Hemingway, or Flannery O’Connor) and two must be used in the “nontraditional” way (like the stories by Jamaica Kincaid, Jorge Luis Borges, Gabriel García Márquez, J. Annie MacLeod, or Margaret Atwood). In other words, you must use all four elements below, but two should be straightforward/traditional and two should be funky/nontraditional:

- Incorporate realistic dialogue in a dramatic scene (traditional—Hemingway is your best model) or dialogue within what is actually internal monologue, and therefore is not in a dramatic scene (nontraditional—Kincaid is your best model);
- Incorporate a third- or first-person point of view that is not meant to be obvious in and of itself (traditional—O’Connor, Carver, Hemingway) or a third- or first-person point of view in which a narrator or character is intrusive and tells the reader how to read the story (nontraditional—MacLeod or Atwood);
- Incorporate everyday, natural objects as symbols (traditional—Hemingway, Carver, O’Connor) or use self-conscious, overt symbols that are pointed out to the reader by either a narrator or a character, or are so melodramatic that they are farcical or magical (nontraditional—García Márquez or MacLeod); and
- Use a plot form that is chronological and that follows the Initiating Circumstance–Rising Action–Climax–Denouement traditional form (Carver and O’Connor are your best models) or a plot form that calls attention to itself as a plot and that doesn’t follow the traditional IC–RA–C–D form (Atwood and Borges are good models here).

Note that I give you models on purpose. I expect you to borrow approaches from these writers that might work for your individual story. While I do not want you to steal language, characters, or setting from these writers, why not steal a certain idea about approach? The dual act of learning how to read and write fiction well is all about studying and mimicking models.

Of course, like all out-of-class formal assignments, this one must be typed, double-spaced, and spell-checked. This time around, I want you to keep your story to three pages—no more—and make sure it’s not less than two-and-a-half. Part of this assignment has to do with the discipline of the form itself (which is, of course, about being brief).

# Sample Syllabus 3

**Andrew Dunn**

Northern Highlands Regional High School  
Allendale, New Jersey

## School Profile

**School Location and Environment:** Northern Highlands draws its students from four local sending districts in suburban New Jersey. The towns, located about 30 minutes from New York City, are predominantly affluent. Class sizes are usually no more than 25 students; with five classes each, teachers typically are responsible for 100 students. The school always ranks among the top 10 in New Jersey, a selling point among realtors in the area.

**Grades:** 9–12

**Type:** Public high school

**Total Enrollment:** 1,300 students

**Ethnic Diversity:** 12 percent minority (9.3 percent Asian Pacific Islander, 2.6 percent Hispanic, 0.1 percent African American)

**College Record:** More than 95 percent of the students attend four-year colleges after they graduate.

## Personal Philosophy

I teach AP English Literature and Composition because I enjoy talking about books, words, and ideas with students who, I hope, are willing and able to engage in such discourse, and I relish the occasional fresh insights that AP students bring to their writing. I enjoy the intellectual challenge.

## Class Profile

I usually have three sections of AP with a total enrollment of 45–55 students (in addition to two other regular English classes). Our school schedule is divided into eight periods, but only six periods meet each day, on a rotating basis. This means that each period is 55 minutes, each class meets four times in a five-day period, and no one class will meet every day during the same time frame.

## Course Overview

I do not follow the exact sequence nor teach the same books outlined here each year, and I add or subtract texts as the year progresses. My thematic organization (“The Tragic Figure in Literature,” “The Search for Identity”) is broad enough to allow for substitutions and additions. Students are never without a reading assignment or an outside paper due date.

Our year is divided into nine-week quarters. Students may expect to write two to three papers (three to six pages each) outside of class as well as two to three in-class essays (rhetorical or literary analysis), and complete a variety of quizzes/short test assignments per quarter.

I prepare students for both the AP English Literature and Composition Exam and the AP English Language and Composition Exam in one year. Students choose which exam(s) they will take when they sign up in the spring.

## Course Planner/Student Activities

### Topic/Unit: Writing with Style

**Approximate # of weeks: 2**

After a few days of informal discussion of the summer reading, I begin the year by having students read John Trimble's short book, *Writing with Style: Conversations on the Art of Writing*, two chapters per night. Most problems with student writing, Trimble says, stem from the failure to think well. If students don't have something to say, they produce what he terms mumbo jumbo, writing only for themselves.

Each day, students complete exercises associated with the chapters. For example, after reading his chapter titled "Openers," students will critique and revise sample openers, working in pairs or groups. I also use quizzes to assess students' understanding for chapters such as "Punctuation" and "Diction."

The benefit of beginning the year with this book is that I am able to establish what I expect for all writing during the year, from critical analyses (chapter 3) to personal essays. Often I will suggest that students "see Trimble" when I write notes on their papers.

As students finish with Trimble, I distribute the *Brief Bedford Reader* and assign their first paper. (See "Bedford Reader-Based Writing Assignments" below.)

### Topic/Unit: Poetry

**Approximate # of weeks: 4**

Although students use Laurence Perrine's *Sound and Sense* for nightly reading assignments, I supply individual photocopies for poems we read and discuss in class. Some of these poems have appeared on past AP Exams, and many I have collected over the years. While I do give a fair amount of attention to pre-nineteenth-century writing, I will also slip in a poem from the most recent issue of the *New Yorker*, which may be difficult in a different way, to help students feel comfortable with writing that at first seems daunting (and to prepare them for reading *King Lear*).

To help guide students as they read and explicate poems, I use techniques from Helen Vendler's *Poems, Poets, Poetry*.

I use a simple technique to encourage close reading, one that works with both poems and prose passages through the year. I ask students to read a poem and answer multiple-choice questions based upon the poem (these are taken from past AP Exams or from the WordMasters Challenge program for which I help prepare materials), recording their individual answers on the actual page and on a Scantron sheet. After collecting the Scantrons, which I later score and use for quiz grades, I have students form into their groups (about six to eight per group) and reach a consensus as a group. At the end of the period, one person from each group posts the group's answers on the board. If any group achieves a perfect score, each of its members will be given an extra quiz grade of A for the marking period. Since students have a stake in the outcome of the activity, they quickly focus on the most difficult questions and help one another answer them. I walk around and listen in on their deliberations so that when we review the answers I can refer to specific comments I've overheard.

## Chapter 3

Another activity also involves groups. I give each group a packet of six to eight poems and a night or two to read them closely and mark them up individually. Group members then help one another explicate each of the poems in their packet during a class period or two. When they feel they understand all of the poems, I distribute one poem from their packet to each member of the respective groups and ask them to write an in-class exegesis, which counts for a test grade. On another day, students will teach a poem they have selected from their packet to the rest of the class using the overhead projector.

I also ask students to write poems in the course of this unit and to share them with one another and revise them. I write along with them and share my work as well. The poems are not graded, but I encourage students to submit their best ones to the school's literary magazine.

### Topic/Unit: The Tragic Figure in Literature

#### Part I: *King Lear* and *A Thousand Acres*

Approximate # of weeks: 4

I distribute the Jane Smiley novel *A Thousand Acres* about a week before we begin reading *King Lear* in class and ask students to read the first half of the novel by the time we are a week into the play. Students automatically make the connections as they are reading both works.

As we read the play in class, with students volunteering to read parts aloud, I gloss the text and stop frequently to raise discussion questions. For example, I ask them to consider why Cordelia refuses to play along with her sisters in the opening scene and whether she is right in doing so. Discussions that follow often supply insights and force students to examine the text closely. Short in-class writing assignments also ask students to show their understanding of the text. I might ask students to read Lear's "Reason not the need" speech (II, 4, 267-89) and to define, in writing, what Lear is talking about by finding examples from their own experience or reading. (Many will choose to compare Larry Cook's loss of his driving privileges to Lear's loss of his followers.)

I assume a certain familiarity with the basic characteristics of the tragic figure as outlined by Aristotle in *The Poetics*, but I take time to review them as we read the play. I emphasize that Aristotle says that the tragic figure is one of some renown who, through some error or frailty, suffers a fall. It is the action of the figure, not the character himself or herself, and the universality of the experience that inspire fear or pity for the members of the audience. Students apply these criteria to *King Lear* and Larry Cook in class discussions.

Many students are also familiar with the theories of leadership put forth by Machiavelli in *The Prince*. I review these as we read the play and ask students to consider Shakespeare's character of Edmund in the subplot of the play as Machiavelli would assess him.

Although students will make references to *A Thousand Acres* as we read *King Lear* in class, I don't have a full discussion of the book until after I have asked them to respond to a past AP Exam (or an AP Exam-type) writing prompt in class. For example: "Often the setting in a piece of literature adds meaning to the work, almost serving as another character. Compare and contrast how Shakespeare and Smiley use setting to enhance meaning."

#### Bedford Reader-Based Writing Assignments

I'm inserting the following description here so there won't be any confusion about the "Approximate # of weeks" listed for the units that follow. Only a small percentage of class time in the four weeks listed, say, for *The Mayor of Casterbridge* is spent going over the text. I typically assign a book by halves; after the due date for the first half, I assess students' understanding, normally using passage-identification questions ("tell why the passage is significant"), and then we discuss that portion of the

novel. Similarly, but using a particular AP Exam prompt for an assessment, we discuss the book as a whole after they have given a fresh response, untainted by my or others' observations.

I use the *Brief Bedford Reader* as a framework for writing assignments students complete through the year. The book is organized according to the traditional rhetorical strategies—narration, description, exemplification, cause/effect, definition, comparison/contrast, and argumentation. Students must read the chapter and the sample selections, choose and articulate a controlling thesis statement, and then write a three- to six-page paper using the particular strategy of the chapter and their personal experiences or observations. For example, a student writes a narrative about his first day volunteering at a camp for severely disabled children and adults; his thesis: *A good deed doesn't necessarily leave anybody feeling particularly good because charity turns out to be surprisingly complicated and difficult.* (Students often find they will be able to revise and condense the narrative personal essay for their college applications.)

We do a good deal of talking about what makes a strong personal essay and how being able to articulate a meaningful thesis (having something to say) is most critical. I share student samples from past years and we critique these. I encourage students to share first drafts with me, but I do not mark them up; instead we sit after school and go over them. (My recurring question during these sessions is “What were you trying to say here?”) While these papers might seem more directed toward preparing students for the AP English Language and Composition Exam, I think the practice of writing and thinking clearly serves them well. Students write literary analysis under timed conditions in class and when they do the research assignment (see “Research Assignment” below).

It is important to return papers as quickly as possible. Students, like all of us, are anxious to see how a reader responds to their words. A strategy I use is to divide all of my AP students into four groups, by lottery. I then set four due dates for each paper, stretched over a two-week period. During the first quarter, students in Group 1 must hand in their papers first; in the second quarter, Group 2 students are first, Group 1 last, and so on. I set a goal for myself to finish all the papers of one group before the next papers come in; students usually get their papers back within three days.

### Topic/Unit: The Tragic Figure in Literature

#### Part II: *The Mayor of Casterbridge*

Approximate # of weeks: 4

Essential Questions: How does Thomas Hardy treat the classical principles of the tragic figure in his nineteenth-century novel? To what extent do the mores of a particular time period define the tragic condition?

Through writing assignments and class discussions, students will be able to show that they can draw parallels and distinctions between Michael Henchard and King Lear (and Larry Cook). They will also discuss how the element of fate (or chance) works in leading to Henchard's ultimate downfall. From evidence they glean from the novel, students will determine what was the world view of people in Victorian England and be prepared to compare it to our world view today.

#### Writing Topics

From a past AP Exam (1994):

*In some works of literature, a character who appears briefly, or does not appear at all, is a significant presence.*

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Write an essay in which you show how such a character functions in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*. You may wish to discuss how the character affects action, theme, or the development of other characters. Avoid plot summary.

Close reading of selected passages:

Read closely the last paragraph of the novel, which summarizes Elizabeth-Jane's attitude toward life, and tell how other characters in the novel, based upon their experiences, might respond to it. What is your response to her conclusion that "happiness was but the occasional episode in a general drama of pain"?

### Topic/Unit: Short Fiction

Approximate # of weeks: 4

Essential Question: How does the short story work on many levels to create a unified effect?

Students should be able to pinpoint and clearly explain the particular effect an author achieves in a piece of short fiction and show how the author achieves that effect through the use of such elements as symbols, imagery, diction, and organization.

I try to fit this unit in before the winter holiday break so that I may distribute the research paper assignment before the third quarter begins. I stagger the due dates for the research paper through the third marking period in the same way I do the *Bedford* assignments.

I assign stories I have collected through the years, many of which lend themselves to the type of interpretation suitable for the research assignment. Several of the stories come from an out-of-print anthology edited by Sally Arteseros called *American Voices*, a couple were published by former students, and some I've taken from magazines like the *New Yorker* and the *Atlantic*. I usually end with two stories by Faulkner, "A Rose for Emily" and "Dry September," which lead into the next unit.

I have many sample short stories with multiple-choice questions from past years of the WordMasters Challenge that I use for one-day assessment exercises. The questions direct students to look for details they might normally miss in a cursory reading, and the stories are short enough that students can read the story, answer the questions, review the answers, and discuss the story in one class period.

We also write short stories during this time (I, too, write a story and share my results with students), but not for credit. Students complete two or three pages of their story for three or four in-class work sessions; during these sessions they read one another's work and give reactions. Some stories are selected to be read aloud. At the end, I will work with any student who wishes to refine a story to submit it for publication.

### Research Assignment

I call this paper a "modified research paper" because I am not interested in having students quote extensively from a number of sources to show they know how to do that. Rather, students need to find only one source to apply to one of the short stories they have read in class or over the summer. Here is the actual assignment I give them:

Modified Research Paper (5–10 double-spaced typed pages; MLA format)

Your task in this paper is to reread one of the stories you read over the summer from *The Scribner Anthology of Contemporary Short Fiction* or one of the stories we read in class and then to write an analysis of the story that is original and complete.

Your analysis must be based on some published work that offers a theory of why people behave the way they do. Some suggestions for authors to consult for your theoretical framework are listed at the end of this assignment. For example, you might find a work that explores how childhood friendships and/or traumas may become fixations in adult life and then use this work to discuss what happens in Margaret Atwood's "Death By Landscape." A possible model for what you are to do is what Bruno Bettelheim does with fairy tales in *The Uses of Enchantment*, applying Freudian theories to explain them. Samples from past years will be available.

Citations throughout your paper will probably come from only two sources: the short story itself and the work you have chosen as the basis for your analysis. I must know that you can appropriately cite sources.

You may use any source for your material as long as it is a primary one. For example, should you interpret a story according to the theories of Sigmund Freud, read Freud, not someone's interpretation of Freud.

Theories of why people behave the way they do may come from the fields of psychology, philosophy, theology, political science, or sociology.

How to proceed:

- Review all of the stories; if there is a story you cannot recall, you may wish to read it again.
- Go prowling in the library until you find one or two authors whose theories intrigue you and browse through their works. Remember, you will probably end up skimming through a good deal of material and then narrowing your focus later.
- Reread the story that best lends itself to the theory you have picked.
- If you see you have a theoretical outline for an interpretation, begin your close rereading of the story and your note-taking from the theory. By the time you are finished, you should know the story well enough to be able to find passages or words to support your interpretation.

Be open in your thinking. Stay away from self-help books (e.g., how to cope with a difficult marriage, 20 ways to gain assertiveness); if you have any doubts about the source, please see me before becoming too deeply committed.

Some of the authors and some of the stories may have received extensive interpretations in academic journals. Avoid these. It is difficult to write a fresh approach to a story once you have read someone else's interpretation of it.

The papers will be due on a staggered schedule through the marking period so that I can respond to each paper as it comes in. Due dates will be chosen by lottery. Writing and reading assignments will continue as usual through the marking period; be sure not to procrastinate.

This paper will count as two regular essays. Be sure that your work is original and that you show you know how to cite sources.

Some names to investigate for your interpretive framework include Abraham Maslow, Sigmund Freud, Eric Ericson, C. G. Jung, Martin Buber, Eric Fromm, and Robert Coles.

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### Topic/Unit: The Tragic Figure in Literature

#### Part III: *Light in August*

Approximate # of weeks: 4

Essential questions: Is it possible to have a tragic figure, according to the classical outline of what constitutes the tragic figure, in the modern (twentieth- to twenty-first-century) world? To what extent do psychological forces—the effects of our interpersonal relationships with others—shape destiny?

Students discuss how Joe Christmas turns out the way he does, comparing him to King Lear and Michael Henchard along the way. Faulkner's use of other characters who have been warped, in one way or another, by the circumstances of their birth (Gail Hightower, Joanna Burden, Percy Grimm) or by their rigid adherence to fanatical beliefs (McEachern and Hines) provides for rich discussions. This novel is excellent for pulling out selected passages and reading them closely.

#### Writing Topics

From a past AP Exam (1979):

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

From a past AP Exam (1982):

*In great literature, no scene of violence exists for its own sake. In a well-organized essay, explain how a scene (or scenes) in *Light in August* contributes to the meaning of the complete work. Avoid plot summary.*

Other questions I pose demand that students be able to see parallels and distinctions in the novel. For example:

*Three different characters in the novel are portrayed as setting off on missions to deal with what they see as moral injustices. Describe the three characters and tell how they compare and contrast to one another in their missions.*

### Topic/Unit: Character in Search of Identity

#### Part I: *Invisible Man*

Approximate # of weeks: 3

Essential Questions: How and why is the search for self an essential pattern in literature, and why is this search so critical to the African American experience? What elements of society act against an individual's search for an understanding of self?

One of the observations students will make as they move from Shakespeare to Hardy, then from Faulkner to Ellison, will be about writing style and which particular style they prefer. With *Invisible Man*, the cadences of jazz, religious revivalism, and oratory all add to the total effect and provide a nice contrast to the other works we have read.

Students recognize and are willing to trace the steps of the journey from innocence to experience that fit the archetypal search-for-self saga. While many will first learn through their inevitable reading of CliffsNotes or SparkNotes how Ellison uses names and objects as symbols, they can be pushed to explore other possible meanings and recurring motifs in the work.

For example, although the commercially prepared notes might explain how the invisible strings on the Sambo dolls Tod Clifton sells on the street symbolize the strings that white society uses to make African Americans dance to its tunes, they fail to explain how and why Tod Clifton ends up where he is. While no one answer is given in the text, students should be able to discuss several possible reasons.

### Writing Topics

From a past AP Exam (1995):

*Writers often highlight the values of a culture or a society by using characters who are alienated from that culture or society because of gender, race, class, or creed.*

*Show how the narrator’s alienation in Invisible Man reveals the surrounding society’s assumptions and moral values.*

From a past AP Exam (1989):

*In questioning the value of literary realism, Flannery O’Connor has written, “I am interested in making a good case for distortion because I am coming to believe that it is the only way to make people see.”*

*Write an essay in which you “make a good case for distortion,” as distinct from literary realism based upon your reading of Invisible Man. Analyze how important elements are “distorted” and explain how these distortions contribute to the effectiveness of the work. Avoid plot summary.*

Close reading of selected passages:

*Read the following passage and give specific examples from the novel to explain what it means. Also respond to the passage from your experiences and observations. Is the narrator’s conclusion an accurate one?*

*“I was never more hated than when I tried to be honest. Or when, even as just now I’ve tried to articulate exactly what I feel to be the truth. No one was satisfied—not even I. On the other hand, I’ve never been more loved and appreciated than when I tried to ‘justify’ and affirm someone’s mistaken beliefs; or when I’ve tried to give my friends the incorrect, absurd answers they wished to hear.”*

### Topic/Unit: Character in Search of Identity

#### Part II: *Song of Solomon*

Approximate # of weeks: 3

Essential Questions: How does Milkman’s search for identity compare to that of the narrator in *Invisible Man*? What themes from mythology transcend time periods and how are they embedded in the human psyche? How does Toni Morrison create a mythology?

Students should see the distinctions between Part I and Part II of the novel in the treatment of the protagonist, Milkman. Archetypes in the hero’s journey, such as the mentor/guide figure and the figures of the Other and the Wise Fool, are evident, and after reviewing the elements of the hero’s journey—the same elements used in *Star Wars* (outlined by Joseph Campbell with Bill Moyers in the PBS series, *The Power of Myth*)—students should be able to recognize them and write about them.

### Writing Topics

From a past AP Exam (1996):

*The British novelist Fay Weldon offers this observation about happy endings:*

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*“The writers, I do believe, who get the best and most lasting response from readers are the writers who offer a happy ending through moral development. By a happy ending, I do not mean mere fortunate events—a marriage or a last-minute rescue from death—but some kind of spiritual reassessment or moral reconciliation, even with the self, even at death.”*

*In a well-written essay, identify the “spiritual reassessment or moral reconciliation” evident in the ending of Song of Solomon and explain its significance in the work as a whole.*

Close reading of selected passage:

*Read the following passage and tell how it has significance in the novel. Also discuss what the passage says about the American Dream; do you agree with its sentiments?*

Sixteen years later he (Macon Dead) had one of the best farms in Montour County. A farm that colored their lives like a paintbrush and spoke to them like a sermon. “You see?” the farm said to them. “See? See what you can do? Never mind you can’t tell one letter from another, never mind you born a slave, never mind you lose your name, never mind your daddy dead, never mind nothing. Here, this here, is what a man can do if he puts his mind to it and his back in it. Stop sniveling,” it said. “Stop picking around the edges of the world. Take advantage, and if you can’t take advantage, take disadvantage. We live here. On this planet, in this nation, in this county right here. Nowhere else! We got a home in this rock, don’t you see! Nobody starving in my home; nobody crying in my home, and if I got a home, you got one too! Grab it. Grab this land! Take it, hold it, my brothers, make it, my brothers, shake it, squeeze it, turn it, twist it, beat it, kick it, kiss it, whip it, stomp it, dig it, plow it, seed it, reap it, rent it, buy it, sell it, own it, build it, multiply it, and pass it on—can you hear me? Pass it on!”

**Topic/Unit: Character in Search of Direction**  
**Revolutionary Road**

**Approximate # of weeks: 2**

Essential Questions: What motivates the choices individuals make for themselves? How does the modern novelist treat characters that are neither tradition-directed nor inner-directed in making their choices? To what extent is the suburban lifestyle responsible for alienating people, one from another?

This novel by Richard Yates was a delightful find when I used it for a summer reading novel (along with *Rabbit, Run*—a pairing that works well). I have since added it to the curriculum because, although it’s about suburbia in the 1950s, it has a contemporary feel and students find it to be quick reading. The insights into character are flawlessly detailed, even as the characters themselves are flawed and shallow. Students infer what Yates is saying about the modern condition in general, discuss how the characters make choices, and compare the novel to other novels, plays, and films for similar thematic messages.

Usually students have taken the AP Exam by this time in the year. I find I can ask questions that allow students to discuss a character’s motivation without relying on the AP format. For example, I might ask students to define a character by how true that character is to himself or herself and rank characters accordingly.

## Teaching Strategies

I have embedded my teaching strategies throughout this syllabus. In this section, I will address strategies for keeping students engaged during the time period between the AP Exam and the end of the school year.

## After the Exam

During the period after the AP Exam, I have used books from the English department book closet. Such finds include *Stranger in a Strange Land* (Robert Heinlein), a science fiction book that seems marinated in 1960s' idealism; *Stop-Time* (Frank Conroy), a memoir of adolescence in what would now be called a dysfunctional home environment; and *Summerhill* (A. S. Neill), a nonfiction book about a revolutionary school and approach to child-rearing.

*Summerhill* has been the most successful. I do not ask students to read it cover to cover but to read selected portions for class discussions, which often become quite lively. Students are all too willing to talk openly about their 13 years of schooling and to reflect upon what worked well and what did not.

The final piece of writing students produce for the course taps into their reflective mood—a graduation speech. Our school's graduation ceremony has spots in the program for two at-large speeches in addition to the traditional valedictorian and salutatorian addresses; students write speeches and compete for these open slots. I spend some time with students talking, once again, about what makes a good piece of writing. Many are aware of the traps of cliché and generalization and, while they might have something to say, they must work to make it fit the occasion and the audience. I share copies of speeches from past graduations and copies of those that I thought were good but were not selected.

All students deliver their speeches in their respective AP classes and, after receiving comments from their peers, have a day or two to revise before handing them in to me for a grade. Students who wish to try out for the spots will often drop by before or after school to continue working on the speeches.

Between writing the graduation speech and reviewing for the final exam (all students must take the final), students have a reason for continuing to work during the final month of school.

## Student Evaluation

In-class writing (test category) consists of two types: free-response questions taken from past AP Exams and tests on books. I grade the free-response questions anonymously and holistically. Tests on books consist of several passage-identification questions, short-answer questions, and one essay. (I word the essay question to match the type students will see on the AP Exam.)

Papers prepared outside of class (4–6 typed pages) count twice as much as essays written in class. The research paper (5–10 typed pages) counts four times as much as essays written in class.

I use portions of the multiple-choice sections of past AP Exams and multiple-choice questions from WordMasters Challenge for quiz grades. I also quiz students periodically on their reading, using passage-identification and short-answer questions.

Quizzes: 15 percent

Tests, essays: 85 percent

Average number of grades in a quarter:

In-class writings/tests: 4

Papers prepared outside of class: 2 (which equal 4 grades)

Quizzes: 6–10

## Chapter 3

### Student Resources

- Ellison, Ralph. *Invisible Man*. New York: Vintage, 1995.
- Faulkner, William. *Light in August*. New York: Vintage, 1991.
- Hardy, Thomas. *The Mayor of Casterbridge*. New York: Penguin Books, 1994.
- Kennedy, X. J., Dorothy M. Kennedy, and Jane E. Aaron. *The Brief Bedford Reader*. 7th ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's Press, 2000.
- Morrison, Toni. *Song of Solomon*. New York: Knopf, 1977.
- Perrine, Laurence. *Sound and Sense: An Introduction to Poetry*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1956.
- Shakespeare, William. *King Lear (New Folger Shakespeare Library)*. New York: Washington Square Press, 2004.
- Smiley, Jane. *A Thousand Acres*. 1st Anchor Books ed. New York: Anchor Books, 2003.
- Trimble, John R. *Writing with Style: Conversations on the Art of Writing*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1975.
- Williford, Lex, and Michael Martone, eds. *The Scribner Anthology of Contemporary Short Fiction: Fifty North American Stories Since 1970*. New York: Scribner Paperback Fiction, 1999.
- Wright, Robert. *The Moral Animal: The New Science of Evolutionary Psychology*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1994.
- Yates, Richard. *Revolutionary Road*. 2nd Vintage Contemporaries ed. New York: Vintage Contemporaries, 2000.

### Teacher Resources

- Arteseros, Sally, ed. *American Voices: Best Short Fiction by Contemporary Authors*. New York: Hyperion, 1992.
- Burrows, David J., Frederick R. Lapedes, and John T. Shawcross, eds. *Myths and Motifs in Literature*. New York: Free Press, 1973.
- Hamilton, Edith. *Mythology*. Boston: Back Bay Books, 1998.
- Vendler, Helen, ed. *Poems, Poets, Poetry: An Introduction and Anthology*. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's Press, 1997.

### Web Sites

#### AP Central

[apcentral.collegeboard.com](http://apcentral.collegeboard.com)

#### WordMasters Challenge

[www.wordmasterschallenge.com](http://www.wordmasterschallenge.com)

#### New Yorker

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## Sample Syllabus 4

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### University Profile

**School Type, Location, and Environment:** A large, competitively ranked, public university and research institution, the University of California, Berkeley, is the original seat of the statewide University of California system. It is located in the semiurban hub of Berkeley, California, with easy, quick transportation access to San Francisco. UC Berkeley offers both undergraduate and graduate degrees.

**Total Enrollment:** 32,814 students: 22,880 undergraduate and 9,934 graduate

**Ethnic Diversity:** Of an undergraduate population of 22,880 students, more than half are minorities. Of the total undergraduate student body, 9,390 are Asian, with students of ethnic Chinese background representing the majority. The remaining minority student population breaks down as follows: Latino/Chicano, 2,410; African American, 833; and Native American, 131. There are also 736 international students. Students for whom no data are available or who are listed as “other” number 2,025.

### Class Profile

**Reading and Composition Program:** UC Berkeley’s College of Letters and Sciences specifies that all undergraduate students, regardless of major, fulfill a two-part reading and composition (R&C) requirement. This requirement is aimed at equipping students with strong critical reading, writing, and research skills. With a grade of 5 on the AP English Literature and Composition Exam, incoming students test out of this requirement. Students with a 4 on this exam or either a 4 or a 5 on the AP English Language and Composition Exam bypass the first half of the requirement but are still required to complete the second half, which focuses on a research component. R&C courses typically have a literary emphasis but are offered across a wide cross-section of departments, including African American Studies, Comparative Literature, Film Studies, History, Italian, Near Eastern Studies, Slavic, Theater, and Women’s Studies (to give a random sampling). My syllabus is designed specifically for an English R&C course, with a marked literary orientation, yet is intended for a nonmajor student. Typically, the majority of the students who complete their R&C requirement through the English department are neither majors of English nor students within the humanities.

**Class Size:** 17 students

### Philosophy of the Department

“R&C instructors are at liberty to design and implement their own syllabi, but the R&C program encourages a literary orientation. This may, however, include material from a wide range of other pertinent disciplines: history, sociology, geography, anthropology, religion, and many others . . . these courses are unified by a shared pedagogical purpose: to help students read and write more skillfully and fluently about matters of increasing complexity.”

[From *A Guide to Teaching in the English Department for Graduate Student Instructors* (UC Berkeley), 4th edition (2000), compiled by Luciana Herman and Diane Matlock.]

## Personal Philosophy and Pedagogical Inspiration for My English Class, “Bearing Witness: Contemporary Literature of Testimony”

In an essay called “The Holocaust as Literary Inspiration” (1977), Elie Wiesel writes, “If the Greeks invented tragedy, the Romans the epistle, and the Renaissance the sonnet, our generation invented a new literature, that of testimony.” Wiesel suggests that literature of testimony is a uniquely contemporary literary form, a mode of discourse “invented” by a generation shaped by the events of the Second World War. That the emergence of this new mode of expression arises within a historical time frame that encompasses not only the Holocaust, but also the atomic decimation of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japanese war crimes, French colonial aggression in Algeria, the Cambodian genocide, the politically motivated practice of “disappearance” in Latin America, Indonesian violence in East Timor, the Guatemalan “Silent Holocaust,” the Iraqi targeting of Kurds, the war in Bosnia, the Rwandan genocide, and, most recently, the Sudanese crisis begins to suggest the correspondence, however oblique, of literature of testimony to the events of the age. If “something rotten” could be said to be at the core of literature of testimony, then that “something” very well might be historical trauma.

In December 2001 the Swedish Academy held a Nobel Centennial Symposium devoted to a timely reflection on “witness literature.” As Horace Engdahl, permanent secretary of the Swedish Academy, writes in his preface to a companion volume to the symposium, “[t]he primary objective of the symposium was to examine the concept of witness literature and its relevance to contemporary literature.” Engdahl identifies two aspects of witness literature to have been primary topics of consideration: “on the one hand, the particular claim to truth that witness literature puts forward; and, on the other hand, the process that leads from catastrophe to creativity and that turns the victim into a writing witness with the power to suspend forgetfulness and denial.” At the heart of witness literature, or literature of *testimony*, then, is the need to *testify*—i.e., to witness to the truth of an experience, an event, a trauma.

As a scholar of twentieth-century literature, with an emphasis on contemporary fiction, I am motivated to teach a course on contemporary literature of testimony less because of its topicality as such than because of what its topicality signifies; indeed, the urgency of literature of witness or testimony in our historical juncture cannot be diminished. My course is, for this reason, designed around distinctively contemporary literature (R&C courses, on this point, are not intended to be comprehensive literary survey courses, leaving the individual instructor creativity in devising specific course content). Even so, I realize that my course readings adhere to, relatively speaking, a somewhat distilled version of an already narrow theme of testimony and may, for this reason, not meet the breadth requirements of an AP class.

Were I to broaden the textual offerings and to extend the concept of “literature of testimony” anachronistically to pre-World War II literature, I conceivably could begin as early as the early modern period. Because literature of testimony is centrally preoccupied with questions of narrative relay—of passing the mantle, as it were, of witnessing—precursors to this contemporary literary mode can be found in, for example, Shakespeare, whose Hamlet speaks poignantly of his quandary: “O God, Horatio, what a wounded name, / Things standing thus unknown, shall I leave behind me! / If thou didst ever hold me in thy heart, / Absent thee from felicity a while, / And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain / To tell my story” (V.ii.344-49).

The precariousness of narrative exchange—of charging another to “tell [one’s] story”—not surprisingly lends itself to literature that revolves around the dilemma of unreliable narration or that foregrounds narrative or storytelling transmission. Here, Joseph Conrad, Ford Madox Ford, Zora Neale Hurston, William Faulkner, Salman Rushdie, Kazuo Ishiguro, Maxine Hong Kingston, Art Spiegelman, and Chang-rae Lee are just a sampling of writers whose work comes to mind. Narratives or poems, moreover,

that are centrally concerned with the task of commemoration—Tennyson’s *In Memoriam*, Shelley’s *Adonais*, Yeats’s “Easter, 1916,” Wilfred Owen and the war poets, some lyric poetry, the elegy, portraits of lost worlds, Toomer’s *Cane*, Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart*, Ishiguro’s *Remains of the Day*, and Ondaatje’s *The English Patient*, for example—can also be read as engaged in the work of testimony. And finally, literature that posits a festering or haunting “something rotten” as a deformative traumatic force and/or that features discernibly recursive, nonprogressive temporal modes—here, we can think of Charlotte Brontë, Henry James, T. S. Eliot, Virginia Woolf, Ernest Hemingway, Jean Rhys, Vladimir Nabokov, Graham Greene, John Okada, Toni Morrison, Gayl Jones, Alice Walker, Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, Dorothy Allison, Anna Deavere Smith, and Héctor Tobar, to name a few, in addition to the authors named above—can likewise be persuasively and powerfully understood as witness literature, or literature of testimony.

## Teaching Strategies

Over the course of several semesters of teaching literature at UC Berkeley, I have developed what I call a “flashing” word exercise, as an initial step to producing a strong close reading. I give my students the example of John Nash—the Nobel laureate whose life and travails are the subject of the film *A Beautiful Mind*. I ask the students, first of all, if they are familiar with Nash. Given that a good percentage of my English students are science majors, many of them have some working acquaintance with Nash’s work, if not some familiarity with his biography. I elicit details of his biography—of his career recognition by the Swedish Academy as well as his struggle with schizophrenia. I then either screen or describe a critical scene in the film—namely, the scene in which Nash, as played by Russell Crowe, retreats to a small shed on his property that he has converted into a covert information center. Newspaper clippings, magazine articles, and other written media paper the walls. In this scene, this idiosyncratic wallpaper is represented as if through Nash’s eyes. Words from any one article that catch his attention glow or flash with intensified color and light and then are joined, in narrative sequence, with other words from other articles that similarly emanate or radiate heightened meaning.

I ask my students for their assessment of this scene. “Paranoid,” “conspiracy theories,” “mad,” “tragic,” and “delusional” are just some of the phrases that they use to describe Nash’s tenuous take on political reality during this dark period in his life. What I then propose to my students is an analogy that is met initially with incredulity: namely, “Just as Nash is, in this scene, to reality, so too are you to the text.” Literary critical analysis, I suggest to them, begins from the ground up. It is rooted in the text but it doesn’t end there. Rather, a reader begins with close textual observations—what I call, for the remainder of the semester, “flashing” words or phrases—the sense of which may not always be immediately apparent. The reader then moves on to larger narrative patterns, that is, the fertile connecting of one flashing word to another, and embarks upon the tortuous labor of interpretation. What I suggest to my students is framed in Freudian terms: namely, just as Nash is able to perceive latent meaning or submerged significance by foregrounding and isolating key flashing words and phrases, so too is a skillful reader able to apply decoding strategies to a text. Unlike Nash, at this particular juncture in his life, however, a careful reader—I caution my students—is charged with an explicitly evidentiary task. The student not only must make observations of the text in question but also must rigorously follow through with an evidence-based, carefully mounted case for his or her reading. At stake in the success of their literary critical arguments, I advise them, is not only flash but also substance.

Both in collective close readings in class and in one-on-one conferences with individual students, I often begin with the question, “What flashes in this passage for you?” I have never been met with silence. What I ultimately strive to convey to my students, via my flashing analogy, is that achieving strong critical writing is not only a manageable goal but also a pleasurable process. On the one hand, the knowledge that observations are foundational elements of any literary critical analysis and are, at the same time, as simple as what one sees or perceives in a text makes the task of writing reassuringly approachable. Rather than

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attempting to conceive of a thesis first (a daunting task to most), beginning with ground-level observations, in effect, demystifies the writing process for my students. On the other hand, that these ground-level observations are unquestionably theirs renders the prospect of building a critical argument a point of personal pride.

In the parenthetical “Note to Teachers” in the student course description that follows, I also address these teaching strategies, which have proven to be highly effective in my class:

- Student-generated topics
- Short responses
- Electronic discussion group (EDG)

### Course Overview

#### *Bearing Witness: Contemporary Literature of Testimony*

Though enforced dislocation and large-scale population removal are not exclusive to modernity, the twentieth century has borne witness to events that, in their critically considered aftermath, have contributed significantly—across a wide cultural spectrum—to an ever-expanding lexicon intended to identify places, or “gray zones,” whose function it is and has been to house racialized subjects that have been forcibly, and in many instances fatally, displaced: way station, holding cell, detention center, refugee camp, comfort station, internment camp, gulag, concentration camp. These euphemistic terms denote transitional, often extranational sites that paradoxically signify both refuge and the impossibility of refuge, belonging in a context of not belonging. This course aims to examine, via a consideration of a culturally varied, mid- to late-twentieth-century cross-section of *literature of testimony*, the modern phenomenon of mass detention and internment as well as its determination by a governing logic of racial exclusion. With due attention to historical particularity, we will explore literary representations of the camp as a notably complex site, intended to contain and detain those pushed (to borrow from Walter Benjamin’s description of the urban disenfranchised) to the “back of beyond,” in addition to considering the camp’s instrumental function vis-à-vis the nation in a self-perceived state of crisis. We will read a broad array of literary selections, written in or translated into English, that depict both allegorized and historical examples of internment from authors as diverse as Primo Levi, Joy Kogawa, J. M. Coetzee, Leslie Marmon Silko, and Chang-rae Lee. We will also turn, to a lesser yet still significant degree, our critical attention to cinematic treatments of the internment experience.

#### Requirements for the Course

This course is intended, above all, to give you the opportunity to hone your critical thinking skills as well as to strengthen and to refine the quality of your written expression. With literature of testimony as our collective textual interest, we will focus on

- developing attentive reading skills;
- staking interpretative, thoughtful claims based on foundational observations of each text; and
- crafting written arguments (with, it should be added, a strong emphasis on substantial revisions of your original drafts).

In addition to short responses, group journal-keeping, presentations, and participation (including one field outing), you will write three papers (the first two with at least one revision). The last paper will have a research component.

## Required Texts

1. J. M. Coetzee, *Waiting for the Barbarians* (1982)
2. Chang-rae Lee, *A Gesture Life* (1999)
3. Primo Levi, *Survival at Auschwitz* (originally published as *Se questo è un uomo* 1958; Touchstone edition 1993)
4. Joy Kogawa, *Obasan* (1982)
5. Leslie Marmon Silko, *Ceremony* (1977)
6. Course Reader

## Student Evaluation

### Papers 60 percent (three papers)

Each paper is worth 20 percent of your overall grade. The *second draft* of each paper will receive detailed comments but no grade and will be followed by a one-on-one, half-hour conference during which you will discuss your goals for your revision with me. You will initiate the discussion on your writing, so please come prepared to do so. (In addition to these mandatory one-on-one conferences, you are also welcome to attend office hours for additional feedback.) Following this conference, you must be willing to make a comprehensive effort to *re-envision* and to *reconceive* your argument as well as to *retool* its expression, if need be. Don't be tempted, in other words, to make purely cosmetic changes. Superficial, insubstantial changes may result in a lower grade. Your revisions will receive a letter grade but few comments. Grades aside, it is in your best interests—as a developing writer and a flexible thinker—to make your revisions worthwhile endeavors.

**Note to teachers:** I am a firm believer in students arriving at their own theses without the assistance of provided prompts. Observations, Marie Ponsot and Rosemary Deen point out, have a dual nature—they are at once public and personal. They are public insofar as they are available to anyone reading a text, e.g., “Doc Hata is not a doctor.” That is, they are, in essence, descriptive. At the same time, they are personal in that what one reader observes in a text is not necessarily what another reader might pick up on. For example, I might be troubled by the knowledge that Chang-rae Lee's Doc Hata is neither a doctor nor ethnically Japanese, whereas your curiosity might be piqued by Hata's exacting insistence on matters of decorum. Throughout the semester, I encourage my students to trust not only their intuition when it comes to critical reading—a nagging hunch, for example, that draws their attention to certain observable aspects of the text—but to follow up their hunches with sustained, evidentiary consideration of why these observations are important. Critical writing, I stress to my students, proceeds from critical reading, and critical reading necessarily requires intimate engagement with and sound observations of the text. I want my students, moreover, to be invested in as well as responsible for their reading of a work—to be as excited and passionate about their critical thinking as possible. Having students come up with their own theses without the “benefit” of given paper topics ensures that—over the course of the semester—students begin to develop their own internal critical compasses when it comes to critical reading. Rather than writing to the shadow text of a “correct” or desired answer, as students often attempt to do when writing to a teacher-given prompt, my students must take charge of a writing process that fundamentally begins with trusting their own observations.

**Paper Format** (see, in addition, the “Sample Paper Format” handout in the reader)

1. Typewritten.
2. Double-spaced throughout.

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3. 12-point, Times New Roman font.
4. 1-inch margins on all sides.
5. Distinct, original paper title.
6. Each page must bear your last name and the page number in the upper right-hand corner.
7. All pages should be arranged in the proper order and stapled together (no paper clips, please!).
8. Citations should be in standard, MLA format (we'll discuss this in class).
9. A "Works Cited" must be appended to the essay.
10. Final papers should be submitted with previous drafts.

### **Group Presentation**                      **10 percent**

The class will be divided into five groups. Each group is in charge of developing a collaborative presentation on one of the five key texts. In your presentation, you should be sure to engage with your assigned text's central themes and concerns. Your presentation should be approximately *45 minutes* long and must contain an interactive component that fosters active class discussion and participation. Your peers will grade your presentation.

**Note to teachers:** At the beginning of the semester, students are assigned to presentation groups on a partly self-selected, partly random basis. I first describe each text briefly—if the publisher's account on the back cover is strong, I have a student volunteer read that aloud. Each student, based upon a number he or she has randomly drawn, then chooses a presentation group to which he or she will belong for the whole semester. Because the members of any one presentation group work closely with each other in preparation for the presentation—the work for which, I always stress, must be democratically distributed and conscientiously shared—they often become close friends. Members of a presentation group tend to rely on each other, viewing other group members as an informal support network with regard to the class. I encourage them to turn to each other, for example, for information concerning missed classes, and extra peer feedback on essay ideas. The members of the presentation group also belong to an electronic discussion group (EDG), a semiprivate, collective journal reserved for their use alone. In the weeks leading up to their presentation, the group members are advised not only to meet directly but also to use the EDG as a brainstorming and planning site. (See the Teacher Resources section below for information on setting up an EDG.) I also meet at least once with each group beforehand—preferably after the groups have come up with some variation on a plan for their presentations—to serve as a sounding board for their ideas and to give specific suggestions, if they so desire. Following the presentation, I calculate the peer grades and then meet with the groups once again, both to give postpresentation feedback and to give students the opportunity to read their peers' comments. (I furnish my students with an evaluation form, the template of which is reproduced in my reader so that each group, while planning its presentation, has a clear sense of what the grading criteria will be.) What I have found, time and again, is that students are astute, discerning, and fair graders of each other's work. Handing the task of evaluation, in this instance, to the students themselves not only heightens the presentation group's incentive to produce a thoughtful yet engaging presentation but also grants the peer-graders an opportunity to put their critical receptive skills to the test. The presentation is the only peer-graded assignment for the course.

### **Participation**                              **20 percent**

This portion of your grade will reflect:

1. Your attendance. In terms of workload and pace, this course is, with no exaggeration, both intensive and demanding; steady attendance is therefore a must. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of class only.

2. Your contributions to our discussions. Being bodily present does not constitute active participation. The quality of our class conversations depends vitally on your direct engagement with the material assigned, as reflected in the ideas, questions, and comments that you express during our discussions.

**Note to teachers:** Even though I take pains to emphasize the importance of active participation from the outset of the course, I am not one to penalize a student who is reticent or shy by nature for not speaking up in class. A brilliant member of my graduate school cohort once told me that she gains more through observation and reflection than she does through vocal participation, and I do believe that accommodation should be made for different student learning strategies. All the same, neither am I one *not* to draw such a student into the conversational fold or dynamic class activities during class time. I often make a point of asking quiet students to read passages aloud, or in the instance that a characteristically reserved student has written a fantastic short response for a certain text, I'll often expressly call on that student to share a honed interpretive insight with his or her classmates during discussion on that text. Also, in the information sheets that my students fill out at the beginning of the course, I provide a space for students to address any disabilities or other issues that they feel might impact their performance in the class. Should a student indicate to me in either his or her student information sheet or private conference that he or she finds it uncomfortable or, worse, distressing to speak in class, I make a concerted effort to honor the import of this communication.

3. Your EDG journal. This class will be divided into five presentation groups (as mentioned above), each of which will keep a shared weekly EDG journal. You will write your own entry outside of our designated class time as well as read and respond to the entries submitted by members of your presentation group. Each group will have access to a discrete EDG space, which I'll set up for you (I'll provide you with the EDG address by the end of the first week), and each member of the group is responsible for writing the equivalent of approximately one page of "free writing" per EDG entry. Some tips for the journal: You can approach these entries as conversations, inquiries, or individual reflections. The EDG journal can serve as a very useful forum for raising and discussing questions you might have about the readings, planning your presentation, testing out and getting feedback for your analysis of a text, and bouncing around possible paper ideas. The hidden social upshot of the journal is that, most likely, you will develop close ties to and lasting bonds with your group members.
4. Your short-response papers (more detailed explanation later; a sample short-response paper has been included in the reader—see the "Table of Contents").

**Note to teachers:** The short-response paper has proven to be an invaluable assignment in the targeted development of my students' critical thinking and writing skills. I provide a sample short response, one that clearly demonstrates my expectations for this assignment, in a reader that I prepare for the course. The short response is divided into five, categorically specific yet open-ended sections that each student must individually respond to: (1) critical questions, (2) overall theme, (3) passage/excerpt selection, (4) brief close reading, and (5) explanation for choosing the passage. The short response is due on the first day of discussion of a new text and thus typically gives me a sense of the student's unfiltered, fresh engagement with the text. I often will ask my students to give heightened critical attention to one or two of the five sections of the short response in the interest of having them develop and hone a particular critical-reading or writing strategy and then ask them, for a subsequent short response, to focus on another section. For example, I emphasize to my students that strong literary analyses are only as strong as the critical questions that implicitly motivate them. "The questions you ask of a text are potential starting points for critical literary analyses," I tell my students. If I ask my students to focus on the critical-question section of the short response, I then also focus on the critical-question section in my feedback on this assignment.

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Also, I typically make note, of the critical questions students have with regard to a text so as to address those questions in a lecture or to incorporate them in follow-up discussion activities.

5. Your peer editing. On the days scheduled for peer editing, bring working drafts of your paper for each of your peer editors. Though these papers are works in progress, they should be presentable. They must be typed and double-spaced. Your peer editors will review and comment upon the draft you've provided for them. All marked drafts with the peer editor's name must be turned in with the final revision. Peer-editing comments will be evaluated (though not graded).

**Note to teachers:** My students take their first two essays through several stages: thesis → thesis workshop → first draft → peer-editing workshop → second draft (this is the draft that I read and comment upon) → one-on-one, half-hour conference with me → revision (this final version of the essay receives a grade but few comments). For both the first and second drafts of the first two papers, the students fill out self-assessment and reflection sheets, respectively, and attach them to their drafts. For the third and final essay, the writing process, unlike the one just described for the first two essays, is less explicitly staged. According to UC Berkeley English Department regulations, the instructor must retain the last paper for a full academic year (a regulation aimed at resolving potential grading disputes), so I am not permitted, in any case, to return this essay to my students until a year after the course is over, by which time few students request their papers back. By the third paper, I assume, moreover, that my students are relatively secure in their critical skills and capable of self-direction.

6. Your attending a collective outing (more TBA). Field trip!

### Exams

**10 percent**

1. Midterm Quiz (5 percent)
2. Final Quiz (5 percent)

**Note to teachers:** Although there is no exam requirement for the R&C requirement, I incorporate what I call midterm and final quizzes into my curriculum. These quizzes are not weighted heavily, as you can see, and the final quiz is not comprehensive, yet I find them to be valuable in assessing where each student is at—at both mid- and end-term—with regard to their reading comprehension, textual analysis, and close reading skills. The first section of these quizzes is labeled “Identification Questions.” For this section, the students must identify 8 out of 10 characters, references, and quotations. Not only must they provide the title and the author of the work of the character, reference, or quotation in question, but they must also furnish as much contextualizing detail as possible about the latter. The second section is called “Short Answer Identification Questions.” For this section, the students are given two analytic prompts for each work covered. Of the two prompts, the students must respond to one. A typical prompt might be something along the lines of “In Helena María Viramontes’s short story, ‘The Cariboo Café,’ the café owner repeats the statement, ‘I run an honest business.’ Place this statement in context. Is this statement itself ‘honest’? Why might the café owner feel compelled to assert and then to *reassert* the honesty of his work?” The final section is titled “Close Reading.” For this section, I provide two passages taken from the assigned texts. For example, a representative passage might look like the following (extracted from Héctor Tobar’s *The Tattooed Soldier*): “*I have too much pride. A bus boy with too much pride is a contradiction in terms. An illegal immigrant with too much pride is doomed to unemployment. Only Mr. Finkel, the Culver City restaurateur, tolerated Antonio’s sour disposition. Mr. Finkel was a Polish Jew and seemed to recognize something in Antonio, the face of concealed trauma, perhaps, the disoriented, resentful eyes of the exile.*” The students must select one of two passages, such as this one, and deliver a close reading modeled after those written for their short responses.

### Class Policies

1. A text must be read in its entirety by the day of open discussion.
2. The late penalty for papers is a subtraction of a third of a grade (e.g., from a B to a B-), for every day the paper is late.
3. Extensions: If an emergency comes up and you cannot submit your essay on time, please speak with me. I will grant an extension on a paper due date, provided that you have a compelling reason for not turning in the paper on time and have notified me sufficiently in advance. Extensions on peer-editing drafts and conferences are not possible.
4. During the course of the semester, I will use student papers to model strong writing practices. This is a completely anonymous process. If you would prefer that a paper not be read by anyone other than me, please let me know. (I'll be sure to ask you in advance if I'm interested in using your paper as a sample.)
5. All work submitted in this class must be your own. According to the University of California, plagiarism "is defined as the use of intellectual material produced by another person without acknowledging its source."

### General Reminders

1. While grades are a necessary evil of academic life, don't let them become the focal point of your experience in this class. Rather than obsess over your grade on an individual paper, focus on your overall growth as a writer over the course of the semester. One surefire way to mature as a writer is to be flexible and self-reflexive about your writing. Although you probably won't and shouldn't always agree with the feedback from your peers and from me, keep in mind that we function as outside readers of your work and therefore furnish you with a valuable external point of view on your work. Also, be open to the idea of revision. Ultimately, being able to see your own work with a good measure of critical distance is essential to the evolution of your writing.
2. For extra safety (technological failures can never be predicted), save all major assignments on disk in case of loss. Keeping an extra hard copy of each of the three papers is also a good idea. Please don't throw away anything until you have received a final grade for the course.
3. E-mail etiquette: I am not available to give extensive feedback and editing via e-mail. Please come in and see me during my office hours instead. I do not, for the record, download e-mail attachments (from previous bad experience); place hard copies in my office box. That said, should you need to notify me concerning an absence or wish to contact me about a brief matter, feel free to use e-mail for that purpose.
4. The syllabus is open to alteration. We'll see how things unfold throughout the course of the semester and play it by ear. I'll make certain to announce any changes as clearly as possible.

## Course Planner

### Week 1

- |      |  |
|------|--|
| Wed. | Introductory remarks about the course<br>Student information sheets<br>Establishment of presentation/EDG<br>Opening discussion |
| Fri. | Overview of the materials in the reader<br>Short one-on-one meeting signup<br><b>*EDG journal</b>                              |

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### Week 2

Mon. Short reading exercise: Michael Dorris's "The Myth of Justice" (reader)  
(during office hours) One-on-one short meetings

Wed. Writing: E. B. White, "The Elements of Style" excerpt (reader)  
Writing: Ponsot and Deen, "Making Observations" (reader)  
"The Shawl" (reader) open discussion  
**Short Response #1 ("The Shawl") due**

Fri. "The Shawl" continued  
Open discussion: Giorgio Agamben, "What Is a Camp?" (reader)  
(*Survival in Auschwitz* group: meet with me)  
**\*EDG journal**

### Week 3

Mon. Open discussion: Cathy Caruth, "Introduction" to *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*  
(reader)

Wed. *Oxford English Dictionary* definitions and etymologies (reader): open discussion  
Critical concept: key terms, core definitions  
*Survival in Auschwitz* open discussion

Fri. Film: Claude Lanzmann's *Shoah* (segment)  
(*Obasan* group: meet with me)  
**\*EDG journal**

### Week 4

Mon. *Survival in Auschwitz* presentation and group-directed discussion

Wed. *Survival in Auschwitz* lecture and directed discussion

Fri. *Obasan* open discussion  
Mine Okubo's Preface to *Citizen 13660*  
**Short Response #2 (*Obasan*) due**  
**\*EDG journal**

### Week 5

Mon. Holiday (no class)

Wed. *Obasan* presentation and group-directed discussion  
Film: short WWII government propaganda film on Japanese American internment

Fri. *Obasan* lecture and directed discussion  
**\*EDG journal**

### Week 6

Mon. Thesis Workshop  
Online Writing Lab (OWL) Thesis reading (reader)

- Wed. **First draft due—Paper #1**  
Peer-Editing Modeling  
Peer Editing
- Fri. Writing: Nancy Sommer’s “Revision Strategies of Student Writers and Experienced Adult Writers”  
Christine’s Writing Tips Handout  
(A *Gesture Life* group: meet with me)  
**\*NO EDG journal**

**Week 7**

- Mon. **Final draft due—Paper #1**  
Model paper
- Wed. *A Gesture Life* open discussion  
*Comfort Women* translator’s preface  
**Short Response #3 (A Gesture Life) due**
- Fri. *A Gesture Life* presentation and group-directed discussion  
Film: Excerpts from *The Murmuring* and *Habitual Sadness*  
(All day) One-on-one paper conferences  
**\*EDG journal**

**Week 8**

- Mon. Midterm Review (Sample Midterm Questions)  
(All day) One-on-one paper conferences
- Wed. *A Gesture Life* lecture and directed discussion
- Fri. **Revision due—Paper #1**  
Midterm review (sample midterm questions)  
(*Ceremony* group: meet with me)  
**\*EDG journal**

**Week 9**

- Mon. Midterm quiz (in class)
- Wed. *Ceremony* open discussion  
**Short Response #4 (Ceremony) due**
- Fri. *Ceremony* presentation and group-directed discussion  
**\*EDG journal**

**SPRING BREAK: Enjoy!**

**Week 10**

- Mon. *Ceremony* lecture and directed discussion
- Wed. Thesis workshop

## Chapter 3

Fri. Library Research Orientation Day (meet in library)  
(*Waiting for the Barbarians* group: meet with me)  
**\*EDG journal**

### Week 11

Mon. **First draft—Paper #2 due**  
Peer editing

Wed. **Final draft—Paper #2 due**  
Model paper

Fri. *Waiting for the Barbarians* open discussion  
**Short Response #5 (*Waiting for the Barbarians*) due**  
**\*EDG journal**

### Week 12

Mon. *Waiting for the Barbarians* presentation and group-directed discussion  
(All day) One-on-one paper conferences

Wed. Film: *A Long Night's Journey into Day*

Fri. Film continued: *A Long Night's Journey into Day*  
**\*EDG journal**

### Week 13

Mon. **Revision—Paper #2 due**  
Research sources: open discussion  
Critical Question: credibility and bias  
Jose Padilla, Guantanamo, and Abu Ghraib articles (reader)

Wed. **Samples (you bring in): contemporary instances of internment**  
Post-9/11 Internment: open discussion (topic: due process or continued confinement?)

Fri. Cynthia Ozick, “Metaphor and Memory” (handout): open discussion  
Stephen Knapp excerpt on “collective punishment” (handout): open discussion  
Critical Question: history as analogy, history as continuity?  
**\*EDG journal**

### Week 14

Mon. Reparations (handout to be distributed): open discussion

Wed. Outside resources workshop

Fri. Thesis workshop  
**\*EDG journal**

### Week 15

Mon. Film (TBA)

Wed. Final exam review

Fri.        **Paper #3 due**  
 Closing festivities  
 \*NO EDG journal

## Week 16

Mon.        Final exam

## Teacher Resources

In addition to the assigned literary texts for the course, key required texts also include Joseph Gibaldi's *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* (6th edition) and Frederick Crews's *The Random House Handbook* (6th edition). In noting a recurring stylistic or grammatical error while marking a student's draft, I typically refer him or her to a relevant section in either Gibaldi or Crews. I make clear that these errors should be attended to in the student's revision.

For each Reading and Composition course that I teach, I also prepare an extensive reader comprising four parts. The first part of the reader contains general course materials that I have both devised and borrowed (including syllabus, sample assignments, close reading strategies, peer-editing templates, revision checklists, research paper tips, model paper, and grading rubric). The second part provides essays and articles on composition. (I find a section called "Making Observations" from Marie Ponsot and Rosemary Deen's *Beat Not the Poor Desk* and an essay by Nancy Sommers called "Revision Strategies of Student Writers and Experienced Adult Writers" particularly helpful.) The third part of the reader delves into critical definitions and key concepts pertinent to the course. For a course on literature of testimony, for example, highlighting the religious, juridical, and sociohistorical mobilizations of the term "testimony" might be useful, depending on the literary texts you choose to teach. And finally, for the fourth part of the reader, I include critical essays relating to the topic that organizes the course. I have found Giorgio Agamben's essay "What Is a Camp?" (2000), Cathy Caruth's introduction to *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* (1995), Dori Laub's "Bearing Witness or the Vicissitudes of Listening" (1992), Marita Sturken's "Absent Images of Memory: Remembering and Reenacting the Japanese Internment" (1997), and Achille Mbembe's "Necropolitics" (2003) all variously useful.

### Setting Up an Electronic Discussion Group (EDG)

Anyone can set up a Yahoo! EDG, at no charge, by going directly to the Yahoo! Web site and clicking on "Groups." The steps for setting up an EDG are explained in a straightforward fashion, and the whole setup process takes several minutes, at most. If you choose to explore this option, please note that to invite students to a group, you must first have their e-mail addresses in order to send them direct invitations. Also, I always block public access to the EDG space. (There are a series of specific options that you can select to customize your EDG space.) Although I serve as the designated Yahoo! Groups monitor for each EDG space and I receive and read the students' entries weekly, I make it plain to my students from the outset of the semester that the EDG weekly journal is meant to be an exploratory, relatively uncensored, expressive forum; accordingly, EDG writing follows no set format, just as long as the concerns expressed within each entry relate to the course. Because the majority of writing assignments for the course are highly directed and formally structured, I deliberately reserve the EDG space as an alternative writing space for my students. Even as I stress that—given the small class size—students should participate actively in class discussion, I also indicate at the beginning of the semester that those students who feel less comfortable broaching ideas or proffering responses in class should consider the EDG space as a supplemental discussion site and express their thoughts there.

# Chapter 4

## The AP Exam in English Literature and Composition

### Exam Format

The AP Exam in English Literature and Composition is three hours in length and consists of two parts: Section I—Multiple Choice (55 questions, one hour) and Section II—Free Response (3 questions, two hours).

During the first hour, students answer multiple-choice questions based on four or five passages that they have probably not seen before. These selections are excerpts from novels or plays or complete poems representing various periods of English and American literature from the sixteenth to the twenty-first century. The works included are those that are often taught in an introduction to literature course in college. The multiple-choice questions test a student’s ability not only to understand the texts but to read them analytically and to understand how writers use language to produce certain effects. Thus, the questions require students to take into consideration such elements as diction, tone, irony, point of view, characterization, use of figurative language, and genre. In short, these questions are like those a teacher might ask in a class devoted to paying close attention to the details and subtleties of both the form and content in a work of literature.

(For sample questions, please see the *2004 AP English Literature and Composition Released Exam* and the *AP English Course Description*. You may also go to [apcentral.collegeboard.com/englit](http://apcentral.collegeboard.com/englit) and click on “AP English Literature and Composition Exam.”)

The second part of the exam, the free-response section, comprises three essay questions. The first two present students with texts for analysis; one question requires analysis of a poem (or pair of poems); the other, analysis of a prose passage from a novel or play. Students are required to do more than merely paraphrase the texts or identify their literary devices. The questions ask them to show how the authors use language (including the literary elements mentioned above) to produce meaning. These analytical questions usually direct students to concentrate on an aspect of the text that is particularly significant, for example, the importance of a particular image in a poem or the relationships among characters who appear in a prose passage. The third essay question, known as the “open question,” asks students to discuss a generalization about an aspect of literature (for example, a theme, a structural element, or a type of character) by analyzing a novel or play they have studied in class or read on their own. A list of some 20 or 30 works follows the question prompt, but students are free to choose another appropriate work that they may know better or have read more recently. Recent questions have focused on a character’s apparent madness, on a work’s “tragic vision,” and on moral ambiguity as a central feature of a work. Once again, students must be prepared to go beyond observation to interpretation, to analyze how, for example, a theme gathers significance throughout the course of a work. These essay questions, of course, also measure a student’s ability to write clearly and persuasively and to convince the reader of a thesis.

### Preparing Students

As you have seen from the sample syllabi in chapter 3, most teachers include implicit exam preparation throughout the course. Carlos Escobar’s syllabus, for example, uses prompts from previous AP Exam essay questions as assessments to precede discussions, so, at the same time that students are showing their careful reading and analytical insights about texts they are about to discuss, they are becoming comfortable with the sort of questions the AP Exam poses. Andrew Dunn, whose syllabus’s guiding principle is “essential questions,” encourages students to examine selected passages from the works they study both as a basis for becoming comfortable with close reading and, implicitly, as practice for writing critically and analytically. Anne Cognard’s syllabus, which begins with an intense study of poetry, conceives of her AP course as an ongoing writing workshop where students are constantly writing and rewriting as they think, rethink, and revise. Like Carlos Escobar and Andrew Dunn, Anne Cognard stresses the importance of close reading—one of the skills on which the AP English Literature and Composition Exam consistently focuses.

#### Getting Ready for the AP Exam

Generally I do not focus on the AP English Literature Exam until a few weeks before the exam administration. Then I have students do multiple-choice questions and review the books we have read during the year, concentrating on a few that should work for the open question. Most important, students write essays every night on topics from AP Released Exams, and I return their essays with comments the next day. Their first efforts are sometimes poor: the students do not have their books, and they have not written on these sorts of questions before. I write a brief suggestion or two and find something positive to say. The goal of this review is to get writers ready and feeling that they can do well, and they usually do.

—David Youngblood, Sayre School,  
Lexington, Kentucky

Students can register to take the AP English Literature and Composition Exam, or any AP Exam for that matter, whether or not they are registered in an AP course. According to the AP Web site, ([www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/ap/reg.html](http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/ap/reg.html)), “If you are a homeschooled student or attend a school that doesn’t offer AP, you can still participate. Each year hundreds of students participate through independent study. Some states even sponsor online AP courses.” But most students who sit for the exam have prepared in a high school classroom and have received intensive attention to reading and writing analytically and critically. As the exam draws near, no matter how well you have prepared together, you and your students will feel the need to do more intentional exam preparation, if for no other reason than to make students comfortable and “exam-wise.” Your students might begin with the College Board’s site at [www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/ap/prep.html](http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/ap/prep.html). This site offers free downloading of the free-response questions from the past several years. It also provides instructions for registering for the exam and for ordering the English Literature and Composition APCD® CD-ROM, which includes tutorials, practice exams, test-taking strategies, and suggested study schedules. As a teaching professional registered with AP Central, you can consult [apcentral.collegeboard.com/englit](http://apcentral.collegeboard.com/englit), then click on “AP English Literature and Composition” for exam questions and scoring guidelines for the last several years. You might also like to check “Starting an AP Program” under “The Program” tab.

Finally, an excellent book for teachers and students is *Cliffs AP English Literature and Composition* by former AP English Development Committee member Allan Casson. Professor Casson’s text is a compact and clear guide to the AP English Literature and Composition Exam and course.

Your job is to prepare students, but registering them for the exam is normally the job of the AP Coordinator, the person responsible for contacting Educational Testing Service (ETS) about ordering

## Chapter 4

test materials. You must be in touch with your AP Coordinator, who orders exams in March, to ensure that your students can take the exam for which you have prepared them. If you don't know who your AP Coordinator is, check the instructions for "Exam Administration for Coordinators" at [apcentral.collegeboard.com/coordinators](http://apcentral.collegeboard.com/coordinators).

### Administering the Exam

You may not administer the exam to your students yourself; the AP Coordinator will take care of securing an exam administrator. But you can prepare students ahead of time by telling them to be calm, to eat a good breakfast, and to bring with them water, pens, and an unobtrusive snack like raisins or bananas (potassium is supposed to be brain food!).

### Scoring the Exams

The multiple-choice section of the AP English Literature and Composition Exam accounts for 45 percent of the student's grade, and the free-response section accounts for 55 percent.

The multiple-choice portion of the exam is machine scored. The free-response essays are scored during the AP English Literature and Composition Reading. Experienced teachers and college faculty, known as Readers, are hired as consultants to score the essays. In June of each year, the Readers gather for the Reading and are trained on applying the scoring guidelines to each essay. The main goal of the scoring process is to have all Readers score essays consistently and fairly.

### Using the AP Instructional Planning Report

Schools receive the *AP Instructional Planning Report* for each of their AP classes in September. The report compares your students' performance on specific topics in the AP Exam to the performance of students worldwide on those same topics, helping you target areas for increased attention and focus in the curriculum. To get the most out of the report, please read the interpretive information on the document. It explains how the data, when used correctly, can provide valuable information for instructional and curricular assessment as well as for planning and development. Contact your school's AP Coordinator for this report.

### What to Do After the Exam

Some school calendars end shortly after the AP Exams in May, while others continue for another month or six weeks. For classes that continue, keeping students motivated and attentive can be challenging.

#### Send in the Clowns

If you have set a serious but reasonable tone throughout the year, you can usually inspire AP English Literature and Composition students to accompany you to the end of the course. Mid-May is not the time to assign *Hamlet* or *Crime and Punishment* (saving *Hamlet* for the weeks just before and during AP Exams was one of the big mistakes I made the first time I taught the course). But plays—especially absurdist plays—seem made for students in May. We generally perform them during class, and everyone enjoys hamming it up in Ionesco's *The Bald Soprano*, for example, and in Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*. Albee's *The Sandbox* is another short play that engages students.

The last work of the course is *Siddhartha*, a novel that causes the seniors, days from graduation, to wrestle with questions about their life's purpose.

—Kathleen M. Puhr, Clayton High School,  
St. Louis, Missouri

## The AP Exam in English Literature and Composition

Each year, as the AP Exam approaches, the AP English Electronic Discussion Group exchanges questions and ideas about what to do after the exam. Some teachers have students read and then write children's literature; the graduating seniors take pleasure in bringing their own work to local elementary schools to read to young students. Other teachers use the time to study how to read a film. They don't, that is, simply show movies every day. Instead, using a film like *Rear Window* (directed by Alfred Hitchcock), they talk about films as texts, encouraging students to use the same vocabulary as they use in discussions about literature. The possibilities are endless!

# Chapter 5

## Resources for Teachers

Although references were as up to date as possible at the time of publication, contact information occasionally changes and some materials become unavailable. All Web site URLs identified in this guide begin with <http://>.

### How to Address Limited Resources

Small schools and schools with limited budgets and resources sometimes find launching an AP course difficult. The 2004 Small School Summit addressed the challenges facing these schools; a report of the meeting can be found on AP Central by clicking “The Program” tab, then selecting “Achieving Equity.”

One invaluable resource for all schools, including small and rural districts, is the Pre-AP initiatives the College Board offers, particularly Vertical Teams. According to AP Central, “an AP Vertical Team is a group of teachers from different grade levels in a given discipline who work cooperatively to develop and implement a vertically aligned program aimed at helping students acquire the academic skills necessary for success in the Advanced Placement Program. An AP Vertical Team necessarily includes middle school participation.” In small schools, because it is sometimes difficult to sustain a full AP class every year, teachers have sometimes taught AP every other year, combining juniors and seniors together. In a small setting, bringing everyone on board, from lower grades through high school, is particularly crucial. The primary goals of an AP Vertical Team are:

- To improve academic performance for all students in earlier grades by introducing skills and concepts needed for success in AP and other challenging courses.
- To improve performance and participation in the Advanced Placement Program.

You can read about Vertical Teams and other Pre-AP professional development initiatives, including issues of equity and access, on AP Central by selecting the “Pre-AP” tab.

The biggest problem facing many schools, not surprisingly, is often financial. Here, the Internet, a boon for teachers anywhere, becomes especially important for teachers in schools with limited budgets and resources. But its blessings are also its curse: How can overburdened teachers find what we need amid the hundreds of thousands of resources? How do we know what we find is reliable? How can we be sure that texts we download are accurate and complete, without typographical or punctuation errors? The short answer: Neither we nor our students can rely on the accuracy of texts or information we encounter online. That said, the Internet opens the window and beckons us—we just have to make sure to double-check what we discover.

## Resources

Teachers in public schools are not usually able to order several new texts at a time, and, though some schools and districts rely on high school literature anthologies, one of your goals should be to develop and expand the book list from which you can choose each year. As a new AP English Literature and Composition teacher, try whenever possible to purchase individual novels or groups of plays and poems rather than all-inclusive high school anthologies. Some teaching professionals like the range and breadth of genres and periods that high school anthologies offer, and they come to rely on the ancillary teaching materials that accompany these anthologies. Although some anthologies are excellent, sinking your budget into anthologies means that you yield editorial control of your course to the anthology's editors. Buying individual titles, on the other hand, allows you greater flexibility in developing and reconfiguring your course as you gain more experience.

My ability to choose what we read is one of the many aspects of teaching AP English Literature and Composition that has kept me interested, engaged, and enthused over the decades of my career. I would not want to change all the texts we read from one year to another—what a nightmare of preparation that would be—but I can, even in hard economic times, gradually build a range of texts in the book room at school. I might select an anthology of Shakespeare tragedies, including *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *King Lear*, and *Othello*, because I would be able to mix and match what I teach from one year to the other. Similarly, a comprehensive poetry anthology, perhaps *The Norton Introduction to Poetry*, would allow me, if I choose, to teach different poems each year. If your school district requires that you buy an anthology, look to college texts like *Literature: An Introduction to Fiction, Poetry, and Drama*, *The Norton Introduction to Literature*, *The Riverside Anthology of Literature*, or *The Bedford Introduction to Literature: Reading, Thinking, Writing*. But without great care on the part of the teacher, high school anthologies, with questions for students included, seem to buffer both students and teachers from generating questions and discussion topics themselves. As I hope the rest of this guide makes abundantly clear, I believe that brainstorming questions together is a first step toward productive discussion and writing.

Many useful teaching ideas and resources will come from the leader and the other teachers that you meet at an AP Summer Institute and from colleagues in your school and district who have experience teaching AP courses. In addition, the electronic discussion group offers you advice and resources from willing and engaged colleagues all over the country and the world. You can ask about specific texts, seek help with specific and general issues, and offer your own expertise. Once again, follow the instructions at [apcentral.collegeboard.com/EDG](http://apcentral.collegeboard.com/EDG) to join the AP English Electronic Discussion Group.

You may design your own course limited only by what is in your book room and the demands and mores of your community. Even those limitations evolve and change. Parents who sometimes begin by resisting the mature literature many of us teach in AP classes come to see the value in students reading widely and deeply. And, in even the poorest districts, teachers can occasionally buy books for their classes. Sometimes parent associations offer small grants to individual classes and teachers for materials, and used books are available online and in bookstores.

### College Textbooks and Anthologies

Beatty, Jerome, et al., eds. *The Norton Introduction to Literature*. 8th ed. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2001.

Hunter, J. Paul, ed. *The Norton Introduction to Poetry*. 7th ed. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1999.

Hunt, Douglas. *The Riverside Anthology of Literature*. 3rd ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1997.

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Kennedy, X. J., and Dana Gioia, eds. *Literature: An Introduction to Fiction, Poetry, and Drama*, 8th ed. New York: Longman, 2001.

Meyer, Michael. *The Bedford Introduction to Literature: Reading, Thinking, Writing*. 7th ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's Press, 2004.

In addition to the list that follows, be sure to revisit the resources included in the sample syllabi in chapter 3.

## Literary Criticism

### Bedford/St. Martin's Press Case Studies in Contemporary Criticism

These case studies include an authoritative text of a major literary work, followed by critical essays that approach the work from several contemporary critical perspectives, such as gender criticism and cultural studies. Each essay is accompanied by an introduction (with bibliography) to the history, principles, and practice of its critical perspective. Every volume also surveys the biographical, historical, and critical contexts of the literary work and concludes with a glossary of critical terms. New editions reprint cultural documents that contextualize the literary works and feature essays that show how critical perspectives can be combined. If you can, choose the *Bedford/St. Martin's Press Case Studies in Contemporary Criticism* for one of the longer texts you read. Students find comparing the multiple approaches to the same text fascinating. [www.bedfordstmartins.com](http://www.bedfordstmartins.com).

### Norton Critical Editions

These are complete texts of canonical works along with critical essays. A list of available texts can be found at [www.wwnorton.com/college/English/nce\\_alpha.htm](http://www.wwnorton.com/college/English/nce_alpha.htm).

Barry, Peter. *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory*. 2nd ed. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2002.

Booth, Wayne C. *The Rhetoric of Fiction*. 2nd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983.

Culler, Jonathan. *Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997.

Fetterley, Judith. *The Resisting Reader: A Feminist Approach to American Fiction*. Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1978.

Frye, Northrop. *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1957.

Frye, Northrop. *The Educated Imagination*. Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1964.

Kane, Thomas S., and Leonard J. Peters, eds. *Writing Prose: Techniques and Purposes*. 6th ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 1986.

Koch, Kenneth. *Making Your Own Days: The Pleasures of Reading and Writing Poetry*. New York: Touchstone, 1999.

Lodge, David. *The Art of Fiction: Illustrated from Classic and Modern Texts*. New York: Viking Adult, 1993.

Miller, Jordan Y. *The Heath Introduction to Drama*. 5th ed. Lexington, Mass.: D. C. Heath, 1996.

Pinsky, Robert. *The Sounds of Poetry: A Brief Guide*. New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1998.

Tyson, Lois. *Critical Theory Today: A User-Friendly Guide*. New York: Garland, 1998.

## Glossaries of Literary Terms

Abrams, M. H. *A Glossary of Literary Terms*. 7th ed. Fort Worth, Texas: Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 1999.

Baldick, Chris. *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004.

Cuddon, J. A. *The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*. 4th ed. New York: Penguin Books, 2000.

Preminger, Alex, and T. V. F. Brogan. *The New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993.

## Guides to Writing about Literature

Barnet, Sylvan, and William E. Cain. *A Short Guide to Writing About Literature*. 10th ed. New York: Pearson/Longman, 2005.

Griffith, Kelley. *Writing Essays About Literature: A Guide and Style Sheet*. 6th ed. Fort Worth, Texas: Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 2002.

Hickey, Dona J. *Developing a Written Voice*. Mountain View, Calif.: Mayfield, 1993.

Kenney, William. *How to Read and Write About Fiction*. 2nd ed. New York: Arco, 1988.

Roberts, Edgar V. *Writing Themes About Literature*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1991.

Vena, Gary. *How to Read and Write About Drama*. 2nd ed. New York: Arco, 1988.

## Grammar and Style

Axelrod, Rise B., and Charles R. Cooper. *The St. Martin's Guide to Writing*. 7th ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's Press, 2004.

Cox, Don Richard, and Elizabeth Giddens. *Crafting Prose*. San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1991.

DiYanni, Robert, and Pat C. Hoy II, *The Scribner Handbook for Writers*. 4th ed. New York: Pearson/Longman, 2003.

Gibaldi, Joseph. *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, 6th ed. New York: Modern Language Association of America, 2003.

Hodges, John C., et al. *Harbrace College Handbook*. 13th ed. Fort Worth, Texas: Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 1998.

Sebranek, Patrick, Verne Meyer, and Dave Kemper. *Writers INC: Write for College: A Student Handbook*. Wilmington, Mass.: Write Source, Great Source Education Group, 1997.

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Strunk, William, and E. B. White. *The Elements of Style*. 4th ed. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1999.

Trimmer, Joseph F. *The Essentials of MLA Style: A Guide to the System of Documentation Recommended by the MLA for Writers of Research Papers*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1998.

Trimmer, Joseph F. *Writing with a Purpose*. 14th ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1998.

Williams, Joseph M. *Style: Ten Lessons in Clarity and Grace*. 7th ed. New York: Longman, 2002.

## Web Sites

### Academy of American Poets

[www.poets.org/index.php](http://www.poets.org/index.php)

This is the Web site of the Academy of American Poets. It offers, as its name implies, reliable texts and biographical information on American poets. It also has changing feature articles and provides the opportunity to hear poets reading their own works.

### Bartleby

[www.bartleby.com](http://www.bartleby.com)

This site has become a staple in the English classroom. The texts it offers are mostly traditional and tend to be accurate. This is a good place to find the full text of plays, poetry, and novels.

### Favorite Poem Project

[www.favoritepoem.org](http://www.favoritepoem.org)

Previous poet laureate Robert Pinsky started this site. It offers beginning ideas for teaching the elements of poetry and an interactive gallery for viewing the Favorite Poem videos. This Web site can inspire your class to create its own class- or schoolwide favorite poem project. (Note: Be especially wary of downloading poems from the Internet without checking them against a printed source. Errors, typos, misprints, and dropped lines abound.)

### National Endowment for the Humanities

[edsitement.neh.gov/tab\\_lesson.asp?subjectArea=4](http://edsitement.neh.gov/tab_lesson.asp?subjectArea=4)

This is a rich site with lesson ideas for texts you might choose. Suggestions often include combining texts with film, history, and art.

### Overview of Literary Movements

[guweb2.gonzaga.edu/faculty/campbell/enl311/litfram.html](http://guweb2.gonzaga.edu/faculty/campbell/enl311/litfram.html)

This comprehensive site from Gonzaga University includes different critics' views of various American literary movements.

### Project Gutenberg

[www.gutenberg.org](http://www.gutenberg.org)

This site contains the full text of 18,000 e-books, and the number is bound to grow.

## Periodicals

*The New Yorker*  
*Harper's*  
*The Atlantic*

## Professional Associations

### National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE)

[www.ncte.org](http://www.ncte.org)

NCTE is a nonprofit professional association for English educators dedicated to improving the teaching and learning of English and the language arts. NCTE provides professional development opportunities for teachers. The organization “promotes the development of literacy, the use of language to construct personal and public worlds and to achieve full participation in society, through the learning and teaching of English and the related arts and sciences of language.” [From the NCTE Strategic Plan]

### Modern Language Association (MLA)

[www.mla.org](http://www.mla.org)

Founded in 1883, the Modern Language Association of America provides opportunities for its members to share their scholarly findings and teaching experiences with colleagues and to discuss trends in the academy. MLA members host an annual convention and other meetings, work with related organizations, and sustain one of the finest publishing programs in the humanities. For over a hundred years, members have worked to strengthen the study and teaching of language and literature. [From the MLA Web site]

## Professional Journals

### NCTE Journals

NCTE offers several journals covering the Teaching of English and language arts. For more information on the journals listed below, visit [www.ncte.org/pubs/journals](http://www.ncte.org/pubs/journals).

***English Journal*** is geared to English language arts teachers in junior and senior high schools and middle schools. It presents information on the teaching of writing and reading, literature, and language. Published bimonthly, each issue focuses on the relationship of theory and research to classroom practice and provides reviews of books and electronic media.

***Classroom Notes Plus*** contains teaching ideas submitted by middle school and junior and senior high school English teachers. A quarterly publication, each issue provides practical suggestions for teaching literature as well as in-depth writing activities.

***College English*** publishes articles about literature, rhetoric-composition, critical theory, creative writing theory and pedagogy, linguistics, literacy, reading theory, pedagogy, and professional issues related to the teaching of English. Published bimonthly, each issue also includes opinion pieces, review essays, and letters from readers.

***College Composition and Communications (CCC)*** is the journal of the Conference on College Composition and Communication. CCC publishes research and scholarship in composition studies that support those who teach writing at the college level.

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### ***PMLA Journal***

*PMLA* is the journal of the Modern Language Association of America. The journal is geared to scholars and teachers of language and literature. *PMLA*, published four times each year (January, March, May, and October), presents members' essays on language and literature. In addition, a Directory issue (September) contains a listing of the association's members, a directory of departmental administrators, and other professional information. For more information, visit [www.mla.org/publications/pmla](http://www.mla.org/publications/pmla).

## Professional Development

In this section, the College Board outlines its professional development opportunities in support of AP educators.

The teachers, administrators, and AP Coordinators involved in the AP and Pre-AP programs compose a dedicated, engaged, vibrant community of educational professionals. Welcome!

We invite you to become an active participant in the community. The College Board offers a variety of professional development opportunities designed to educate, support, and invigorate both new and experienced AP teachers and educational professionals. These year-round offerings range from half-day workshops to intensive weeklong summer institutes, from the AP Annual Conference to AP Central, and from participation in an AP Reading to Development Committee membership.

## Workshops and Summer Institutes

At the heart of the College Board's professional development offerings are workshops and summer institutes. Participating in an AP workshop is generally one of the first steps to becoming a successful AP teacher. Workshops range in length from half-day to weeklong events and are focused on all 37 AP courses and a range of supplemental topics. Workshop consultants are innovative, successful, and experienced AP teachers; teachers trained in developmental skills and strategies; college faculty members; and other qualified educational professionals who have been trained and endorsed by the College Board. For new and experienced teachers, these course-specific training opportunities encompass all aspects of AP course content, organization, evaluation, and methodology. For administrators, counselors, and AP Coordinators, workshops address critical issues faced in introducing, developing, supporting, and expanding AP programs in secondary schools. They also serve as a forum for exchanging ideas about AP.

While the AP Program does not have a set of formal requirements that teachers must satisfy prior to teaching an AP course, the College Board suggests that AP teachers have considerable experience and an advanced degree in the discipline before undertaking an AP course.

AP Summer Institutes provide teachers with in-depth training in AP courses and teaching strategies. Participants engage in at least 30 hours of training led by College Board-endorsed consultants and receive printed materials, including excerpts from AP Course Descriptions, AP Exam information, and other course-specific teaching resources. Many locations offer guest speakers, field trips, and other hands-on activities. Each institute is managed individually by staff at the sponsoring institution under the guidelines provided by the College Board.

Participants in College Board professional development workshops and summer institutes are eligible for continuing education units (CEUs). The College Board is authorized by the International Association for Continuing Education and Training (IACET) to offer CEUs. IACET is an internationally recognized organization that provides standards and authorization for continuing education and training.

Workshop and institute offerings for the AP English Literature and Composition teacher (or potential teacher) range from introductory to topic-specific events and include offerings tailored to teachers in the middle and early high school years. To learn more about scheduled workshops and summer institutes near you, visit the Institutes & Workshops area on AP Central: [apcentral.collegeboard.com/events](http://apcentral.collegeboard.com/events).

### Online Events

The College Board offers a wide variety of online events, which are presented by College Board-endorsed consultants and recognized subject-matter experts to participants via a Web-based, real-time interface. Online events range from one hour to several days and are interactive, allowing for exchanges between the presenter and participants and between participants. Like face-to-face workshops, online events vary in focus from introductory themes to specific topics, and many offer CEUs for participants. For a complete list of upcoming and archived online events, visit [apcentral.collegeboard.com/onlineevents](http://apcentral.collegeboard.com/onlineevents).

Archives of many past online events are also available for free or for a small fee. Archived events can be viewed on your computer at your convenience.

### AP Central

AP Central is the College Board's online home for AP professionals. The site offers a wealth of resources, including Course Descriptions, sample syllabi, exam questions, a vast database of teaching resource reviews, lesson plans, course-specific feature articles, and much more. Bookmark the information on AP Central about AP English Literature and Composition: [apcentral.collegeboard.com/englit](http://apcentral.collegeboard.com/englit).

AP Program information is also available on the site, including exam calendars, fee and fee reduction policies, student performance data, participation forms, research reports, college and university AP grade acceptance policies, and more.

AP professionals are encouraged to contribute to the resources on AP Central by submitting articles or lesson plans for publication and by adding comments to Teacher's Resources reviews.

### Electronic Discussion Groups

The AP electronic discussion groups (EDGs) were created to provide a moderated forum for the exchange of ideas, insights, and practices among AP teachers, AP Coordinators, consultants, AP Exam Readers, administrators, and college faculty. EDGs are Web-based threaded discussion groups focused on specific AP courses or roles, giving participants the ability to post and respond to questions online to be viewed by other members of the EDG. To join an EDG, visit <http://apcentral.collegeboard.com/community/edg>.

### AP Annual Conference

The AP Annual Conference (APAC) is a gathering of the AP community, including teachers, secondary school administrators, and college faculty. The APAC is the only national conference that focuses on providing complete strategies for middle and high school teachers and administrators involved in the AP Program. The 2007 conference will be held July 11 to 15 in Las Vegas, Nevada. Conference events include presentations by each course's Development Committee, course- and topic-specific sessions, guest speakers, and pre- and postconference workshops for new and experienced teachers. To learn more about this year's event, please visit [www.collegeboard.com/apac](http://www.collegeboard.com/apac).

AP professionals are encouraged to lead workshops and presentations at the conference. Proposals are due in the fall of each year prior to the event (visit AP Central for specific deadlines and requirements).

# Professional Opportunities

## College Board Consultants and Contributors

Experienced AP teachers and educational professionals share their techniques, best practices, materials, and expertise with other educators by serving as College Board consultants and contributors. They may lead workshops and summer institutes, sharing their proven techniques and best practices with new and experienced AP teachers, AP Coordinators, and administrators. They may also contribute to AP course and exam development (writing exam questions or serving on a Development Committee) or evaluate AP Exams at the annual AP Reading. Consultants and contributors may be teachers, postsecondary faculty, counselors, administrators, and retired educators. They receive an honorarium for their work and are reimbursed for expenses.

To learn more about becoming a workshop consultant, visit [apcentral.collegeboard.com/consultant](http://apcentral.collegeboard.com/consultant).

## AP Exam Readers

High school and college faculty members from around the world gather in the United States each June to evaluate and score the free-response sections of the AP Exams at the annual AP Reading. AP Exam Readers are led by a Chief Reader, a college professor who has the responsibility of ensuring that students receive grades that accurately reflect college-level achievement. Readers describe the experience as providing unparalleled insight into the exam evaluation process and as an opportunity for intensive collegial exchange between high school and college faculty. (More than 8,500 Readers participated in the 2006 Reading.) High school Readers receive certificates awarding professional development hours and CEUs for their participation in the AP Reading. To apply to become an AP Reader, go to [apcentral.collegeboard.com/readers](http://apcentral.collegeboard.com/readers).

## Development Committee Members

The dedicated members of each course's Development Committee play a critical role in the preparation of the Course Description and exam. They represent a diverse spectrum of knowledge and points of view in their fields and, as a group, are the authority when it comes to making subject-matter decisions in the exam-construction process. The AP Development Committees represent a unique collaboration between high school and college educators.

## AP Grants

The College Board offers a suite of competitive grants that provide financial and technical assistance to schools and teachers interested in expanding access to AP. The suite consists of three grant programs: College Board AP Fellows, College Board Pre-AP Fellows, and the AP Start-Up Grant, totaling over \$600,000 in aid annually for professional development and classroom resources. The programs provide stipends for teachers and schools that want to start an AP program or expand their current program. Schools and teachers that serve minority and/or low income students who have been traditionally underrepresented in AP courses are given preference. To learn more, visit [apcentral.collegeboard.com/apgrants](http://apcentral.collegeboard.com/apgrants).

# Our Commitment to Professional Development

The College Board is committed to supporting and educating AP teachers, AP Coordinators, and administrators. We encourage you to attend professional development events and workshops to expand your knowledge of and familiarity with the AP course(s) you teach or that your school offers, and then to share that knowledge with other members of the AP community. In addition, we recommend that

you join professional associations, attend meetings, and read journals to help support your involvement in the community of educational professionals in your discipline. By working with other educational professionals, you will strengthen that community and increase the variety of teaching resources you use.

Your work in the classroom and your contributions to professional development help the AP Program continue to grow, providing students worldwide with the opportunity to engage in college-level learning while still in high school.