

AP Course Audit  
AP English Language  
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**General Overview:**

We are a district that has a vertical team structure including Advanced 8<sup>th</sup> Grade English, 9<sup>th</sup> grade Honors Introduction to High School English, and 10<sup>th</sup> grade Honors English Perspectives. In 9<sup>th</sup> grade, students focus on fiction, primarily short stories and poetry, to explore other writers' craft and write several assignments in which they mimic or model authors' techniques. Also, a multi-genre research paper reinforces citations skills introduced to the students in 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades. In 10<sup>th</sup> grade, the first unit of study, and later the semester test, focuses on relating visuals and texts. Further, subordination and coordination, as well as several techniques students may use to enhance their own texts, repetition, persuasive argumentation, transitions, are introduced during the sophomore year. During the junior year of AP English Language and the senior year of AP English Literature, specific grammar and writing techniques are reviewed with the students as necessary depending upon student needs.

**First Quarter:**

Focus: The development of literature as it relates to Patriotism and the founding of the country.

Beginning with an audio presentation, students listen to several songs relating to love and then explore the strategies employed by Anne Bradstreet and Edward Taylor. Moving through the Puritan time frame, Jonathan Edwards sermon, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" is used as a base line reference for comparison to other writers of the 18<sup>th</sup> century as students learn and/or review authors' use of: parallel structure, pathos, ethos, logos, repetition, metaphors, allusion, etc. Through a variety of AP tests, students learn the purpose of using particular strategies in differing situations. Speeches, including Patrick Henry, John F. Kennedy, Abraham Lincoln, Alfred Green, and various CSPAN speakers are analyzed for technique. Students also explore the genre of letter writing, including authors Robert E. Lee, Abigail Adams, John Downe, Lord Chesterfield, Thomas Jefferson, contrasting the use of personal writing with writing for a group. During this time in class, development of essay structure, honing of thesis statements, and techniques for introductions to a variety of text styles, are emphasized; students revise smaller portions of their writings as we discuss the strategies of specific authors. Several writing prompts are used throughout this quarter to give students an opportunity for shorter writings. Students also begin practicing matching their own use of rhetoric to the purpose of the AP tests with which they're practicing. For example, the tone of Lincoln is explored as opposed to the tone of John Downe. Students are then encouraged to explore their own use of personal voice as they explore the thoughts of an author such as Thomas Paine and his comments on "summer soldiers." In addition to the shorter writings and AP practice tests, students are assigned their first longer paper of 5-7 pages in which they define Patriotism on a personal level. While expository in nature, students are given several opportunities throughout the writing process for both teacher and peer feedback before the "final" draft is graded. While we explore writing, we also delve into Romanticism and Transcendentalism as different examples of personal writing: poetry, essay writing, speeches. Students learn the use of personal writing through nature as we explore Emerson and Thoreau, and literary techniques are encouraged in their own repertoires as we read and write Whitman and Dickenson.

Furthermore, the arguments presented by the poets are related to AP tests, such as Scott Russell Sanders, and used for a basis of personal writing for the students and classroom discussion.

### **Second Quarter:**

Focus: The development of the American Dream during and after the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

We begin this quarter as we continue moving historically through American literature with the reading of The Great Gatsby. Using Gatsby as the basis for discussion, students continue to define themselves as we blend the ideas of patriotism and wealth. Several in-class writing prompts are assigned in which students define quotes from the text. Also, research of the 1920's is incorporated into projects assigned throughout class in which students now apply non-textual reading into their use of rhetoric. Taking the knowledge previously learned in both 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grades regarding the impact of visuals on a reader, students are taught to continue to develop their critical thinking skills by integrating photos, video clips, scanned text, three dimensional objects, blogs, websites, MySpace, and/or music clips into their writings about the novel. While reading the novel, we continue with AP test practice by writing tests and discussing techniques and arguments authors use and how they work in conjunction. For example, the Hazlitt AP test is used as writing practice, a discussion of the rhetorical devices he uses, and an exploration of his argument as it relates to The Great Gatsby and individual student beliefs. Continuing through the 20<sup>th</sup> century, we explore various viewpoints of individuals who do not fit the definition of the American Dream and how that makes an impact on family. We explore juxtaposition, refutation and acknowledgement in greater detail as we look various family structure, including with practice AP test, Julius Caesar, Eudora Welty, Virginia Woolf, Orwell's look at Gandhi, etc. Students then work on their own narrative writing as they explore the connections they have made with others in their second longer paper of the year. Again, several teacher and peer editing opportunities are provided. Finally, during this quarter, we begin reading Nickel and Dimed as a direct correlation to the failure of the American Dream.

### **Third Quarter:**

Focus: Alternative views of the American Dream and how the country has changed since its formation.

Students begin the quarter with a month long research project, and their third longer paper, regarding the continuing effects of poverty as outlined in Nickel and Dimed. The extended stretch of time for one paper allows integration of charts and graphs into their papers, research time in both the computer lab and Media Center, and the revision of multiple drafts. To increase students' use of visual images within their own writing, we practice with whatever synthesis essays are available, the first year being only the "TV debates" and "invasive species" tests. During the month, or so, we look at other author's argumentation regarding the concept of money and wealth, including a review of Sanders and Hazlitt, practice argumentation writing with the Singer and Price AP tests, and an essay by Edward Hoagland, "The Glue is Gone," which argues the loss of ethics in our lives. Further discussion returns us to our preliminary discussion of nature we had started in the beginning of the school year; at this time instruction includes more individual practice with argumentation and analysis skills through the reading of authors such as Rick Bass, Lewis Thomas, James Audubon, Annie Dillard, etc. Writing practice includes John Barry and Audubon and Dillard AP tests. By this time in the year, students are more proficient with parallel structure, loose and periodic sentences, and coordination and subordination, which have been increasingly obvious the more they read. Students finish this quarter with close reading of scantron tests to prepare them for both the AP test and the ACT.

### **Fourth Quarter:**

Focus: How authors express their dissatisfaction with the world around them through the use of humor and satire.

Beginning the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter and branching to the fourth quarter, we read The Crucible as a return to our Puritan roots and a method of looking at what live, visual text might be as opposed to the written text of the play. We focus on irony and political commentary through our reading, and students are given several in-class prompts to test their analytical skills. During this time, we also discuss the Kundera, The Onion, a local, national or global controversy, and Shaw AP tests as students continue to practice writing both full essays and prewriting/reading skills. During this quarter, students write their last 5-7 page paper, a satire, after reading Swift's "A Modest Proposal," taking The Onion AP test, and using Toulmin's model to develop a line of reasoning, through prewriting to a full essay, on a controversy, which becomes the topic of their satires. More emphasis is placed on revising AP tests themselves, and reviewing progress over the course of the year, during the last few weeks of April. Just before the AP test itself, we begin reading The Sound and the Fury to finish our discussion of the American Dream, patriotism, and the family structure, and to begin preparation for the next year.

### **On going throughout the year:**

Students learn 200 Greek and Latin roots to be used for vocabulary development. Further, students begin incorporating new vocabulary into their speaking and writing through One Hundred Words Ever High School Graduate Should Know and through natural and practiced vocabulary absorption acquired through their own individual out of class reading. Students are assigned four essays each quarter, for a total of sixteen, from the DiYanni text in which they are to continue to develop: the use of personal voice, various grammar skills particular to each student's improvement, argumentation and analytical skills, and application external to the texts themselves. Students are presented direct teacher feedback on all AP tests they practice in class, as well as the weekend practice day, which is approximately eighteen a year, through the use of rubrics. Most AP tests are also directly analyzed for style and/or argumentation during full group discussion, both led by me and particularly successful students as a model for reading and skill development. Peer editing and revision are also employed throughout the year as students learn to improve their writing skills. Early in the year, often the second week of school, I introduce Stephen Toulmin's model of argumentation so students can begin to integrate different methods of prewriting into their thinking; this proves to be difficult, so we return to the structure frequently as we analyze both writers' and students' work.

### Texts Used:

American Heritage Dictionaries, eds. One Hundred Words Ever High School Graduate Should Know. Houghton Mifflin Company. Boston: 2005  
DiYanni, Robert, ed. One Hundred Great Essays. Addison Wesley Longman, Inc. New York: 2002  
Ehrenreich, Barbara. Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America. Henry Holt and Company. New York: 2001  
Faulkner, William. The Sound and the Fury. First Vintage International Edition. New York: 1990  
Fitzgerald, F. Scott. The Great Gatsby. First Scribner Paperback Fiction Edition. New York: 1995  
Hawthorne, Nathaniel. The Scarlet Letter. Prentice Hall Library. Needham, Massachusetts:  
Rice, Scott. From Reading to Revision. Wadsworth Publishing Company. New York: 1996  
Twain, Mark. The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn. Prentice Hall Library. Needham, Massachusetts:

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