



# AP English LITERATURE and COMPOSITION



Respectable Senior,

Welcome to AP English Literature and Composition ('AP Lit'). This is a challenging class, but you may already know that by reputation. You find succor in 'Comp' and pick up the same college credit or flounce through English IV Honors and earn the same quality point, but you know that universities smile most kindly on students who don't shy away from AP courses. In fact, one of the most reliable predictors of college success (in the eyes of university admission officials) is a high school student's performance in AP courses; a B or higher in 3 or more AP courses makes you highly desirable to universities. While you could be doing anything else with this portion of your pivotal senior year, you choose to challenge yourself as a learner by enrolling in AP Literature. For that, I respect you.

By the way, **bentonenglish.com** is the class website. Despite its deceptively narcissistic name, it's designed to be quite useful to you. Expect weekly schedule updates, downloadable handouts, e-texts, audio-texts, and other swanky resources shall to be at your disposal.

I am strict in a few ways: papers and journals need to be at school by the due date even if you are not. My definition of "cheating" is also very broad. If you write something, you are personally guaranteeing that it is an idea of your own creation. Even closely imitating another human's language, thoughts, ideas, or expressions and representing them as your own original work is an intellectual, academic, and moral failure. Zeros, referrals, banishment from honor societies, a general fall from grace, and blacklisting by legitimate universities are all reasonable (and probable) consequences for an individual who sins in this way. Approach this course with a teachable mindset: as an opportunity to improve your academic writing.

If you endured AP Language (not at all necessary in order to succeed in this course, though many of its concepts do carry over quite well), you recall that course's exam focusing on rhetoric: specifically non-fiction. The AP Literature exam is a wholly different beast. To succeed – that is, to avoid wasting your time – you'll need to be comfortable reading challenging literature on a very analytical level. No matter the text, you must be capable of considering its structure, style, figurative language, imagery, symbolism, tone, and themes. I will help with this.

That said, you *must* do the assigned reading to succeed in this class. I truly mean that. Once we start on new texts by the second or third week of class, you'll receive a detailed reading schedule that asks you read about 15 minutes a day. As helpful as Google and all the digitized collective ideas of the human race are, you will never finish this race if you shoot yourself in the foot with the starter's pistol.

You've (hopefully) read all sorts of literature already in your academic career. For this year's class, there are about a dozen diverse works that I've selected to add to your literary arsenal; all of them require unhurried, careful reading. You will truly reap what you sow.

Within this packet you'll find the College Board's **Curricular Requirements** for this course, a **Course Description**, a **Wish List** of supplies I am shamelessly begging for, and a mandatory **Student Contract**. After reading this packet thoroughly, please detach and return the **Syllabus Agreement** by Thursday, August 22<sup>nd</sup>, or within three school days of your receipt of this packet.

Mr. Benton

## **Curricular Requirements**

**C.1 -** The teacher has read and will fully abide by the most recent *AP English Course Description*, available as a free download on the AP English Literature and Composition Course Home Page.

**C.2 -** The course includes an intensive study of representative works such as those by authors cited in the *AP English Course Description*. (Note: The College Board does not mandate any particular authors or reading list.) The choice of works for the AP course is made by the school in relation to the school's overall English curriculum sequence, so that by the time the student completes AP English Literature and Composition, he or she will have studied during high school literature from both British and American writers as well as works written in several genres from the sixteenth century to contemporary times. The works selected for the course should require careful, deliberative reading that yields multiple meanings.

**C.3 -** The course teaches students to write an interpretation of a piece of literature that is based on a careful observation of textual detail, considering the following:

- The work's structure, style, and themes
- Social and historical values that the work reflects and embodies
- Elements of the work such as the use of figurative language, imagery, symbolism, and tone

**C.4 -** The course includes frequent opportunities for students to write and rewrite formal, extended analyses and timed, in-class responses. The course requires:

- Writing to understand: informal, exploratory writing activities that enable students to discover what they think in the process of writing about their reading (such assignments could include annotation, free-writing, keeping a reading journal, and response/reaction papers)
- Writing to explain: expository, analytical, essays in which students draw upon textual details to develop an extended explanation/interpretation of the meanings of a literary text.
- Writing to evaluate: analytical, argumentative essays in which students draw upon textual details to make and explain judgments about a work's artistry and quality, and its social and cultural values

**C.5 -** 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:

- 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 emphasis through diction and sentence structure

## **Course Description**

Welcome to your senior year and to Advanced Placement English Literature and Composition. You will find this course to be a challenge to your thought process, your writing skills, and probably to your time management, but I feel sure you will rise to the occasion and prove yourselves to be true AP scholars.

The focus of this course is the reading and analysis of good literature. The course includes an intensive study of representative works such as those by authors cited in the AP English Literature Course Description (C.1). We will cover a diverse selection of literature and will deal with works that are from a variety of genres and different periods of time, from the sixteenth century to the twenty-first (C.2). You will be asked to write interpretations of the literature based on careful observation of textual detail and will be asked to consider the work's structure, style, and themes. We will also focus on such elements as figurative language, imagery, symbolism, and tone (C.3).

You will do extensive journaling on topics related to the works we study, and continuous journaling is a requirement of the class. You will also write a few formal essays in this course (C.4). These must be typed and in proper MLA format. In class, you will also be given ample opportunity to write timed responses to AP prompts as you prepare for the exam in May. We will focus on developing an effective vocabulary with which to discuss literature, on using a variety of sentence structures, including the proper use of subordination, on using logical organization, and on the effective use of textual quotation (C.5).

While it is not mandatory that you buy your own copy (since some lenders are available), it is a highly recommended practice so that you can mark up the text, make marginal notes, and tab sections (C.2). The following texts will be used in class this year:

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|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Edith Hamilton – <i>Mythology</i>        | <input type="checkbox"/> Cormac McCarthy – <i>The Road</i>          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Herman Hesse – <i>Siddhartha</i>         | <input type="checkbox"/> Arthur Miller – <i>Death of a Salesman</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Charlotte Brontë – <i>Jane Eyre</i>      | <input type="checkbox"/> Samuel Beckett - <i>Waiting for Godot</i>  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mary Shelley – <i>Frankenstein</i>       | <input type="checkbox"/> Albert Camus - <i>The Stranger</i>         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> William Shakespeare – <i>Hamlet</i>      |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Alan Moore – <i>Watchmen</i>             |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ian McEwan – <i>Atonement</i>            |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Joseph Conrad – <i>Heart of Darkness</i> |   |

### **Textbook:**

Carol Jago ed. - *Literature & Composition: Reading, Writing, Thinking* (Bedford/St. Martin's, 2011)

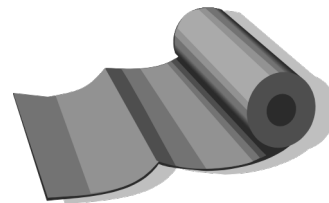
## Wish List

There are some supplies that are useful for the classroom and teacher that are not supplied by the school. Some of these needs are:

- HP #21 print cartridges
- hand sanitizer
- disinfecting wipes



- paper towels
- 5-hour Energy Shots



## Student Contract

As a student of Mr. Benton's AP Literature course, I agree to the following class policies regarding absences, late work, tutoring, completion of assignments, required supplies, computer access, and academic honesty:

### **Absences**

It is completely the **student's responsibility** to obtain "make-up work" and to set up with Mr. Benton a time before or after school to make up quizzes, in-class essays, notes (if necessary), or to receive any other information missed due to an absence. If a student has missed a class, he or she should refer to the agenda available in class, in his or her planner, and on [bentonenglish.com](http://bentonenglish.com). However, if the student has questions about the assignment, has missed notes, or has missed an assessment of some sort (e.g. quiz, essay), he/she will have to talk with Mr. Benton before or after (but not during) class or contact him via email. If a student is absent for a quiz, he or she has exactly five school days to make it up before that task's grade is permanently entered as a zero.

### **Lateness**

To be considered "on time," assigned homework must be turned in within the first few minutes of class. Assignments that are one day late will receive a **50%-off** penalty. Work that is over one day late will not be awarded a grade. The exceptions to this rule are some long-term assignments (e.g. journal assignments, typed papers) for which 15-40% (varying at the teacher's discretion) will be deducted for each late day. If a student arrives to school late, it's expected that he or she turn in any assigned work to Mr. Benton during the school day as soon as is humanly possible.

Major assignments (such as journals or papers) must be turned in on the due date **regardless** of whether or not the student is present. In these cases, work may be submitted online or emailed in on the due date.

It should be noted that Mr. Benton is a creature of mercy, and this will be explained further in class.

### **Tutoring**

Mr. Benton is available after school (exact days and times TBA) for tutoring in regards to this course. By signing this syllabus, the student acknowledges the availability of tutoring and agrees to make use of the teacher's time if this course causes academic concern.

## Completion

An AP student is expected to fully complete each assignment issued with an honest level of effort, focus, and time. It is not an option to simply skip an assignment or to choose to “take a bad grade” for shoddy or incomplete work. If an assignment is not turned in or if it is deemed unacceptably incomplete, the student may be issued an **academic referral** (for violating the terms of this syllabus) to SPHS administration. In this case, the student will fully and adequately complete the work for no grade.

## Supplies

While other items that do not appear in this list may be required intermittently throughout the course by teacher request, the following materials are required of all AP Literature students on a daily basis:

- Composition book** (college rule preferred)
- Notebook paper** (college rule preferred)
- Blue or black pens** (pencils are terrible)
- Highlighters** (multiple colors are helpful for marking texts)
- Folder/binder** (to store handouts, notes, graded work, etc.)
- Currently assigned text(s)**

## Computers

Throughout the school year, students will be producing many typed journal responses. These assignments must often be submitted digitally to Turnitin.com on the due date. (Hard copies will also be due from time to time; students may print these in class if necessary.) If a student does not reliably have at least weekly access an internet-connected computer, the student must notify Mr. Benton of this reality within the first week of the course. Students are also encouraged to access the class website at [bentonenglish.com](http://bentonenglish.com) for immediate access to the class schedule and downloadable handouts. Mr. Benton’s email address is [bentonro@pcsb.org](mailto:bentonro@pcsb.org), and students are urged to make use of his expedited priority responses to AP students.

## Honesty

Academic dishonesty includes all forms of cheating (giving or receiving) and plagiarism as outlined in SPHS’s AP Honor Code. If a student turns in an assignment, it is a personal guarantee that it is an idea of his/her own creation. Even closely imitating the language, thoughts, ideas, or expressions of another human (whether he or she be a classmate or an anonymous denizen of the internet) and submitting those words as one’s own original work without giving due credit or using proper MLA citation is an intellectual, academic, and moral failure. See [plagiarism.org](http://plagiarism.org) and the Plagiarism Notes provided in the first week of class for more information. Aside from possible removal from this AP course, the following consequences are also considered reasonable and will be the **expected results** in any case of a student’s academic dishonesty:

- a **zero** on the assignment
- academic referrals**
- blacklisting by legitimate **universities**
- probation/banishment from **NHS**
- required **completion** of the assignment for no credit



### Student Info

Email address:

Cell phone:

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Who was your English teacher last year?

What has been the most frustrating aspect of your high school English classes thus far?

Why are you enrolled in AP Lit?

What clubs/organizations/teams/cabals/posses are you currently involved with at SPHS?

What are your current plans after graduation?

(Aside from a high grade and AP exam score) what do you hope to get out of this class?

Explain your biggest motivation to do well in school.

Do you have reliable access to an internet-connected computer at least once a week? (If not, please explain.)