

ELEVENTH GRADE CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

Eleventh grade English Language Arts continues to build upon and extend the knowledge established in the previous grades. Eleventh grade English, American Literature, is a survey course that examines the different aspects of the American identity in drama, fiction, non-fiction, and poetry. The study of such texts is a means of probing the uniqueness of the United States by providing an appreciation for its literature, by assessing the impact of history upon its literature, and by examining works that often focus on multiculturalism unrivaled in the modern world.

In eleventh grade, students select a college preparatory-standard course of study or an accelerated course of study. The degree of intensity, the pace of reading, and the number of books read are what distinguish the two thorough and challenging courses. Some students may elect to enroll in an interdisciplinary course, American Studies, which examines the cultural landscape of American society through a wider humanistic lens.

Written Composition and Language

Students continue to write for a variety of academic purposes by authoring original compositions that incorporate sophisticated sentence patterns, well-developed thesis statements, and literary criticism to support original ideas. In addition to using specific examples as proof to support a well-developed thesis statement, students include direct quotations from books, essays, and Internet sources, correctly punctuated and cited. Students begin compositions with introductions that provide sufficient background facts about the author, the literature, and relevant historical information, and which state the thesis clearly. Students continue to include topic sentences that present the idea a paragraph will develop. A clincher sentence that shows how the specific examples contained in the paragraph support the thesis of the paper will be incorporated in analytic compositions. Students will write conclusions that extend beyond mere summary. As the junior year advances, students are challenged to write increasingly complex literary thesis papers, as well as composing work in other genres (for example, fiction writing, personal narratives, and persuasive essays). A strong emphasis is given to revising and editing; students continue to self and peer-edit their writing for content and standard English conventions. Students study sentence structure carefully to further increase sophistication in identifying and manipulating sentence patterns. The fine points of syntax, usage, and mechanics are stressed at this level.

Reading and Literature

Eleventh graders continue to develop critical thinking to increase their reading vocabulary, to hone the skills necessary for literary analysis, and to refine the precision of language essential to understanding increasingly complex literature. There is a concentration on careful textual analysis of difficult passages, and the pace of reading is

accelerated. Through the study of American literature, students expand their familiarity and appreciation of different genres, as well as increase their understanding and application of various literary devices.

Students will be presented with various types of assessments: essays, essay tests, multiple choice tests, open response questions, presentations, multifaceted projects, and narrative writing. Additionally, students become increasingly aware of the importance of being active readers when responding to American literature.

Eleventh grade American Literature thematically revolves around the American Dream, Diversity in America, and The American Environment. Readings may focus on selections from the following titles: The Great Gatsby, The Grapes of Wrath, Of Mice and Men, The Color of Water, Winesburg, Ohio, All Souls, Death of a Salesman, The Crucible, Our Town, Spoon River Anthology, The Things They Carried, Inherit the Wind, The Awakening, The Scarlet Letter, Going to Meet the Man, Feed, The Lone Ranger and Tonto: Fist-fight in Heaven, and The Joy luck Club. Other texts are routinely piloted and may appear as course selections.

Understandings	Essential Questions	What Students Will Know and Be Able to Do
<p>I. Students will understand that the American Dream is a tool to look at American literature, their families, and themselves.</p>	<p>Overarching Question:</p> <p>What is the role of the American Dream in literature and on American identity?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which major historical events and movements directly influenced the American Dream? • How do the beliefs and experiences of earlier generations of Americans impact contemporary views of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will define the American Dream and identify its elements in literature. • Students will recognize the relationship between major historical events and the evolution of the American Dream through the study of major works of American literature. • By comparing and contrasting thematically similar works of American literature, students will demonstrate a philosophical understanding of the

	<p>life in America and the American Dream? / Are Americans from the past, present and future connected to each other by this concept?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the societal obstacles that preclude attainment of the American Dream? • How is the concept of freedom integral to American literature? / What are the freedoms encompassed by the American dream? • How is the American Dream tied to capitalism? • How do we understand and express ourselves in our modern world through various forms of art and literature? • Does the American Dream still exist? • What aspects of the American Dream are reflected in the student's family history? 	<p>positive and negative aspects of the American Dream.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through the study of American literature, students will compare and contrast cultural differences and their impact upon literary characters. • Students will understand the influence and effect of the American Dream on their own families. • Students will analyze characters and themes in historical context. • Students will research and identify the individual biographical influences of authors that have made their work relevant to the audience. • Through the study of such works as <u>The Great Gatsby</u> and <u>The Grapes of Wrath</u>, students will compare/contrast the impact of past economic disparity on literary characters and draw conclusion about social mobility then and now. • Students will identify the impact of other disciplines on a piece of literature.
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<p>II. Students will understand how <i>environment</i> affects our identity and our culture, literature and arts.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do the beliefs of our ancestors impact our views (and expectations) of life in America and in the world? • Why is it important to recognize our individual cultural identity? • What is essential for your happiness or your American Dream? <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do we define our environment and what forces shape it? • How do cultural collisions shape our culture? How are these conflicts depicted in literature and the arts? • How did the original idea of the city on a hill/chosen people in a new land influence our literature and the arts? • How did the concept of the American West demonstrate conflict as 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will understand how salient literary devices (e.g. setting, tone) shape our understanding of time and place. • Students will be able to articulate how an environment can influence a society's culture and identity. • By comparing and contrasting thematically similar works of American literature, students will demonstrate a philosophical understanding of how divergent American settings can impact Americans in varying ways. • Students will understand that characters are often defined by the environments they inhabit.
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<p>III. Students will understand how the various diverse voices that make up the American</p>	<p>well as promise?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How does war affect society and how society sees itself?• Has your environment shape your identity?• Why is it important to understand the historical background information of a literary work?• How do the philosophical, sociological and psychological implications of American culture at a particular time period influence literary themes and characters? <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What are the various voices that make up the American Experience?• How does American society impact these diverse voices and vice	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students will understand that %environment+is not just physical, but also spiritual, emotion, and mental. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students will recognize the value of different perspectives in American Literature (e.g. the immigrant, African-American, female, Native American).• Students will recognize specific time periods as a time of civil unrest for people of diverse ethnicities.
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<p>Identity shape its Literature and Arts.</p>	<p>versa?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How is this perception of self-expressed through various forms of art and literature? • How do people of diverse ethnicities see themselves in relation to other ethnic groups? How do they see themselves fit into society? <hr/>	
<p>IV. Students will understand that research is the process of obtaining information and/or knowledge from a variety of sources.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does research elevate literary analysis? • What are credible sources? • What makes a source suspect? • What are the steps of the research process? • Why use supportive in-text citations? • Why use sources cited and sources consulted instead of the generic term bibliography? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will locate information from a variety of sources (books, periodicals, electronic sources). • Students will evaluate the credibility of the source. • Students will use both primary and secondary sources. • Students will take notes in their own words and organize notes in outlines, on note cards or on graphic organizers of choice. • Students will use in-text citations. • Students will compile a MLA bibliography distinguishing between sources cited and sources consulted. • Students will produce a multi-paragraph research paper.

<p>V. Students will understand that learning and practicing key ELA reading, writing, and literary skills will enhance their abilities as life-long thinkers and will prepare them for the demands of a post-secondary environment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why use the MLA style sheet for writing English papers? <hr style="width: 10%; margin: 20px auto;"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do American literary movements (romanticism, realism, naturalism, modernism, and contemporary) reflect the author's attitude towards events of his/her time? • How does the understanding of these movements enhance our knowledge of literary and/or cultural history? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will be able to distinguish the core elements of significant literary movements. • Students will practice the key elements of workshopping and peer editing in order to elevate their own and their peers compositions. • Students will be able to write across three significant writing modes: literary analysis, creative, and expository. Students will practice their writing skills with these genres by completing <i>some</i> of the following assessments: creation of a short story, completion of both in-class and take home literary analyses, and the composing of expository essays/projects (e.g. <i>What is Man, Where I am</i>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does the honoring of the steps of the writing process make us more effective writers? • How does our understanding of sentence structure and writing style enhance our capabilities as wordsmiths? • How does the practice of close reading strategies make us more effective readers? • How does the understanding of literary and poetic devices make us more effective writers and thinkers? 	<p><i>From Poems, Our Town Portfolios).</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will review and apply their understanding of key usage, grammar, and stylistic principles . especially as they pertain to Construct English review, word choice, sentence variety, and structural coherence. • Students will undertake differentiated projects that will allow them to synthesize a wide range of ELA fluencies (e.g. <i>Transcendentalist School, Acre Project</i>) • Students will be able to carefully read and assess a literary and/or informational text in order to articulate its thematic content. • Students will understand the nuances of core literary and poetic devices.
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