AP English Language and Composition Course Syllabus

Course Overview

Note: This syllabus is being updated (2014-15) to reflect appropriate page numbers in our new text. The curriculum plan and the skills and concepts continue as they are presented here.

The AP English Language and Composition Course is designed to give students an opportunity to carefully analyze a broad range of challenging nonfiction prose works, to deepen their understanding of the power of rhetoric, and to understand how language works. Through close reading of various texts, students will examine the authors’ purposes and their uses of rhetorical modes and strategies. Students will write in a variety of modes, composing with an awareness of purpose, strategy, and audience; strengthening their own composition skills; and developing a sense of style. The AP Language and Composition course also includes the study of fiction to strengthen the close reading and literary analysis skills required for the AP English Literature course that many of these students take in their senior year. Summer reading and writing are required. Students prepare for the AP English Language and Composition Exam.

CR 1 The teacher has read the most recent AP English Course Description, available as a free download on the AP English Language and Composition Course Home Page.

CR 2 The course teaches and requires students to write in several forms (e.g., narrative, expository, analytical, and argumentative essays) about a variety of subjects (e.g., public policies, popular culture, personal experiences).

CR 4 The course requires expository, analytical, and argumentative writing assignments that are based on readings representing a wide variety of prose styles and genres.

CR 5 The course requires nonfiction readings (e.g., essays, journalism, political writing, science writing, nature writing, autobiographies/biographies, diaries, history, criticism) that are selected to give students opportunities to identify and explain an author's use of rhetorical strategies and techniques. If fiction and poetry are also assigned, their main purpose should be to help students understand how various effects are achieved by writers' linguistic and rhetorical choices.

The textbook for the course is the McGraw-Hill Reader, Ninth Edition; the readings feature expository, analytical, personal, and argumentative texts from varied authors and historical and social contexts. Students will examine essays, speeches, letters, imaginative literature, visual text, and film.

The major fiction studies include the following: The Bluest Eye by Toni Morrison, a study enhanced by visual texts, poetry, and story that focus on the themes of beauty, race, and gender; Macbeth by William Shakespeare; and a short-story unit.

The study of visual image as text is accomplished through a variety of film, advertisements, cartoons, and artwork including Raising Cain (PBS Video Series) and Wal-Mart: The High Cost of Low Price.

CR 6 The course teaches students to analyze how graphics and visual images both relate to written texts and serve as alternative forms of text themselves.

See Bibliography for other resources.
Course units highlight particular themes and genre. Students engage in a variety of formal and informal writing assignments as they identify, analyze, and imitate rhetorical strategies. Student writing will advance through the several stages of the writing process, including revision based on peer review and teacher commentary. A number of writings will engage students in conducting and documenting research according to MLA guidelines. Requirements include completion of at least one revised essay per six-week card marking and one extended, researched argument per semester.

CR – 3 The course requires students to write essays that proceed through several stages or drafts, with revision aided by teacher and peers.

CR – 4 The course requires students to write in informal contexts (e.g., imitation exercises, journal keeping, collaborative writing, and in-class responses) designed to help them become increasingly aware of themselves as writers and of the techniques employed by the writers they read.

CR – 7 The course teaches research skills, and in particular, the ability to evaluate, use, and cite primary and secondary sources. The course assigns projects such as the researched argument paper, which goes beyond the parameters of a traditional research paper by asking students to present an argument of their own that includes the analysis and synthesis of ideas from an array of sources.

CR – 8 The course teaches students how to cite sources using a recognized editorial style (e.g., Modern Language Association, The Chicago Manual of Style, etc.).

CR – 9 The course teaches students how to cite sources using a recognized editorial style (e.g., Modern Language Association, The Chicago Manual of Style, etc.).

CR – 10 The AP teacher provides instruction and feedback on students' writing assignments, both before and after the students revise their work, that help the students develop these skills: A wide-ranging vocabulary used appropriately and effectively

- A variety of sentence structures, including appropriate use of subordination and coordination
- Logical organization, enhanced by specific techniques to increase coherence, such as repetition, transitions, and emphasis
- A balance of generalization and specific, illustrative detail
- An effective use of rhetoric, including controlling tone, establishing and maintaining voice, and achieving appropriate emphasis through diction and sentence structure

To enhance increasing sophistication in student writing voice and style, the course includes weekly units of vocabulary study and periodic exercises in grammar and syntax determined by teacher assessment of student writing development.

Students will also read independently throughout the year both non-fiction and fiction from approved reading lists. Students will keep a dialectical journal of self-selected quotes and annotate their readings to identify and analyze examples of rhetorical modes and devices. Students are required to read one book each card marking, read two related criticisms, and summarize those critiques in a reading log.

Further, throughout the course students will keep a media journal to summarize and comment on editorials and articles in newspapers and journals of national record. Once during the year each student will conduct a Socratic Seminar with the class based on an issue of interest studied through the media journal.
Unit: Orientation, Close Reading, and Rhetorical Awareness

The purpose of this unit is to acquaint students with the rigor required in an AP English Language and Composition course. Students will be introduced to the practice of close reading of written and visual text, annotation of text and rhetorical analysis. Students will write analytical essays to provide a baseline of their writing ability and to set goals for growth.

Concepts and Skills

- Critical thinking
  - Critical reading strategies as outlined in Chapter 1 of *The McGraw Hill Reader, Ninth Edition*: engage with the writer’s text, read attentively, paraphrase, ask questions, control prejudices and biases to keep an open mind.

- Annotating, note taking and questioning a text

- Rhetorical Situation
  - Subject-Occasion-Audience-Purpose-Speaker-Tone (SOAPSTone) strategies as taught in the College Board workshop “Pre-AP: Interdisciplinary Strategies for English and Social Studies.”

- Reading visual text
  - Overview-Parts>Title-Interrelationships-Conclusion (OPTIC) strategies as outlined in Walter Pauk’s *How to Study in College* excerpted in *AP English Language and Composition Sample Syllabus 2*.

- Syntax Analysis Chart
  - A reflective tool outlined in *The AP Vertical Teams Guide for English*, published by the College Board. Students will use the chart in revising their essays as part of the writing process, as well as in analyzing how style contributes to meaning and purpose in the essays, stories, and novels they read for class.

Materials

*The McGraw Hill Reader, Ninth Edition*
Visual images from *The McGraw Hill Reader, Ninth Edition*
(10) Selected Memoirs
AP English Language and Composition Released Exam Items
Assignments and Assessments

**Major Assignment # 1:** A summer reading assignment requires students to read a memoir from an approved list and keep a dialectical journal of key passages. When they return in the fall, students will select a passage that reflects the author’s view of the world and write an essay to explain the rhetorical strategies employed in the passage to achieve the author’s purpose.

[CR – 3, CR – 6, CR – 9, CR – 10]

**Major Assignment # 2:** Students will take an AP released multiple-choice test to provide a baseline.

[CR – 6]

**Major Assignment # 3:** Students will respond to an AP released free-response prompt to provide a baseline measurement of their composition skills.

[CR – 6]

**Major Assignment # 4:** Students will paraphrase and analyze the argument in two visual images.

[CR – 4, CR – 7]

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**Unit: Introduction to Rhetorical Modes**

The purpose of this unit is to introduce the various modes of discourse used in writing and speaking. These modes appear in the essays in the text *The McGraw Hill Reader, Ninth Edition*. The units in the text are organized thematically. Students will read a sampling of essays in each unit, become familiar with the modes, understanding the various authors’ approaches, identifying them correctly, and employing them in their own essay writing.

The rhetorical modes include narration, description, definition, exemplification, process analysis, comparison and contrast, cause and effect, and classification. While the foundations of persuasion and argumentation are addressed in this unit, they are examined more extensively throughout subsequent units.

Related elements such as irony, analogy, humor, and satire and rhetorical strategies such as parallelism, rhetorical question, deductive and inductive reasoning, and figurative language will also be noted, exemplified, and discussed.

**Concepts and Skills**

- Critical reading of a variety of essays
Students will apply their critical reading and annotation skills to discern the values of the rhetorical modes and their connection to the author’s purpose.

- Preparation of journal responses to essays
  - This exercise will foster familiarity with the structures and the vocabulary.

- Analysis of the rhetorical modes as related to author’s purpose
  - Homework assignments and class discussions will afford an opportunity to discuss the “Rhetoric” section questions in the textbook. These analyses will aid students in identifying the methods of argument and strategies used, discerning the author’s thesis, and understanding the process of argumentation.

- Composition of a series of essays practicing the rhetorical modes
  - Students will demonstrate their understanding of the rhetorical modes by incorporating them appropriately in their own writing.
  - Formulation of a sound thesis and outline of an essay plan
  - Through examination of the essays, students will understand how to formulate their own theses and plan their arguments.

Materials
- *The McGraw Hill Reader, Ninth Edition*
- List of Rhetorical Devices

Assignments and Assessments
Each unit will focus on two or three rhetorical modes and several devices. While all appropriate devices may be discussed, those isolated below will be studied and modeled by students. Each of the thematic units will culminate in writing an essay that employs the modes and strategies.

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  - Students will demonstrate their understanding of the rhetorical modes by incorporating them appropriately in their own writing.
  - Formulation of a sound thesis and outline of an essay plan
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The following is an organization of the thematic units, the essays, the modes, and the strategies represented:

Chapter 4 “Education and Society”
- Modes: classification, cause and effect, comparison and contrast, process analysis
- Strategies and Devices: syntax, tone, metaphor, anecdote, diction, irony, claim
• Essays:
  - “Learning to Read and Write” by Frederick Douglass
    narration, definition, syntax, tone, metaphor
  - “When Bright Girls Decide that Math Is ‘a Waste of Time’” by S. Jacoby
    cause and effect, anecdote, diction
  - “The Lonely, Good Company of Books” by Richard Rodriguez
    process analysis, point of view, anecdote, irony, diction
  - “Needed: Affirmative Action for the Poor” by Laura D’Andrea Tyson
    comparison and contrast, claim, evidence, audience

Chapter 6 “History, Culture, and Civilization”
• Modes: cause and effect, classification, analogy, definition
• Strategies and Devices: deductive and inductive reasoning, diction, metaphor,
• Essays:
  - “National Prejudices” by Oliver Goldsmith
    classification, definition, logical appeal, metaphor, proposition, tone
  - “America: The Multinational Society” by Ishmael Reed
    humor, use of detail, inductive and deductive reasoning
  - “The Multicultural Mistake” by K. Anthony Appiah
    exemplification, compare and contrast, definition, colloquial style
  - “The Arab World” by Edward T. Hall
    comparison and contrast, anecdote, audience, voice

Chapter 7 “Government, Politics, and Social Justice”
• Modes: persuasion, exposition, compare and contrast
• Strategies and Devices: parallel structure, repetition, extended metaphor,
  syllogistic reasoning, allusion, analogy, connotation
• Essays:
  - “The Declaration of Independence” by Thomas Jefferson
    syllogistic reasoning, deductive argument, parallel structure
  - “I Have a Dream” by Martin Luther King Jr.
    repetition, extended metaphor, allusion
  - “The Circle of Governments” by Niccolo Machiavelli
    exposition, description, audience
  - “Grant and Lee: A Study in Contrasts” by Bruce Catton
    comparison and contrast, syntax, tone

Chapter 8 “Business and Economics”
• Modes: process analysis, description, narration
• Strategies and Devices: analogy, rhetorical question, allusion, audience, voice,
  figurative language, colloquial style, evidence
• Essays:
  - “Professions for Women” by Virginia Woolf
    personal narration (speech), contrast, analogy, figurative language
    exposition, anecdote, evidence, allusion, tone
“Globalization: The Super Story” by Thomas L. Friedman
- definition, colloquial style, voice, evidence

“Nickel and Dimed” by Barbara Ehrenreich
- description, narration, irony, sarcasm

Chapter 5 “Family Roles and Gender Roles”
- Modes: exemplification, definition, comparison and contrast, persuasion
- Strategies and Devices: connotation, symbol, diction, tone, syntax
- Essays:
  - “Wonder Woman” by Gloria Steinem
    - persuasion, audience, evidence
  - “Once More to the Lake” by E. B. White
    - description, narration, connotation, symbol, irony
  - “An American Childhood” by Annie Dillard
    - memoir, humor, structure, syntax, connotation
  - “Love, Internet Style” by David Brooks
    - definition, writer’s stance, syntax
  - “Why Men Don’t Last” by Natalie Angier
    - tone, rebuttal, order of detail
  - “The Female Body” by Margaret Atwood
    - structure, implied thesis, metaphor, detail

Unit: The Argument

This unit will introduce students to the rhetoric of argument. Students will learn to identify, evaluate, and compose logical appeals, emotional appeals, and ethical appeals. Classroom reading, journal response, and group discussion will introduce related terminology: major propositions, minor propositions, claims, warrants, concession, rebuttal, etc., and the various forms of evidence.

Based on “The Morgan Horse Revisited: Using AP Samples for Revisions,” by Mary Jo Potts (included in the 2005-06 AP English Language and Composition Professional Development Workshop Materials), students will learn to differentiate between expository and argumentative writing and will conclude their study with a researched argument on a local issue.

Concepts and Skills
- Elements of argument in non-fiction, visual, and imaginative texts
  - Students will become familiar with the language of argument and its expressions in a variety of texts.
- Research process and writing
  - Students will read and analyze the argumentative essays and understand the process of writing a powerful argument.
- Synthesis of information from multiple sources
  - Students will understand that effective arguments result from a thorough investigation and representation of the sources.
• Evaluation of sources
  Students will conduct a thorough search for information and evaluate the
evidence to be sure that it is “credible, comprehensive, and current” as

• Composition of a formal argument
  Using the “Morgan Horse” model, students will research a “local” issue,
gather information from a variety of sources, evaluate the evidence,
address the opposing view, plan and write a powerful argument.

• Revision based on student samples and teacher commentary
  Peer response groups, with the accompanying rubric, will discuss and
evaluate student essays. Teacher review and suggestions will enhance the
revision process.

Materials
• Chapter 2 from *The McGraw-Hill Reader, Ninth Edition* which outlines the
rhetoric of argument
• The film *Wal-Mart: The High Cost of Low Price*
• The “Morgan Horse” response from the 2004 AP English Language and
Composition Exam
• Articles in journals, magazines, newspapers
• Interview protocol to conduct primary research

Assignments and Assessments
• Students will view the film *Wal-Mart: The High Cost of Low Price* to identify
its major proposition, claims, and warrants.
• Informal writing assignments will require students to paraphrase the movie’s
propositions and evaluate them on the merits of evidence provided.
• In small groups, students will research and produce rebuttals of the movie’s
claims, providing evidence to counter them.
• Each student will be responsible for developing one of the group’s minor
propositions with appropriate evidence.
• Students will then study arguments from *The McGraw Hill Reader, Ninth
Edition*, noting rhetorical strategies, diction, and syntax.
• They will revise the first draft of their portion of the group’s argument to
enrich the language.
• Each group will then present its argument to classmates in the form of a
debate.
• Peers will assess each argument according to veracity of the evidence and the
persuasiveness of its language.

Major Assignment
• Students will then read the student sample “The Morgan Horse Revisited” and
evaluate its effectiveness. Class discussion will highlight its strengths as well
as its failure to develop an argument. Groups will then develop a list of
revisions that could be made to make it into an argument.
Students will research and write their own arguments about local issues of interest to them, employing the MLA format for documentation.

Unit: The Novel as Argument

The purpose of the study of *The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison is to explore the methods of interpretation, to place the novel in a historical and social context, to identify literary devices and understand how they work to achieve the author’s purpose, to study structure and form as artistic qualities, and to have an awareness of the elements of style in fiction. Students will read, annotate, and discuss the novel; read literary criticism of the work; and write a style analysis. They will discern Morrison’s challenge and approach the novel as a persuasive argument for change.

Concepts and Skills

- Critical reading of fiction; exploration of methods of interpretation
  - Students will apply their creative and critical reading skills to Morrison’s text through annotation and note-taking.
- Understanding of the elements of fiction: theme, characterization, plot, point of view, setting
  - Students will be especially interested and perplexed about the structure of the novel and will investigate how setting, structure, and theme are woven together to achieve Morrison’s purpose.
  - The narrative shifts – narrative, third person omniscient, stream of consciousness – provide an opportunity to study point of view and how it relates to characterization and to the author’s purpose.
- Understanding of literary devices and their connection to interpretation: allusion, symbol, simile, imagery, tone
  - Because *The Bluest Eye* is rich in allusion, imagery, simile, and symbol, students will have an opportunity to see how the use of these devices enriches Morrison’s message and the poignancy of her challenge.
  - A vocabulary study of Morrison’s diction and the tone it creates will aid in understanding how they work to achieve the author’s purpose.
- Exploration of context as it applies to fiction
  - A background presentation (through combined lectures, photos, related readings, and student research) will supply information about World War II, 1940’s migration to the industrial North, rural vs. urban society, racial integration, and society’s standards of beauty.
- Listening and speaking skills
  - Study of this novel affords opportunities for discussion of family structures and relationships, friendship, adolescent dreams and disappointments, gender roles, society’s definitions of womanhood and manhood, selfhood, historical and societal influences such as war and migration, and racial implications.
Frequent class discussions will focus on discussing universal human emotions such as frustration, fear, anger, humiliation, self-hatred, self-love, and hope.

Materials
- List of literary devices
- *The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison (school copies available for students)
- Handouts of related poems:
  - “Those Winter Sundays” by Robert Hayden
  - “The Rites of Manhood” by Alden Nowlan
  - “My Papa’s Waltz” by Theodore Roethke
  - “The Guild” by Sharon Olds
  - “A Work of Artifice” by Marge Piercy
  - “Barbie Doll” by Marge Piercy
- Handout of the TP-CASTT poetry analysis process (*AP Vertical Teams Workbook*)
- Film – *Raising Cain*, written by Michael Thompson, Paul Stern, Craig Ginsberg
- *Dick and Jane* reading series samples
- Visual texts such as advertising, 1950’s Hollywood movie clips (Shirley Temple, Lana Turner), and cartoons.

Assignments and Assessments
- **Major Assignment #1: Reading of Toni Morrison’s *The Bluest Eye***
  Students will read and annotate the novel. They will prepare a reading log to chart their interpretations and understanding. They will address discussion questions for homework and in class. They will keep a character list, noting especially the development of the narrator and the main character.

- **Major Assignment #2: Research of Literary Analysis***
  After reading the novel, students will investigate scholarly criticisms of the novel; take notes on their findings; and present possible interpretations as part of class discussions. This information may be used later in the final argumentative essay on the novel.

- **Major Assignment #3: Style Analysis***
  Students will choose an especially rich or poetic passage, copy it, and annotate it according to the list of literary techniques and other discussion points. They will then write a style analysis of the passage. The richness of the novel invites style analysis of the following elements: structure, allusions such as songs and names; motifs such as food, *Dick and Jane*; diction and tone.

- **Major Assignment #4: Argumentative/Persuasive Essay***
  Students will write an Argumentation/Persuasion Essay based on the indictment or challenge that Morrison presents at the end of the novel. Since the work may be viewed as hopeless or as a call for change, students will be able to formulate a position using one or more of Morrison’s themes, including beauty, self-esteem, the ideal family, identity, and scapegoating.
Unit: The Short Story

The purpose of this short-story unit is to teach and review the methods of interpretation, identify literary devices, and use the language of literary analysis in discussion and writing. Students will read, annotate, and discuss a variety of short stories; read critical analyses; and write a literary analysis on an assigned story.

Concepts and Skills

- Critical reading of fiction; exploration of methods of interpretation
- Understanding of the elements of fiction:
  - theme, characterization, plot, point of view, setting
- Understanding of rhetorical devices employed by authors:
  - tone, diction, syntax, irony, paradox
- Understanding of literary devices and their connection to interpretation:
  - allusion, symbol, metaphor, simile, musical devices, imagery
- Exploration of context as it applies to fiction
- Understanding and employment of literary criticism (perspectives) on the works of fiction:
  - historical, feminist, psychological, sociological
- Research of scholarly and creditable literary analyses
- Critical reading of professional models of literary analysis
- Finding arguments in stories (author’s thesis and support); assessing validity of argument, its universality
- Writing the style analysis of short fiction
  - assessment of validity of sources
  - synthesis of sources
  - use of citations

Materials

- Handouts of the short stories allow students to freely annotate and add comments during class discussions. Any of the following stories work for this unit. The reading and study of 5 stories is adequate for a basic understanding of the art of short fiction.
- List of literary terms
- Literary analyses – Students will find these on their own after instruction from teacher as to the use of databases available through the library Intranet.

Stories

- “Araby” and “Eveline” by James Joyce
  - bildungsroman
  - context: Joyce’s autobiography (Catholicism, Dublin, Irish-English conflicts)
  - historical perspective: Irish-English conflicts
• “A Clean, Well-lighted Place” by Ernest Hemingway
  - context: post WWI
  - syntax, dialogue
  - subtext

• “Paul’s Case” by Willa Cather
  - historical, sociological perspectives: Industrial Revolution, class distinctions
  - characterization
  - symbol, allusion

• “The Yellow Wallpaper” by Charlotte Perkins Gilman
  - feminist, sociological, psychological perspectives: gender roles
  - syntax, tone, narration

• “The Chrysanthemums” by John Steinbeck
  - sociological perspective: gender roles, human connection
  - diction and tone
  - symbol

• “A Rose for Emily” by William Faulkner
  - historical perspective: the Old South
  - plot, time sequence
  - diction, tone, symbol

Assignments and Assessments

- Students read and annotate stories, noting perspectives, contexts, devices, themes.
- Class discussion allows students to voice their interpretations and conduct style analysis.
- Each student will choose a passage from a story and present a style analysis to his or her peer group.
- Use of acronyms SMELL, TWIST in AP Vertical Teams Guide
- Students will respond to an appropriate AP Released Item prompt that requires a rhetorical analysis of a passage.

Major Assignment

- Literary analysis essay on rhetorical and literary devices
  - Each student will choose a particular story to investigate thoroughly.
  - Student will read scholarly critical analyses of story and write commentary.


Unit: Synthesis Essay

The purpose of this unit is to engage students in conversations with “scholarship on an issue” through a variety of texts as outlined by David A. Joliffe. After individual research, group discussion, Socratic Seminars, and multiple informal writings, students will determine a position on the issue under study and formulate an argument.
Concepts and Skills

- Analyze author’s purpose, rhetorical modes, and strategies
- Evaluate multiple sources of information
- Interpret messages in visual text
- Research process and writing
- Take a position on an issue
- Synthesize multiple sources to support student’s central argument
- Create an argument incorporating above skills and processes

Materials

- The following essays from The McGraw-Hill Reader, Ninth Edition:
  - “Security Versus Civil Liberties” by Richard A. Posner
  - “Acts of Resistance” by Elaine Scarry
  - “Face Facts: Patriot Act Aids Security, Not Abuse” by Paul Rosenzweig
  - “The Patriot Act of the 18th Century” by Ishmael Reed
  - Appropriate political cartoons
- AP Released Exam Items from AP Central

Assignments and Assessments

- Free -Response Timed Practice The 2002 Free-Response Question 3, (Milan Kundera’s discussion on public versus private life) released item is used as an introduction to the topic of civil liberty vs. national security with a review of the elements of argument.
  - After timed writing in class, students will view released sample papers and assess their written arguments in response to the prompt. Students will revise their original essays, using strategies learned from sample responses, the released rubric, and teacher evaluation.

  [CR – 6, CR—7, CR—8, CR – 9, CR—10]

- Synthesis Essay Practice #1 (Teacher-created Synthesis on National Security vs. Civil Liberty) Continuing the theme of liberty vs. security, students will then practice with the following teacher-developed synthesis assignment.

  [CR – 6, CR—7, CR—8, CR – 9, CR—10]

Directions: The following prompt is based on the accompanying 5 sources.

This question requires you to integrate a variety of sources into a coherent, well-written essay. Refer to the sources to support your position; avoid mere paraphrase or summary. Your argument should be central; the sources should support this argument.

Remember to attribute both direct and indirect citations.
Introduction

The events of September 11, 2001, caused our country to scrutinize more closely our national security and our civil liberties. Has the Patriot Act of 2001 made us safer against terrorist attack or has it impinged on the freedoms guaranteed by our Constitution?

To what extent should civil liberty be limited to insure national security? What are the consequences of empowering the government to conduct the surveillance of our private lives? Are there historical events that provide guidance in addressing the issue of security versus liberty?

Prompt

Read the following sources (including any introductory information) carefully. Then, in an essay that synthesizes at least three of the sources for support, take a position that defends, challenges, or qualifies the claim that dire circumstances justify limiting personal freedoms in order to insure the safety of the nation’s citizens.

Refer to the sources as Source A, Source B, etc.

Source A (Posner)
Source B (Scarry)
Source C (Rosenzweig)
Source D (Reed)
Source E (cartoon)

- **Synthesis Essay Practice #2** The 2007 Synthesis Essay #1 (TV and Elections).

  - After timed writing in class, students will view released sample papers and assess their written arguments in response to the prompt. Students will revise their original essays, using strategies learned from sample responses, the released rubric, and teacher evaluation.


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**Unit: Macbeth by William Shakespeare**

The purpose of the *Macbeth* unit is to acquaint students with the elements of drama, the character development of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth, Shakespeare’s universal themes, and his use of language and literary devices. Because many of these students will go to AP Literature in their senior year, this study, presented after the AP Exam, affords them a valuable background.
Concepts and Skills
- Critical reading of a Shakespearean play: exploration of the methods of interpretation.
- Understanding of the elements of drama
- Structure of the drama:
  - brevity of the play, Macbeth’s speaking half of the lines, play’s reflection of a “race against time,” quick decision-making, the power of bloodlust.
- Understanding of literary devices
- Introduction to Aristotelian tragedy
- Exploration of themes:
  - fantasy, ambition, sense of imagination, freedom and fortune, terror, human nature, time, bloodlust
- Character analyses of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth:
  - antithesis of the characters, their imaginations and wills, their opinions and actions “before and after” the first murder
- Analyses of passages

Materials
- *Macbeth* by William Shakespeare (Copies will be supplied by the school.)
- *Macbeth* – film by Roman Polanski
- Related works: poetry, current events.
- *Shakespeare Set Free: Reading Romeo and Juliet, Macbeth, Midsummer Night’s Dream*, by Peggy O’Brien
- Visual texts such as John Gregory’s bas relief *Macbeth*

Assignments and Assessments
- Reading and annotating play.
- Keeping a log of acts as described by *Shakespeare Set Free*
- Application of knowledge of rhetoric to a pivotal scene.
- Group and individual analyses of passages.
- Written and oral paraphrases of passages.
- Exploration of themes: ambition, greed, rationalization, imagination.
- Preparing scenes for performance
  - Students will perform *Act I, Scene 7*, focusing on voice quality and body language to further understand the “arguments” in the speeches.

- **Major Assessment**
  - Students will write an essay in which they analyze the rhetoric of both Macbeth and Lady Macbeth, specifically their arguments in *Act I, Scene 7* and explain why and how Macbeth is persuaded by his wife to murder King Duncan. Students will consider the following: the use of appeals, choice of details, and audience. Students must carefully consider and thoughtfully discuss two related excerpts from the scene.
Concurrent Assignments

• **Media Journal**
  - Each week students will read a commentary, editorial, op-ed piece, or other opinion from a valued newspaper or magazine and evaluate the strategies and the strengths of the arguments in writing in their media journals. Periodically, one of these “arguments” may be used for a Socratic Seminar. A list of newspapers and periodicals will be suggested.

• **Vocabulary**
  - Each week students will study, test, and use 10 vocabulary words from the Sadlier-Oxford *Vocabulary Workshop, New Edition, Level G.*

• **Grammar Review and Syntax Exercises**
  - In the revision stage students will engage in grammar lessons and syntax exercises based on teacher findings in their essays. The most consistent grammar problems include pronoun/antecedent agreement and punctuation.

• **Independent Reading and Reading of Critical Analysis**
  - Each marking period students will read an independent novel or a biography or autobiography. They will subsequently read critical analyses of their chosen works and respond with their own short written analyses, synthesizing views from two or three sources. (Most of these students will go to AP English Literature in their senior year; this assignment affords them the opportunity to broaden their reading experiences and practice writing about literature.)

• **Socratic Seminars**
  - Through a modeling of Socrates’ *dialectic* method, students are able to examine opinions and ideas, pose questions, think critically, and participate in an exploratory dialogue. Engaging in the Socratic Seminar aids students in listening to others, formulating a stand, assessing evidence, and weighing the validity of a position.

• **Research Skills**
  - In short assignments throughout the year (media journal, essay, literary analysis) students will be asked to sharpen their research skills of gathering information, evaluating sources, synthesizing information, citation, and documentation.

• **List of Rhetorical Devices and Literary Terms**
  - Students will be given an extensive list of strategies, devices, and terms. The list includes rhetorical strategies as well as specific literary terms—
language culled from the AP multiple-choice tests and prompts. They will define and exemplify each term and in daily discussions use the language of writing.

- **Practice Timed Writings**
  - Students will practice periodic timed writings from the AP released essay prompts—expository/analytical, argumentative, and synthesis. The subjects or themes of the essay prompts will be coordinated with the readings from the text or the fiction studies. After each writing, students will use the released rubric and read the released samples to evaluate their writing and plan for improvements or revisions.

- **Practice Multiple-choice Tests**
  - Students will practice taking the AP released multiple-choice tests, beginning with an introductory test at the beginning of the school year and additional periodic testing with more practices in the second semester.
  - Students will review answers to assess their performance in analyzing rhetorical passages and the use of language to create meaning.
Bibliography


O'Brien, Peggy. Shakespeare Set Free.


