



# School District of Marshfield

## Course Syllabus

Course Name: AP English Language & Composition

Length of Course: 1 year

Credits: 1 Credit

### Course Description:

This AP English Language course is designed for high school sophomores, juniors, and seniors in conjunction with Advanced Placement United States History. The course meets for two class periods back to back in a team-taught format. While the AP Language course meets all the criteria outlined in the *AP English Course Description*, the day to day workings of the course dovetail as much as possible with the syllabus of my colleague's AP US History course. Readings are often taken in chronological context from US History, yet studied as much for rhetorical strength and depth as for their historical significance. Students are strongly urged to take both the AP English Language and the AP US History exam at the end of the year.

### Learning Targets:

- The student will be able to analyze, interpret, and cite primary and secondary source documents, using MLA documentation.
- The student will be able to understand an analytical prompt/question and create a competent and well organized response.
- The student will be able to interpret ideas communicated through visual media.
- The student will be able to develop and improve writing, research, and reading skills using a variety of strategies.
- The student will be able to improve critical and higher-ordered thinking skills, with special emphasis on analysis.
- The student will be able to write an essay which proceeds through all stages of the writing process.
- The student will be able to prepare for and earn a 3 or higher on the AP English Language exam in May.

### Expectations:

- Students are required to do the bulk of their reading outside of the class. (3-4 hours per week)
- The writing emphasis in the class will be heavy, as 50% of the AP US History exam is based on writing, while 55% of the AP English Language exam is written.
- Practice objective exams will be given every 2-3 weeks throughout the year.

- Students will be expected to complete a seminar project after the AP National exams in May. Projects will be assigned the week following the exams.

Supplemental Reading (but not limited to):

- *The Declaration of Independence*, Thomas Jefferson
- "Speech in the Virginia Convention", Patrick Henry
- "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God", Johnathan Edwards
- *Common Sense*, Thomas Paine
- *Brave New World*, Aldous Huxley
- "Civil Disobedience", Henry David Thoreau
- "The American Scholar", Ralph Waldo Emerson
- "Letter from the Birmingham Jail", Martin Luther King, Jr.
- "I Have a Dream", Martin Luther King, Jr.
- Uncle Tom's Cabin, Harriet Beecher Stowe
- *The Gettysburg Address*, Abraham Lincoln
- The "Cross of Gold" speech, William Jennings Bryan
- The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, Mark Twain
- "The Man Who Corrupted Hadleyburg", Mark Twain
- *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets*, Stephen Crane
- "The Yellow Wallpaper", Charlotte Perkins Gilman
- A Farewell to Arms, Ernest Hemingway
- The Great Gatsby, F. Scott Fitzgerald
- The Grapes of Wrath, John Steinbeck
- Of Mice and Men, John Steinbeck
- Inaugural Address, John F. Kennedy
- Speech to the Nobel Prize Committee, William Faulkner
- The Things They Carried, Tim O'Brien

Assessments:

Achievement will be assessed in 3 ways:

- 1) Multiple choice practice exams/ Applied Practice questions
- 2) Essay Tests
  - A. Rhetorical analysis
  - B. Persuasive/argumentative
  - C. Synthesis questions

*Special 9 point rubrics are completed and attached to each student's essay (See Appendix A)*

- 3) Class work/homework

Essays will be assigned as both in-class and out-of-class assignments.

Grading scale will be based on 9 point rubric. Scores of 5 will receive "A" and will correspond to the "3" level on the AP national exam. Scores of 6-9 also receive "A", but indicate to student that progress is entering into the "4" and

"5" levels of achievement nationally. Scores below 5 correspond to "B", "C", "D", and "F" grades and indicate that progress needs to be made in order to pass national exam.

Grade is earned in close proportion to AP exam score. Writing constitutes 50% of quarter grade, while multiple choice tests make up 40% of the quarter grade. Formative assessments make up the remaining 10%.

Course Syllabus:

### Unit 1

Since the course content of United States History begins in the pre-Colombian phase, AP English Language readings do not begin to dovetail until Colonial times. Our first unit begins establishing analytical writing skills by covering the 9 point rubric used by the College Board and replicated in our classroom. Weekly vocabulary units and assessments are outlined. A grammar review and refresher on the types of sentences is undertaken. Sample essays from previous AP exams are studied and scored using the 9 point rubric. Anchor papers from 1-9 posted in the back of the room are referenced and analyzed. During this two week period the first major paper is assigned and completed, with conferences during drafting and after completion. Elapsed class time: 8-12 days.

### Unit 2

During the study of the Colonial time period in US History, AP Lang students begin the supplemental study of history with selections from Paine, Henry, Edwards, Franklin, but especially Jefferson's *Declaration*. The founding principles of the nation are analyzed with respect to the time period, but are also juxtaposed with modern op-ed pieces for comparative purposes. From George Will and Anna Quindlen to Garrison Keillor, students are required to trace the precepts of Jeffersonian democracy to the modern mind. Beginning with *Applied Practice* questions on the *Declaration*, students are introduced also to the rigors of the AP multiple choice exam. We begin our in-depth understanding of rhetoric with our second major essay, this one a timed rhetorical analysis piece in regard to the Age of Reason, the major emphasis on Jefferson. Elapsed class time: 10-12 days, (18-24 days gone from 180 day total).

### Unit 3

With the History class into the excitement of Federalism and the early part of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, in AP Lang we move off the board to Huxley's Brave New World. Though it takes us away from America and into the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, I find this futuristic novel especially useful for broadening the perspectives and hopefully blowing the minds of a class which is comprised of 85%

sophomores. In order for students to understand the College Board's concept of cultural IQ and the typical persuasive/argumentative essay prompts which attend this idea, they need to see their own world in a different way. Huxley allows for this change in outlook very nicely. I intersperse our days of novel study with the usual vocabulary work and daily "sponge" writing activities, but this also an excellent time to begin some visual literacy effort. While their brains are reeling from "centrifugal bumblepuppy", we begin looking at political cartoons. Contextualizing cartoons allows students to see the real power of irony and satire, so the connection to the novel is cemented. Rather than test on the novel, our assessment is actually our third major paper of the quarter, a persuasive/argumentative essay. I usually use one of the old AP test essays, but allow the students to research their answer and build in some analysis/synthesis in this way. Elapsed class time: 15 days, (33-39 days now gone). End of first quarter as far as paper grading is concerned.

#### Unit 4

We get back to supplemental history readings in this next unit, and some tough ones at that. Actually beginning with John Locke, we look closely at the changing mindset of America with readings from Thoreau and Emerson. Our fourth major paper is a comparative look at "Civil Disobedience" and Martin Luther King Jr.'s "Letter From the Birmingham Jail". Again, we move to the 20<sup>th</sup> Century to look at King quickly, but the influence of Thoreau on modern thought and action necessitates it. This is essay is timed, but revision is required and the rubric accompanies the score so that students receive several forms of feedback. A practice multiple choice exam happens during this unit, where the students can see for themselves that reading and understanding "old" authors is a requirement. Along with the practice exams we analyze carefully the types of questions, skills necessary, and reasons for missed test items. We explain carefully how the multiple choice exams are scored nationally. Elapsed class time: 8 days (41-47 days now gone).

#### Unit 5

As United States History approaches and enters the Civil War, we in English Language look at excerpts from Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. A close look at this classic propaganda piece is the touchstone for another round of visual literacy, in which we inspect cartoons, especially war propaganda, from differing time periods, including today. Examination of Lincoln's "Gettysburg Address" is really the rhetorical centerpiece of the year, so we spend a good deal of time preparing for our fifth major essay, which uses Lincoln's 2<sup>nd</sup> Inaugural Address, an old AP Lang. essay question. Elapsed class time: 10 days (51-57 days – Thanksgiving break).

### Unit 6

From after Thanksgiving to the Winter break we do a project designed to increase our understanding and ability to recognize and use the many rhetorical devices common to great writers. Using Ambrose Bierce's *Devil's Dictionary* as our guide, students make up their own dictionary. Whatever words they choose to define, they copy Bierce's sardonic style and are required to use 20-25 rhetorical terms inside their definition. A small group project, terms like "asyndeton", "chiasmus", and "litote" are burned into student memory in a fun, yet challenging way. We combine this project with further study of satire, using *Huck Finn* excerpts and other Twain pieces as our main guides. Elapsed class time: 15 days (66-72 days gone – winter break).

### Unit 7

Back from break, and with 3 weeks left before the end of the semester, we read Crane's novelette *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* to better grasp some of the less picturesque elements of the Industrial Revolution. Crane's diction and stark realism help set up our sixth major essay of the year, this one a synthesis essay taken from readings in this era. Because this type of essay is new to AP Lang., I allow the students to do this first effort outside of class, but increase the length and require that it be typed and proofread carefully. We continue our visual literacy work with Jacob Riis's photography and more political cartoons of the time period, especially those which demonstrate Twain's "gilded Age". Elapsed class time: 10-14 days (90 days gone – 1<sup>st</sup> semester ends).

### Unit 8

While my US History colleague goes into the American West and the Agricultural Revolution, in AP Lang we go back to our Models for Writers book to specifically target weak areas in our writing. By the end of 1<sup>st</sup> semester, the class has a solid grasp of writing organization, paragraph construction, sentence fluency, and an understanding of what decent analysis entails. We read selected pieces with an eye toward improving our originality, especially in introductions and conclusions. Sentence balance and variety are difficult concepts, especially for sophomores, so our awareness of these concepts in what we read has a carry-over effect in writing. Most importantly, students who have "gotten in the game" because they have learned solid organizational skills now want to become formulaic in their writing in order to cement their chances for success. We need to disabuse them of this notion and strive for sophistication and insight, not safety and boredom. Our seventh major paper of the year is persuasive/argumentative again and derives from some type of controversial issue, either local,

statewide, or national. We do align with US History again, especially in regard to Bryan's "Cross of Gold" speech and the coming of World War I. Elapsed class time: 10 days (Approximately 50 class days until AP national exam).

#### Unit 9

Depending upon time, student proficiency, and my read on the class, we will begin either The Great Gatsby or A Farewell to Arms. If Gatsby, we will more than likely watch excerpts from the film *Legends of the Fall* for another foray into visual literacy and an extra boost in WWI culture. If we read the Hemingway, I will only use the Chapter 3 excerpts from Gatsby for a look into 1920s cultural change. During this time I always use some music from the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century and contrast it with some 1920s jazz. This is an indispensable writing lesson in rhythm and the beginning our "soundtrack" cultural understanding. We will continue using music to help the cultural IQ of our students. I use *Applied Practice* questions if we read Gatsby, but practice multiple choice work continues regardless of the reading choice. Reading load gets heavy here, because the history lessons do not slow on account of our immersion in a novel. Essay #8 is a rhetorical analysis of my own making. Elapsed class time 12 days (About 38 class days left until AP national exam).

#### Unit 10

The Great Depression brings John Steinbeck and excerpts from The Grapes of Wrath. Biblical allusions, diction, tone, rhythm, all compared with the quick read Of Mice and Men help our kids contextualize the economics, politics, and social structure of this time period. More music is added to the scenario and essay #9 adds another argumentative/persuasive piece to the puzzle. The students take their second full practice multiple choice exam in early March. We define further the strategies involved, including the skipping of questions, pacing, and the mathematics of the College Board's scoring procedures. We compare the data of previous year's classes on these practice exams to give students a clear picture of where they stand when they make the decision of whether to take the national exam or not. Registration for the exam is due in the next two weeks. Elapsed class time: 8 days (About 30 class days left until AP national exam).

#### Unit 11

We begin the second World War just before spring break and pick it up for one week after. We look at numerous "Willie and Joe" cartoons done by the great Bill Mauldin, as well as columns from Ernie Pyle. These artists render the feel of WWII more effectively than any single text I know and help our students to personalize a war which seems to be slipping from our nation's grasp very quickly. My colleague and I did a large number of interviews with

WWII vets before we began teaching this particular course, so we draw on the record of those for primary and secondary sources. We are into the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter with this unit, so holistic grading of student papers begins. We will still conference with students at any time, but because we must get essays 10-12 written and scored in about 4-5 weeks, rubrics are no longer attached. Students are instructed that these whole numbers 1-9 exactly correspond to the holistic grading at the AP readings. Re-writes are encouraged, but no longer accepted in terms of the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter grade. Students must feel the joy or the sting of the grade as the stakes are raised. Music continues to be used, with the lyrics making for an ever clearer soundtrack of the experiences. Elapsed class time: 10 days (20 class days left before the national AP exam).

### Unit 12

Essays, multiple choice practice exams, and readings go in a blur from now until the exam. Two of the three essays in this quarter are synthesis pieces, so extra time must be taken in order to finish these. The class periods we have are only 43 minutes, so I must borrow from History's time to get these writings finished and be fair to the students. Similarly, my colleague needs minutes for his DBQ practice, so cooperation is at a premium. We read most of Tim O'Brien's outstanding The Things They Carried for a better understanding of the Vietnam era. King's "I Have a Dream" speech and Kennedy's Inaugural Address are tremendous rhetorical studies before the exam. We also go back to Models for Writers one more time to pinpoint any sore areas in our writing. A review of all of what we've read takes place at this time as well. Students ability to draw upon their reading is so crucial as they prepare. We actually list all of the pieces we've studied from 7<sup>th</sup> grade to now, which stretches brains more than you would think. We look at all of the past essay questions I have in my bank and outline answers. One of our kids' keys to success in the past has been their ability to think and outline in the first 5 minutes of any essay period instead of writing immediately. We work very hard at this in the last week before the exam. Elapsed class time: 15-20 days (Show Time!).

### Unit 13

Far from unlucky, this last unit is used from whenever the exam(s) take place until the end of the school year. Projects are assigned depending upon what comes our way. Formal writing assessment is finished, though students are graded on their projects and expected to meet all classes (even seniors!). From the anchor papers we make to last year's cooperative venture with the local university, our students are given relevant and rigorous work to accomplish right to the final bell.

Resource Requirements:

- Rosa, Alfred, and Paul Eschholz. *Models for Writers: Short Essays for Composition*.
  - Sixth ed. New York: St. Martin's Press, Inc., 1998.
- Sebranek, Patrick, and Dave Kemper, and Verne Meyer. *Writer's INC: Sourcebook*
  - Wilmington: Houghton Mifflin Co., 2001.
- Strunk, Jr., William, and E.B. White. *The Elements of Style*. Fourth ed. Boston:
  - Allyn and Bacon, 2000.
- Warriner, John E. *Warriner's English Grammar and Composition*. New York:
  - Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Publishers, 1986.

Primary Document Readers:

- Kennedy, David M., and Thomas Bailey. *The American Spirit, Volume 1: To 1877*, 10<sup>th</sup> ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2006.
- Kennedy, David M., and Thomas Bailey. *The American Spirit, Volume 2: Since 1865*, 10<sup>th</sup> ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2006.