

AP English Literature and Composition Overview for Parents and Students

**This class requires summer work: students must complete a novel and essay, which are due on the first day of class. Failure to complete this work will result in removal from the class.*

Course Overview	
<p>AP English Literature and Composition is a college-level course designed to deepen students' understanding and appreciation of literature through close reading, analysis, and critical writing. The course focuses on works of literary merit, spanning various genres, time periods, and cultures. Students develop their ability to analyze complex texts, articulate their interpretations, and support their ideas with textual evidence. By completing this course, students may be able to earn college credit and refine essential skills in critical thinking and effective communication.</p>	

Course Content: The course is structured into nine units, each emphasizing different genres and literary techniques:	
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Short Fiction (Units 1, 4, 7)	Analyze how authors develop characters, settings, and themes in short stories
Poetry (Units 2, 5, 8)	Explore poetic forms, figurative language, and sound devices to interpret meaning
Longer Fiction or Drama (Units 3, 6, 9)	Examine novels and plays, focusing on structure, conflict, and character development

Throughout the course, students will revisit key concepts—such as character, setting, structure, narration, and figurative language—to build a deeper understanding of how literary elements work together.

Sample of Readings Covered in Course:	<table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;"><i>Jane Eyre</i></td> <td style="padding: 2px;">Charlotte Bronte</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;"><i>Beowulf</i></td> <td style="padding: 2px;">Author Unknown</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;"><i>The Merchant of Venice</i></td> <td style="padding: 2px;">William Shakespeare</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;"><i>Hamlet</i></td> <td style="padding: 2px;">William Shakespeare</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;"><i>Paradise Lost</i></td> <td style="padding: 2px;">John Milton</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;"><i>Heart of Darkness</i></td> <td style="padding: 2px;">Joseph Conrad</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;"><i>Cry, The Beloved Country</i></td> <td style="padding: 2px;">Alan Paton</td> </tr> </table>	<i>Jane Eyre</i>	Charlotte Bronte	<i>Beowulf</i>	Author Unknown	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>	William Shakespeare	<i>Hamlet</i>	William Shakespeare	<i>Paradise Lost</i>	John Milton	<i>Heart of Darkness</i>	Joseph Conrad	<i>Cry, The Beloved Country</i>	Alan Paton
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Student Skill Developed

- **Close Reading:** Interpreting and analyzing complex literary texts
- **Analytical Writing:** Crafting essays with clear theses and supporting arguments grounded in textual evidence
- **Critical Thinking:** Evaluating perspectives, themes, and cultural contexts in literature
- **Textual Evidence:** Supporting interpretations with relevant and sufficient examples from the text
- **Commentary:** Making clear, logical connections between the evidence and the thesis

Expected Student Workload

Classroom Work Requirements

Students in AP English Literature and Composition will participate in a variety of activities both in and outside the classroom to deepen their understanding of literature. In class, students will engage in discussions, writing, and group analyses of assigned texts, complete timed essays and AP-style writing tasks, and annotate and analyze literary passages

Independent Work Requirements

Outside of class, students are expected to read approximately 20–30 pages per week, depending on the complexity of the text, while taking notes and annotating to prepare for class discussions. Students will also complete practice essays, revise their writing, and review literary concepts to build their analytical skills.

Students should plan to spend 3-5 hours on homework and study time each week, depending on their reading speed, comprehension level and critical thinking skills.

AP Exam Structure

The AP English Literature and Composition Exam evaluates students' ability to analyze literature and write effectively. Essays are now written on the AP Bluebook app online. The 3-hour exam consists of two sections:

Section I

Multiple Choice (45% of score)	55 questions in 60 minutes	Students analyze excerpts from prose, poetry, and drama to answer questions about literary techniques, structure, and meaning.
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Section II

Free Response (55% of score)	3 essays in 2 hours	Poetry Analysis: Analyze a given poem's use of literary elements. Prose Analysis: Analyze an excerpt from a piece of fiction or drama. Open-Ended Essay: Develop an argument about a chosen work of literary merit in response to a given prompt.
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How AP Exams are Scored

The AP English Literature and Composition Exam is scored using a combination of multiple-choice and free-response sections to assess both literary analysis skills and writing ability.

Multiple-Choice Section

The multiple-choice section evaluates students' ability to analyze and interpret prose, poetry, and drama excerpts, with points awarded for correct answers and no penalties for incorrect responses.

Free-Response Section

The free-response section includes three essays—poetry analysis, prose analysis, and an open-ended literary argument—which are scored by trained AP readers using detailed rubrics. These rubrics assess a student's thesis development, use of textual evidence, depth of analysis, and overall writing clarity.

Grading Process and Consistency

Experienced AP readers, often teachers, score the free-response questions based on specific rubrics. These rubrics assess students' understanding of geographic concepts, analytical skills, and ability to interpret data. The grading process includes calibration sessions to ensure fair and consistent scoring across all exams.

Composite Score and Scaling

Scores from each section of the AP exam are combined into a composite score, which is then converted to the AP 5-point scale. A score of 5 means "extremely well qualified," while a 3 indicates "qualified," and a 1 means "no recommendation." A score of 3 or higher is generally considered passing, but some colleges only grant credit for scores of 4 or 5. Be sure to check your colleges of interest for their AP credit policy to confirm its score requirements for credit. **All AP scores are released in July. Students can check their CollegeBoard accounts for their scores. GCS only puts AP scores of 3 or higher on student transcripts.**

*Please note that most colleges do not accept both AP Lang and AP Lit, and some do not accept either. Please be sure to check your colleges of interest for their AP credit policies.