

**Takoma Academy English Department**  
**Advanced Placement Language and Composition**

Instructor: Ms. Ericka Blackwell

Class time: Period 3

Classroom: 3

Office hours: By appointment

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**Course Description:**

Welcome to AP English Language and Composition. This course is designed to teach the skills you will need to succeed in a college level writing course and will follow the curricular requirements described in the AP Language and Composition Course Description published by the College Board. You should expect to discuss some aspect of writing or the writing process every day. We will work together to develop an extensive vocabulary, integrating a wide variety of word-attack skills, so that we can discuss writing and literature in a more precise and efficient manner. You will be asked to write critically on multiple works of literature, proving your ability to understand, explain, and evaluate. You should expect to revise many of your essays throughout the year.

As this is a college level course, you should be competent writers and recognize that the workload is both challenging and places a high level of expectation on you with regard to performance. With the long term nature of many of the projects and assigned readings, effective time management is crucial. You should be prepared to participate in daily small group and whole class discussion and should be active contributors to our process of creating meaning. You should have your own voice in class, and, at the same time, respect the contributions of your classmates. You may disagree with their interpretation; however, you should state your disagreement in a manner that is conducive to literary debate rather than personal opposition.

We anticipate this to be an exciting year, filled with active engagement, learning, and preparation for the future, a journey upon which we will embark together!

**Course Objectives:**

1.) Students will learn to write in a variety of forms including, but not limited to, analytical, argumentative, expository, and narrative styles. Essay topics will address a variety of issues including personal experience, popular culture, and public policies. The assigned topics will represent a variety of prose styles and genres.

2.) Students will be required to learn the process of drafting and revision along with peer editing procedures. A focus of this process will be to develop reflective skills and apply these strategies to their own individual writing, addressing strengths and weaknesses and determining what comprises quality work.

3.) Students will keep journals for the purpose of informal responses to both the literature we read as well as their own writing, focusing on the process and the techniques of writing, bearing in mind the relationship between the author's style and purpose.

4.) Students will be exposed to a variety of fiction and non-fiction readings with the purpose of analyzing the relationship between style and purpose. Students will examine and discuss writers' choices of rhetorical strategies in an effort to understand the correlation between these selections and the intent.

5.) Students will practice the analysis of a variety of visual images in an effort to understand the importance of visual literacy in today's world.

6.) Students will work collaboratively to conduct research culminating in the synthesis of various collected data and the relationship of this data to a given position on an issue of social or historical relevance. A focus of this research will be on the collection and proper citing of sources consistent with the Modern Language Association.

7.) With teacher's assistance and input, students will revise writing assignments as they continue to hone their skills in a variety of writing techniques including, but not limited to, the following:

a. Vocabulary enhancement

b. Sentence structure variety.

c. Use of transitions and repetition

d. Use of both general and specific support to create a balanced and well organized argument

e. Diction, syntax, tone, and voice

### **Assignments:**

1.) Reading: All students will be required to complete a variety of outside reading assignments so that they are prepared to participate in daily class activities directly related to the reading. Due dates will be given in advance and students are expected to adhere to these guidelines. Students should schedule daily time to read for this course.

2.) Writing: Students are to understand that writing is integral to mastery of the course objectives and each student will be required to practice a variety of writing styles. Teacher, peer, and individual evaluations will be ongoing and formative in nature.

3.) Participation: Participation is a key component to our English course. Students will be expected to contribute in class discussion reflecting on both literary content and structure and the writing process.

4.) Assessment: A variety of assessment strategies will be used in determining grades including, but not limited to, teacher, peer, and individual input.

### **Required Readings:**

#### **The Language of Composition (textbook)**

A Raisin in the Sun by Lorraine Hansberry

\*There will be excerpts for students to read from various authors in the textbook and found online.

### **Required Writings:**

AP ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION WRITING UNITS Note: These correspond with the various writing modes that students are expected to master on the AP English Language and Composition Exam. Former AP prompts and teacher-created prompts will serve as models for student practice. Teachers will provide instructional hand-outs to aid students in mastering these various AP modes. When appropriate, selections will be taken from the various literature covered in this course for further reinforcement of key concepts.

Analytical

Essential Question: What various styles do authors employ to achieve different purposes in writing?

Comparison

Essential Question: What similarities and differences exist between short passages that distinguish them as unique in both style and purpose?

Argumentative

Essential Questions: Why is it important to recognize that there are often two sides to every issue? Why is it important to be able to take a stand (defend, challenge, or qualify) on a given issue?

Synthesis

Essential Questions: How can one synthesize various pieces (often in history or science) to come to an informed position on an issue (defend, challenge, or qualify)?

### **Journal Writing Opportunities:**

Students will respond informally in their journals, which will be posted electronically on wordpress.com, to a quote selected from the current unit of study. In addition, students will be asked to periodically critique their own writing progress and respond collectively to other assigned topics. Students will use these journal writings as springboards for small group discussion focusing on style and theme.

### **Informative Articles:**

Students will weekly turn in summaries of weekly articles they have read. The articles must consist of 250-300 words. The student must be able to identify the author, not a website as author. Student must identify the audience and context of the article. This is an analytical piece and summative. More instructions will be given by instructor.

### **Student Evaluation**

The grading system for the English Department at Takoma Academy is as follows:

<b>Attendance</b>	<b>5%</b>
<b>Listening and Speaking</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>Language</b>	<b>25%</b>
<b>Writing</b>	<b>25%</b>
<b>Reading</b>	<b>25%</b>

### **Grading**

Rubrics will be provided for writing pieces and projects for each student via electronically and paper. Late work from an unexcused tardy or absence will receive a starting grade of 50% less than the max points for the assignment. The grade will go down an additional 10% until it has reached a final grade of zero. If the absence or tardy is excused then the student is required to meet with the teacher on the first day back in the class to schedule new assignment due dates. If student doesn't meet with teacher on return the assignment will result in a zero.

### **Keep in Mind!**

For the opportunity to receive all possible points, assignments must be turned in neatly written or typed (depending on criteria) on clean, straight edged paper. The student's name (first and last), class code, and due date must be written/typed, in the top right corner as a heading for the assignment. Handwriting that the instructor cannot read will automatically be considered unacceptable, and the information will immediately be considered incorrect.

### **Attendance Policy**

Regular and prompt class attendance is an essential part of the educational experience. Takoma Academy expects students to exercise good judgment regarding attendance and absences. Students will accept full responsibility for ensuring their work does not suffer because of absences. All students are expected to attend every scheduled class on time. Exceptions may be made for illness and valid emergencies. Please see Student Handbook on attendance policy for the teacher will adhere to this policy for unexcused and excused tardies and absences.

## **Classroom Expectations**

1. Students will come to class on time prepared and ready to learn.
2. Students will complete all assignments, including homework, by all deadlines. Make-up work is only accepted after an excused absence. It is your responsibility to see me for your work before or after school. (Please refer to Student Handbook.)
3. All students will be silent and respectful while other students read aloud.
4. The teachers and students will work together for a respectful, safe classroom.
5. Participation in class discussions will enhance all students' learning experiences.
6. Students are expected to have all assigned readings completed; this may require some reading to be completed outside of the classroom.
7. Cell phones, iPods, tablets of any brand, laptops, mp3 players, and any other personal items are prohibited in class at any time.
8. Students will meet once a week outside of class period with teachers to review concepts. This is mandatory attendance. The exact day is TBA.
9. Students will take weekly AP practice test for a grade.

## **Class Requirements**

Students will be required to complete and pass writing assignments, research projects, tests/exams, and homework. Students will also be required to read outside of class, participate meaningfully and respectfully in classroom discussions, maintain good attendance, have a respectful and positive attitude, and come to class ready to learn! Each student is required to turn assignments on time on Edmodo and maintain their blog sites on wordpress.com.

## **Rewrite Policy**

Students are allotted 3 redoes on assessments per semester. This doesn't include homework or class assignments. Please follow the Student Handbook on the steps to obtaining an assessment redo.

## **Plagiarism, Cheating, and Academic Integrity**

Plagiarism is the practice of copying words, sentences, images, or ideas for use in written or oral assessments without giving proper credit to the source. Cheating is defined as the giving or receiving of illegal help on anything that has been determined by the teacher to be an

individual effort. Both are considered serious offenses and will significantly affect your course grade. Please refer to the Student Handbook.

### **Methodology**

A combination of lecture, class discussion, warm-ups, exit tickets, journals, CNN10, pop quizzes, short answer essays, papers, presentations, videos, cooperative learning, and problem-based learning will be used in this course. Grades will be determined by the satisfactory and timely completion of assignments. The grade of each assignment is based on the prerequisite given for each assignment.

Please acknowledge that you have read and understand the information explained above.

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Student Signature

Print Name

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Parent/Guardian Signature

Print Name