



AMERICAN LITERATURE 1,2 COURSE SYLLABUS

COURSE RATIONALE

English language arts instruction is designed to support students in developing proficiency in reading, writing, speaking, and listening. The instruction is intended to support students in achieving the Common Core state standards for English language arts and prepare students for success in college and the workplace.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course emphasizes skills and strategies for independent reading of, analyzing, and writing about works of American literature, with a focus on how that literature reflects social, political, and moral issues in the United States. Instruction in each standards-based unit of study integrates reading, writing, speaking and listening, and language study.

Students are provided with multiple opportunities to articulate their own ideas as well as to question, interpret, analyze, extend, and evaluate others' ideas. The goal of instruction is to support students in becoming independent, strategic, critical readers, writers, listeners, and speakers who communicate effectively in various forms, for genuine purposes, and to authentic audiences.

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS FOR SUCCESS

The extent to which a student will succeed in this course involves a combination of time management, goal-setting, and adherence to societal expectations regarding interaction with and respect for fellow students and staff. To demonstrate effective time management skills, students are expected to maintain a calendar/planner and devote enough time each night to complete the homework, review concepts, and study, as well as read regularly for schoolwork and for pleasure. To meet goals, students need to continue a cycle of self-reflection: *what did I need to learn today (what was the purpose of the lesson), did I achieve the stated outcome, and what can I do to continue to improve/learn?* To achieve success in the La Jolla High School environment, read the school's mission statement, core values, and student-learner outcomes.

LA JOLLA HIGH SCHOOL'S MISSION STATEMENT AND CORE VALUES

LJHS strives to provide an effective, innovative, and relevant educational experience for its students, challenging them to achieve their full intellectual, social and emotional potential.

CORE VALUES:

- Excellence – We encourage faculty, staff, coaches, and students to innovate and collaborate with each other in order to experience a productive process and meaningful outcomes.
- Honor – We create a culture of honesty and respect for all interactions.
- Fortitude – We foster an appreciation and respect for intellectual curiosity, academic rigor and the hard work required to achieve lasting success.
- Community – We engage fully in our environment—on campus, in our neighborhoods, and in the world beyond us.

LA JOLLA HIGH SCHOOL'S SCHOOLWIDE STUDENT LEARNER OUTCOMES (SSLO's)

1. COMMUNICATE AND COLLABORATE
Students will demonstrate effective oral, written, technological, visual, and interpersonal communication skills in order to experience a productive and meaningful outcome.
2. ANALYZE AND EVALUATE
Students will demonstrate the higher order thinking skills of analysis, synthesis, application, and evaluation in order to cultivate intellectual curiosity, engage in academic rigor, and develop a focused work ethic.
3. ENGAGE AND INTERACT

Students will engage in their school environment in order to create a school community that fosters a culture of honesty and respect for all interactions. Students will develop strength of character that prepares them to make a significant difference in the world.

4. **THINK BEYOND**

Students will become thoughtful, engaged citizens in a global society prepared for participation in the world beyond high school. Students will learn about the cultural, political, historical, scientific, ethical, and economic forces shaping the world.

ASSESSMENT

Students earn a letter grade each grading period based on summative assessments and the student-led conference. A *summative assessment*, such as an embedded assessment or multiple-choice exam, is an evaluative score and figures into the calculation of the student’s final grade.

How Summative Assessments are Weighted in a Standards-Based Gradebook (these percentages do count in PowerSchool)				
<i>Reading</i>	<i>Writing</i>	<i>Speaking and Listening</i>	<i>Language</i>	<i>Timeliness</i>
22.5%	22.5%	22.5%	22.5%	10%

Formative assessments are diagnostic and practice assignments intended to give students feedback on standards leading up to an embedded assessment or exam (summative grades) and are entered into PowerSchool gradebook as a quintile score. Some formative assessments may be revised into summative assessments, such as rough drafts, or accumulate into a summative grade.

Formative Assessment Quintile Scores Conversion Scale (ignore percentages in PowerSchool; they do not count)				
0	2	3	4	5
<i>No evidence of standard</i> 0%	<i>Incomplete evidence of standard</i> 1 - 39.99%	<i>Emerging evidence of standard</i> 40 - 69.99%	<i>Proficient evidence of standard</i> 70 - 89.99%	<i>Exemplary evidence of standard</i> 90 - 100%

A “0” simply means the student missed that opportunity to be assessed. Since they are not averaged into the final grade, students need not be duly concerned about missing an occasional formative assessment; however, if a pattern emerges, I will sit down with that student for a frank but constructive discussion.

TIMELINESS, LATE WORK and MAKEUPS

I do accept late summative assessments, but they will incur a late penalty. If a student wishes to turn in a summative assessment late, such as an essay, he or she understands that they will be deducted five (5) points from their 50-point “Timeliness” grade for each class or day the assessment is overdue. Thus, a summative assessment due Friday but uploaded to [turnitin.com](https://www.turnitin.com) on Monday will be assessed a 15-point late penalty in “Timeliness” in the most recent 3-week progress report. Timeliness constitutes 10% of your total class grade. The 50 points of “Timeliness” will be distributed over five 3-week progress reports over the course of the semester, each worth 10 points. In-class summative assessments, whether multiple choice or On-Demand Writing Prompts (ODWP), are assigned well in advance. If you know you are going to be absent the day of a summative assessment, please let me know as soon as possible via email. Truancies, unexcused absences, or students who display a pattern of absenteeism may not participate in make-ups. For further clarification, see the [LJHS student handbook](#).

Catastrophic emergencies will be dealt with in an appropriate and sensitive manner. Computer problems are not catastrophic events; either submit early or accept the late penalty. All late summative assessments need to be submitted by the final week of the quarter, or they are a “0”.

Excused absences five (5) school days or longer usually require a work contract through the office; if you’re absent two (2) periods or longer, an email prior to your return so work can be prepared for make up is appreciated.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

Rigorous academic honesty is my expectation. A student will earn a low scholarship grade if he or she chooses not to follow the academic honesty policy. A first offense for plagiarizing or cheating is a “0” on the assignment, a referral, and a “U” in citizenship for the progress reporting period. A second-time offense will earn an “F” in scholarship, a referral, a “U” in citizenship for the semester, and removal from the course. I can and have flunked juniors for plagiarism. That is not an idle threat, but a promise to uphold academic integrity. Students can anonymously report instances of plagiarism [on the LJHS Website](#).

Student attendance permitting, we review multiple-choice assessments in class, but students do not get to keep assessment copies or answer sheets. These may be reviewed in detail during Office Hours.

CITIZENSHIP GRADING

To graduate from high school, and to participate in many extracurricular activities including athletics, students are required to maintain a 2.0 GPA in citizenship. The following descriptions should provide a guide in determining what students can expect in this course.

4.0 E = Excellent

3.0 G = Good

2.0 S = Satisfactory

1.0 N = Not Satisfactory

0.0 U = Unacceptable

The following are the citizenship descriptors and attendance policies of LJHS:

- The “E” student demonstrates the citizenship values above, consistently participates in class, and shows leadership qualities. The student has no warnings or reminders about behavior. The student consistently meets and often exceeds behavioral expectations. His/her absences are minimal and excused. The student follows classroom rules consistently and dependably. The student completes assignments on time. The student has fewer than three tardies.
- The “G” student demonstrates the citizenship values above, participates a few times, and has at most one reminder about behavior. The student typically displays positive behavior and contributes to the learning environment. The student is consistently on task and engaged. The student follows classroom rules. The student generally submits work on time. The student may have one to three tardies.
- The “S” student may demonstrate citizenship values above, but his/her participation is inconsistent. The student has turned in late work more than a few times. The student is inconsistent about following classroom rules. The student has been warned about a recurring unacceptable behavior and has not corrected or changed his/her behavior. The student may have more than three tardies. The student may have one or two unexcused absences.
- The “N” student does not demonstrate citizenship values above. The student frequently exhibits disruptive behavior and fails to follow classroom rules. The student is almost always late with assignments, or does not turn them in at all. Negative behavior patterns have not improved. The student has more than five tardies. The student may have three unexcused absences.
- The “U” student breaks classroom rules regularly (at least weekly, sometimes daily), and has received multiple warnings. The student makes little attempt to change his/her behavior. The student seldom completes work. The student has frequent tardies, three or more unexcused absences (or one verified truancy), or has exhibited behavior in class that led to severe disciplinary action.

OFFICE HOURS

To support student learning, I have weekly Office Hours for students who need additional support and tutoring. They are Tuesdays before school from 7:20 – 8:15, unless announced otherwise. Students who schedule conferences with me beforehand have priority; drop-ins will be seen in order of arrival.

STUDENT LED CONFERENCES

Passing period and the first fifteen minutes of class are usually quite hectic for me, so please wait for an appropriate time to for questions regarding homework, and so forth (after the warm-up and preview of the day’s agenda is an excellent time). Questions about individual grades, no matter how brief, are not an appropriate use of class time. Schedule an appointment during Office Hours so you have my undivided attention and we can review a grade in detail. It is my policy to conference with parents or guardians about student grades only if the student is present, so there is a plurality of perspectives, during Office Hours. Printed progress reports for parent/guardian signature go home every third Monday, and I’m happy to correct accounting errors via email.

Each semester students will lead a student-led conference (SLC) with me and present their learning goals, their challenges, and their evidence of growth and the degree of success they achieved in each of the Common Core standard strands: Reading, Writing, Speaking & Listening, and Language. We will discuss the student’s achievement and decide which letter grade best describes the evidence presented. While I have the final authority to determine a student’s grade, I value parent and student feedback in this process in offering a more holistic view of the learner.

INDEPENDENT READING

As part of our Independent Reading requirement, students choose one (1) major work to read each semester. These works complement the themes, genres, critical perspectives or authors we are studying in our units. Each semester, students can expect to discuss these novels in Literature Circles and complete an On-Demand Writing Prompt.

Semester 1: Pre-20th c.

The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn by Mark Twain

My Antonia by Willa Cather

The Awakening by Kate Chopin

The Red Badge of Courage by Stephen Crane

Moby Dick by Herman Melville

Semester 2: 20th and 21st c.

The Grapes of Wrath by John Steinbeck

If I Die in a Combat Zone by Tim O’Brien

A Lesson Before Dying by Ernest Gaines

The Perfect Storm by Sebastian Junger

The Pelican Brief by John Grisham

HOMEWORK AND PREPARATION

In order to be successful, students must read every iota of the assigned text before coming to class. Be prepared to work with the text. Discussing varying aspects of literature, including style and structure, will be a daily practice. In preparation for these discussions, students will sometimes be asked to complete written homework to accompany reading homework.

HALL PASSES

So long as students follow the procedure outlined in class, I trust they can heed the call of nature and then return to class without delay. In the rare cases this privilege has been abused, I have alternative procedures. Documented medical conditions will be treated in an appropriate and sensitive manner.

EXTRA CREDIT

There is no such thing as extra credit.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES

As it says in the LJHS Academic Handbook “All electronic devices...are not to be used during instructional hours...unless specifically authorized by the instructor.” If I determine an electronic device is posing a distraction, I will hold it for the appropriate time period depending on the situation.

UNIVERSAL TARDY POLICY

The first week of each semester will be a tardy grace period (i.e., tardies will not be recorded). Teachers will counsel students about the tardy policy, and tardies will count thereafter. After the first week:

- Level 1: For the first 1-3, teachers give a warning.
 - Level 2: For 4-5 tardies; after 4 tardies: citizenship grade may be lowered, parent contacted by teacher. After 5 tardies: citizenship will be lowered, parent contacted by teacher.
 - Level 3: After 6 tardies, student gets a referral and sent to a VP for further disciplinary action.
- Tardy counts start over at the semester.

If you are not early, then you are late. Being early to class is “on time.” Being late is unacceptable. If you miss a warm-up grade due to unexcused tardiness, then that is a logical consequence of being late.

LJHS UNEXCUSED ABSENCE POLICY

By the end of each progress reporting period, I will check the absences records for students and count the number of unexcused absences. One to two unexcused absences may reflect a clerical error or failure by the parent to call in an excuse. But a third unexcused absence in a 6-week progress reporting period shows a pattern of absences that will lower a student’s citizenship grade to an N. Four or more unexcused absences will earn the student a U. If an unexcused absence is verified as truancy (marked with a “Z”) then the citizenship grade may drop immediately to a U.

HOMEWORK REQUIREMENTS

Students will be expected to...

- Keep a notebook daily in class.
- Write extensively in the notebook.
- Use the notebook as starting points/inspiration for fully developed final drafts.

STUDENT SUPPORT PLAN

Before a unit of instruction begins:

- Daily agenda will list the purpose and outcome for each day’s lesson.

During instruction:

- The teacher will provide instructions in at least two ways (verbal, written).
- On specific activities, students will be able to ask for help from fellow students.
- On most writing assignments in this class, multiple drafts are required and reviewed during the workshop process which includes brainstorming, models of the type of writing expected, peer editing, and the chance for revision.
- The teacher is available during Office Hours if a student needs further clarification or help with an assignment.
- The teacher will answer questions via e-mail (but not the night before an assignment is due).

After assessment:

- After a final draft of a writing assignment is graded, a student may ask to review the details of the parts of the paper that did not meet the expected standards in an afterschool meeting with the teacher upon request, in order to learn from his/her mistakes and improve on the next assignment.
- All tests are final. No retakes are allowed.

+Δ FINAL

My class with the highest average score from Visiting Teachers will earn a +Δ final project or exam grade, meaning that period’s students’ final embedded assessment or exam will be calculated only if it boosts their individual grade. Otherwise, that grade will be dropped. In the likely event of a tie, the +Δ final will go to the class with the least number of tardies.

EIGHT STEPS TO SUCCESS IN ENGLISH CLASS

1. We have a positive attitude.
2. We are on time.
3. We are prepared.
4. We sit in our assigned seat.
5. We raise our hand.
6. We protect our attitude.
7. We know where we are and we know what we are doing.
8. We stay focused.

The Year-at-a-Glance

Beginning of the Year (2 Weeks)

Overview: The two weeks will orient you to the goals, routines, and expectations for 11th Grade American Literature. You will also self-select independent reading texts. In addition, you will have an opportunity to access our class online learning environment in Google classroom and resources like [turnitin.com](https://www.turnitin.com), as well as to construct an interactive reader/writer journal for classwork and homework.

Goals:

- Introduce the idea of the American Dream
- Understand how to analyze a text from a rhetorical perspective
- To assess student understanding of argumentation vs. persuasion

Essential Questions

- What does it mean to be an “American”?

Major Texts:

Lyrics: “Born in the U.S.A.” by Bruce Springsteen;

Essay: “A Quilt of a Country” by Anna Quindlen

Music Video: “This is America” by Childish Gambino

Poetry: “If We Must Die” by Claude McCay; “Heat” by H.D.; “The Crossing” by Ruth Moose;

“Once There Came a Man” by Stephen Crane; “Survival Guide” by Joy Ladin; “won’t you celebrate with me” by Lucille Clifton

Folktale: “La Llorona”

Summer Reading/Formative Assessment:

Guiding Questions: How is the concept of being an American defined in literature?

Writing Prompt: Please analyze and explain the relationship between patriotism and religion in the following texts: “The New Colossus” by Emma Lazarus, “The Promised Land” speech by MLK, and the Statue of Liberty (Getty Images).

Academic Vocabulary

Rhetorical précis

Summarize

Argumentation

Dialectical journal

Defend

Challenge

Qualify

Literary Terms

Setting

Characterization

Dialogue

Conflict

Folktale

Unit 1: The American Dream

Overview: In this unit you will explore a variety of American voices and define what it is to be an American. If asked to describe the essence and spirit of America, you would probably refer to the American Dream. First coined as a phrase in 1931, the phrase “The American Dream” characterizes the unique promise that America has offered immigrants and residents for nearly 400 years. People have come to this country for adventure, opportunity, freedom, and the chance to experience the particular qualities of the American landscape.

Goals:

- To understand and define complex concepts such as the American Dream
- To identify and synthesize a variety of perspectives
- To analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of arguments
- To analyze representative texts from the American experience

Essential Questions:

- How do writers use the strategies of definition to define a concept?
- What is “the American Dream”?

Major Texts:

Essay: “A Cause Greater than Self” by Senator John McCain; “What Is Freedom?” by Jerald M. Jellison and John H. Harvey; “Is the American Dream Still Possible?” by David Wallechinsky; “*Growing Up Asian*,” by Kesaya E. Noda; “The Right to Fail” by William Zinsser
Historical Document: *The Preamble to the Constitution of the United States*; *The Bill of Rights*; *The Declaration of Independence*

Poetry: “The New Colossus” by Emma Lazarus; “I Hear America Singing” by Walt Whitman; “I, Too, Sing America” by Langston Hughes; “Let America Be America Again,” by Langston Hughes; “America” by Claude McKay; “Ellis Island” by Joseph Bruchac “On Being Brought From Africa To America” by Phillis Wheatley, “Europe and America” by David Ignatow, “Money” by Dana Gioia; “Who Burns for the Perfection of Paper” by Martin Espada

Speech: excerpt from President Roosevelt’s Address at Statue of Liberty Celebration; excerpt from “The Four Freedoms,” by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt; excerpt from “2004 Democratic National Convention Keynote” by Barack Obama;

Short Story: “America and I,” by Anzia Yezierska

Letter: Excerpt from *Letters From an American Farmer*, “What is an American?” by Hector St. Jean de Crevecoeur

Essay: Drama: Excerpt from *A Raisin in the Sun* by Lorraine Hansberry

Nonfiction: Excerpt from *Working*, “Roberto Acuna Talks About Farm Workers,” by Studs Terkel

Embedded Assessment 1: Writing a Definition Essay

Learning Focus: Your assignment is to write a multi-paragraph essay that defines your interpretation of what it means to be an American. This essay should use the strategies of definition and different perspectives from the unit to help you develop a complex and thoughtful definition. If possible, incorporate an iconic image into your essay.

Embedded Assessment 2: Synthesizing the American Dream

Learning Focus: Your assignment is to synthesize at least three to five sources and your own observations to defend, challenge, or qualify the statement that America still provides access to the American Dream. This question requires you to integrate a variety of sources (3-5) into a coherent, well-written argumentative essay. Your argument should be central; the sources and your observations should support this argument.

Academic Vocabulary

Primary source	Defend	Challenge	Qualify
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Literary Terms

Exemplification	Personification	Imagery	Synecdoche
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Unit 2: The Power of Persuasion

Overview: You have explored the dream that has burned within Americans since they first set foot on this land. Vital to the continuation of this dream and at the heart of our democracy is persuasive, free speech. America's tradition of open debate and lively free speech was established in the early period of the fight for independence from British rule. Before that, the founding settlers had established the basis for a literate democratic society in its schools and system of justice. Through an exploration of a contemporary drama set in Puritan New England, *The Crucible*, you will see how authors and playwrights like Arthur Miller use literature to further a social message. During the second half of the unit your study of historic American speeches will provide you with an opportunity to analyze models of effective persuasive speech in preparation for writing and delivering an original speech.

Goals:

- To interpret a text in consideration of its context
- To analyze an argument
- To create and present a dramatic scene about a societal issue
- To define and apply the appeals and devices of rhetoric
- To analyze, write, and present a persuasive speech
- To examine and apply syntactic structures in the written and spoken word

Essential Questions:

- How can artistic expression advance social commentary?
- How are the components of rhetoric applied to the creation and delivery of persuasive speeches?

Major Texts:

Sermon: "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" by Jonathan Edwards

Historical Document: *The New England Primer*

Essay: "The Trial of Martha Carrier" by Cotton Mather, "Why I Wrote the Crucible: An Artist's Answer to Politics" by Arthur Miller

Article: "The Lessons of Salem" by Laura Shapiro

Drama: *The Crucible* by Arthur Miller

Fable: "The Very Proper Gander" by Arthur Thurber

Speech: excerpt from "A Declaration of Conscience" by Margaret Chase Smith, "Second Inaugural Address" by Abraham Lincoln, "Speech to the Virginia Convention" by Patrick Henry, "The Gettysburg Address" by Abraham Lincoln, "First Inaugural Address" by Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Inaugural Address" by John F. Kennedy, "9/11 Address to the Nation" by George W. Bush, "President-Elect Victory Speech" by Barack Obama

Embedded Assessment 1: Creating and Performing a Dramatic Scene

Learning Focus: Your assignment is to work with a group to write and perform an original dramatic script in which you make a statement about a conflict that faces society. By doing so, you should be able to demonstrate your understanding of how Arthur Miller spoke out about a contemporary issue (persecution of suspected communists) while setting his drama in a time period with corresponding events (persecution of suspected witches).

Embedded Assessment 2: Writing and Presenting a Persuasive Speech

Learning Focus: Your assignment is to write and present an original, persuasive two- to three-minute speech that addresses a contemporary issue. It should include a clear claim, support, counterclaim, and conclusion/call to action. Incorporate rhetorical appeals and devices to strengthen your argument and help you achieve your desired purpose.

Academic Vocabulary:

Social commentary	Historical context	Rhetoric	Rhetorical context
Vocal delivery			

Literary Terms:

Foil
Verbal irony

Subtext
Situational irony

Motif
Alliteration

Dramatic irony
Syntax

Unit 3: American Forums: The Marketplace of Ideas

Overview: The chaos of information overload can create an overwhelming presence in our lives, yet this information is also crucial to our ability to make informed decisions about everything from personal beliefs to public policy. Indeed, the ways in which these ideas and voices interact with each other create a marketplace of ideas—a forum through which we can shape, test, and revise our own perspectives on our society and the issues that dominate the day. One place in particular where opinions can be shared, heard, and responded to is the newspaper op-ed page. In this context, and in many others, satire is often used by social critics to challenge or comment upon prevailing attitudes. In this unit you will learn to discern a news story from an opinion piece and a satirical text, and you will be better prepared to know where to go when you want to find out what America is thinking—and to create texts that may influence that thinking.

Goals:

- To analyze and create editorial and opinion pieces
- To identify and analyze fallacious reasoning in a text
- To analyze how writers use logic, evidence, and rhetoric to advance opinions
- To define and apply the appeals and devices of rhetoric
- To analyze and apply satirical techniques.
- To examine and apply syntactic structures in the written and spoken word

Essential Questions:

- How do news outlets impact public opinion or public perception?
- How does a writer use tone to advance an opinion?

Major Texts:

Primary Document: First Amendment to the United States Constitution

Informational Text: “The Role of the Media in a Democracy” by George A. Krinsky, “An Inside Look at Editorial Cartoons” by Bill Brennan

Editorial: “How the Rise of the Daily Me Threatens Democracy” by Cass Sunstein, “The Newspaper is Dying—Hooray for Democracy” by Andrew Potter, “Abolish High School Football” by Raymond Schroth, “Facing Consequences at Eden Prairie High” from *Minneapolis/St. Paul Star Tribune*, “Time to Raise the Bar in High Schools” by Jack O’Connell, “New Michigan Graduation Requirements Shortchange Many Students” by Nick Thomas, “Why I Hate Cell Phones” by Sara Reihani

Article: “Facebook Photos Sting Minnesota High School Students,” “Federal Way Schools Restrict Gore Film”

Satire: “Let’s Hear it for the Cheerleaders” by David Bouchier, “Girl Moves to Tears by Of Mice and Men Cliff Notes” from *The Onion*, “Advice to Youth” by Mark Twain, “The War Prayer” by Mark Twain, “Gambling in Schools” by Howard Mohr, “How to Poison the Earth” by Linnea Saukko

Cartoons: sample editorial cartoons

Parody: “In Depth but Shallowly” by Dave Barry

Embedded Assessment 1: Creating an Op-Ed News Project

Learning Focus: Working in groups, your assignment is to plan, develop, write, revise, and present an informational article on a timely and debatable issue of significance to your school community, local community, or national audience. After your group completes its article, you will then individually develop a variety of editorial products that reflect your view (agreement, alternative, or opposing) on the topic. Be creative with your editorial products and include at least two or three different pieces, such as cartoons, editorial, letters, posters/photos, and so on.

Embedded Assessment 2: Writing a Satirical Piece

Learning Focus: You have been studying how opinions are expressed and perceived in a democratic society through a variety of rhetorical formats including satire. Your assignment is to develop a satirical piece critiquing some aspect of our society.

Academic Vocabulary:

Reasoning

Evidence

Bias

Editorial

Fallacies

Parody

caricature

Literary Terms:

Target audience

Secondary audience

Concession

Refutation

Slanters

Satire

Horatian satire

Juvenalian satire

Persona

Objective tone

Subjective tone

Unit 4: The Temptations of the American Dream: *The Great Gatsby*

Overview: *The Great Gatsby* may be the most popular classic in modern American fiction. Since its publication in 1925, Fitzgerald's masterpiece has become a touchstone for generations of readers and writers, who are drawn to Fitzgerald's glamorous yet scathing portrayal of The Jazz Age. The story of Jay Gatsby's desperate quest to win back his first love reverberates with themes at once characteristically American and universally human, among them the importance of honesty, the temptations of wealth, and the struggle to escape the past.

In this unit, you will read *The Great Gatsby* while engaging in activities, such as Discussion Groups, critical reviews, and deep analysis of author's craft, to develop the skills and knowledge required for Embedded Assessment 1: Writing an Analytical Essay. Over the course of the unit, students move from guided analysis to self-directed discussion groups.

Goals:

- Read and comprehend a American novel in depth and complexity of theme.
- Engage in a close reading of an author's stylistic techniques and analyze for effect.
- Prepare and participate in effective group discussions that are self-directed.
- Write an analytical essay that explains how an author's craft conveys theme.

Essential Questions:

- How can talking and working with others help one analyze a novel?
- What tools can an author use to develop a story and create an experience for a reader?

Major Text:

Novel: *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald

Essays: "Prohibition," "Gatsby's Guided to Manhood," and "Harlem in the Jazz Age"

Film: *The Great Gatsby* Directed by Baz Luhrmann

Embedded Assessment 1: Writing an Analytical Essay

Learning Focus: Write an analytical essay about the novel. Choose one of the following prompts:

- Identify one or more significant subplots. Analyze the effect the subplots have on the main action of the novel and how they work with the main plot to develop one of the themes of the novel.
- Discuss the interplay of setting with at least one other element, such as character, plot, tone, or character, in developing one of the themes of the novel.
- Analyze how the author uses a minor character to affect the development of the narrator or main character, the central conflict of the novel, and the novel's theme.

Academic Vocabulary:

persona ellipsis

Literary Terms:

epigraph diction direct characterization indirect characterization
mood tone setting internal conflict external conflict

Unit 5: The Pursuit of Happiness

Overview: The pursuit of happiness is an integral part of the American Dream and part of the foundation of this country. Many people think that the fulfillment of the American Dream centers on financial success; however, riches are not the path to happiness for everyone. One major alternative for pursuing happiness was offered by the Transcendentalists, a group that (partially in response to the Industrial Revolution) valued simplicity, intuition, and nature over the expanding complexities of an increasingly urbanized and modernized society.

In this unit, you will examine how their perspectives still resonate in America, exploring in depth the story of one person who rejected wealth in favor of a different pathway to happiness. After examining the narrative of his experience, as well as other examples, you will craft your own narrative, reflecting on how your experiences have shaped you and your values. And finally, after understanding how an author can construct a narrative using many different genres to create a portrait of a person, you will research and craft a multi-genre project on a topic of your choice.

Goals:

- To compose a personal essay that employs stylistic techniques
- To analyze and evaluate the structural and stylistic features of texts
- To use a variety of genres to express a coherent theme

Essential Questions:

- What does it mean to pursue happiness?
- How can a writer use/manipulate genre conventions for effect?

Major Texts:

Essay: excerpt from *Self-Reliance* by Ralph Waldo Emerson, excerpt from *Walden* by Henry David Thoreau, “A View from Mount Ritter” by Joseph T. O’Connor

Poetry: “In the Depths of Solitude” by Tupac, “Remember” by Joy Harjo, “A Light Exists in Spring” by Emily Dickinson

Art: *The Oxbow* by Thomas Cole, *Kindred Spirits* by Asher Durand

Nonfiction: credo from “All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten” by Robert Fulghum

Nonfiction: *Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America* by Barbara Ehrenreich; *The Pumphouse Gang* by Tom Wolfe

Biographical Sketch: “Sparky” by Earl Nightingale

Article: “Charles M. Schulz Biography” from *Notable Biographies*

Embedded Assessment 1: Writing a Personal Essay

Learning Focus: Your assignment is to write a multi-paragraph reflective essay about a significant personal experience that involves the pursuit of happiness and/or transcendental ideals, being sure to describe the experience and your immediate response to it, as well as to reflect on the significance of the experience.

Embedded Assessment 2: Creating a Multi-Genre Research Project

Learning Focus: Your assignment is to create a multi-genre research project that expresses your research and perspective on a person, event, or movement that embodies the American ideal of the pursuit of happiness.

Academic Vocabulary:

Genre conventions

Literary Terms:

Connotation

Epigraph

Coherence

Stylistic Technique