



# AP® English Literature and Composition

**COURSE AND EXAM DESCRIPTION** 

Effective Fall 2020

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# Introduction

In the AP English Literature and Composition course, students devote themselves to the study of literary works written in—or translated into—English. Careful reading and critical analysis of such works of fiction, drama, and poetry, selected locally by responsible educators, provide rich opportunities for students to develop an appreciation of ways literature reflects and comments on a range of experiences, institutions, and social structures. Students will examine the choices literary writers make and the techniques they utilize to achieve purposes and generate meanings.

To support these objectives, this AP English Literature and Composition Course and Exam Description delineates the knowledge and skills colleges and universities typically expect students to demonstrate in order to receive credit for an introductory college literature course and placement into a higher-level literature course.

This publication is not a curriculum. Teachers create their own curricula by selecting and sequencing the texts and tasks that will enable students to develop the knowledge and skills outlined in this document. In some cases, teachers also need to meet certain state or local requirements within the AP curriculum they develop for their school. The objective of this publication is to provide teachers with clarity regarding the content and skills students should learn in order to qualify for college credit and placement. The AP Program recognizes that the real craft is in the skill with which teachers develop and deliver instruction.

Students develop the skills of literary analysis and composition as they repeatedly practice analyzing poetry and prose, then compose arguments about an interpretation of a literary work. As a model for teachers, the course content and skills are presented in nine units. Across these nine units, the content and skills increase in challenge and complexity, with students receiving

repeated opportunities to develop and apply analysis and composition skills to specific genres of literature (short fiction, poetry, novels, and plays). The objective of this unit structure is to respect new AP teachers' time by suggesting one possible sequence they can adapt rather than build from scratch.

An additional benefit is that these units enable the AP Program to provide interested teachers with formative assessments—the Personal Progress Checks—that they can assign their students at the end of each unit to gauge progress toward success on the AP Exam. However, experienced AP teachers who are pleased with their current course organization and results should feel no pressure to adopt these units, which comprise an optional, not mandatory, sequence for this course.

Teachers who prefer to organize their course by themes, integrating works of poetry and short and long prose in several thematic investigations of their choice (e.g., humanity and nature; industry and technology; family and community), can easily combine two or more of the units in this volume. They can avail themselves of the scaffolded skill progressions detailed in each unit to help focus their students' learning and practice and then assign students the relevant Personal Progress Checks for that group of units.

# **Course Framework Components**

# **Overview**

This course framework provides a description of what students should know and be able to do to qualify for college credit or placement.

# The course framework includes the following components:

# **1** BIG IDEAS AND ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS

The big ideas are cross-cutting concepts that build conceptual understanding and spiral throughout the units of the course. The enduring understandings are the long-term takeaways related to the big ideas.

# 2 COURSE SKILLS

The course skills, and their related essential knowledge statements, are the content of this course. They describe what students should know and be able to do by the end of the course.

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# AP ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION

# Big Ideas and Enduring Understandings

The big ideas serve as the foundation of the AP English Literature and Composition course and enable students to create meaningful connections among course concepts. They are threads that run throughout the course and revisiting them and applying them in a variety of contexts helps students to develop deeper conceptual understanding. Below are the big ideas of the course, along with the enduring understanding associated with each one:

# **CHARACTER (CHR)**

**Enduring Understanding CHR-1:** Characters in literature allow readers to study and explore a range of values, beliefs, assumptions, biases, and cultural norms represented by those characters.

# **SETTING (SET)**

**Enduring Understanding SET-1:** Setting and the details associated with it not only depict a time and place, but also convey values associated with that setting.

# **STRUCTURE (STR)**

**Enduring Understanding STR-1:** The arrangement of the parts and sections of a text, the relationship of the parts to each other, and the sequence in which the text reveals information are all structural choices made by a writer that contribute to the reader's interpretation of a text.

#### **NARRATION (NAR)**

**Enduring Understanding NAR-1:** A narrator's or speaker's perspective controls the details and emphases that affect how readers experience and interpret a text.

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# **FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE (FIG)**

Enduring Understanding FIG-1: Comparisons, representations, and associations shift meaning from the literal to the figurative and invite readers to interpret a text.

# **LITERARY ARGUMENTATION (LAN)**

Enduring Understanding LAN-1: Readers establish and communicate their interpretations of literature through arguments supported by textual evidence.

# UNITS

The course content is organized into units that have been arranged in a logical sequence. This sequence has been developed through feedback from educators as well as analysis of high school and college courses and textbooks.

The nine units in AP English Literature and Composition scaffold skills and knowledge through three genrebased, recurring units. The units are listed below along with their approximate weighting on the exam.

Pacing recommendations shown within the Course at a Glance and the unit guides provide suggestions for how to teach the course content and administer the Personal Progress Checks. The suggested class periods are based on a schedule in which the class meets five days a week for 45 minutes each day. While these recommendations have been made to aid planning, teachers should of course adjust the pacing based on the needs of their students, alternate schedules (e.g., block scheduling), or their school's academic calendar.

Units	Exam Weighting
Short Fiction (Units 1, 4, 7)	42-49%
Poetry (Units 2, 5, 8)	36–45%
Longer Fiction or Drama (Units 3, 6, 9)	15–18%

# Spiraling the Big Ideas The following table shows how the big ideas spiral across units.

Big Ideas	Unit 1	Unit 2	Unit 3	Unit 4	Unit 5	Unit 6	Unit 7	Unit 8	Unit 9
<b>©</b>	Short Fiction I	Poetry I	Longer Fiction or Drama I	Short Fiction II	Poetry II	Longer Fiction or Drama II	Short Fiction III	Poetry III	Longer Fiction or Drama III
Character CHR	<b>&gt;</b>	<b>&gt;</b>	5	<b>&gt;</b>		•	•		•
Setting	•		5	5			5		
Structure STR	•	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Narration NAR	•			5		•	5		•
Figurative Language		•			•	•	•	•	
Literary Argumentation LAN	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•

# AP ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION

# Course Skills

The table that follows presents the AP English Literature and Composition skills, which form the basis of the tasks on the AP Exam. The unit guides later in this publication pair these skills with essential knowledge statements that describe what students should learn through study of the literary works the teacher selects for this course.

More information about teaching the course skills can be found in the Instructional Approaches section.



# AP English Literature and Composition Skills

# Course at a Glance

# Plan

The Course at a Glance provides a useful visual organization of the AP English Literature and Composition curricular components, including:

- Sequence of units, along with suggested pacing. Please note that pacing is based on 45-minute class periods, meeting five days each week, for a full academic year.
- Progression of skills within each unit.
- Spiraling of the big ideas and skills across units.

# Teach

#### SKILL CATEGORIES

Skill categories spiral across units.

- 1 Explain the function of character.
- 2 Explain the
- function of setting.
- 3 Explain the function of plot and structure.
- 4 Explain the function of the narrator or speaker.
- 5 Explain the function of word choice, imagery, and symbols.
- 6 Explain the function of comparison.
- 7 Develop textually substantiated arguments about interpretations of part or all of a text.

## **BIG IDEAS**

Big ideas spiral across units.

- **CHR** Character
- FIG Figurative Language
- S**≢T** Setting STR Structure
- LAN Literary Argumentation
- NAR Narration

# Assess

Assign the Personal Progress Checks—either as homework or in class—for each unit. Each Personal Progress Check contains formative multiple-choice and free-response questions. The feedback from the Personal Progress Checks shows students the areas where they need to focus.

**NOTE:** Partial versions of the free-response questions are provided to prepare students for more complex, full questions that they will encounter on the AP Exam.



# **Short Fiction I**

## ~10 Class Periods

- **1.A** Identify and describe what specific textual details reveal about a character, that character's perspective, and that character's motives.
- SET **2.A** Identify and describe specific textual details that convey or reveal a setting.
- 3.A Identify and describe STR how plot orders events in a narrative.
- **3.B** Explain the function of a STR particular sequence of events in a plot.
- 4.A Identify and describe the narrator or speaker of a text.
- NAR 4.B Identify and explain the function of point of view in a narrative.
- LAN **7.A** Develop a paragraph that includes 1) a claim that requires defense with evidence from the text and 2) the evidence itself.

# Poetry I

# ~10 Class Periods

- **1.A** Identify and describe what specific textual details reveal about a character, that character's perspective, and that character's motives.
- **3.C** Explain the function of STR structure in a text.
- **3.D** Explain the function of contrasts within a text.
- FIG **5.B** Explain the function of specific words and phrases in a text.
- FIG **6.A** Identify and explain the function of a simile.
- FIG **6.B** Identify and explain the function of a metaphor.

LAN

**7.A** Develop a paragraph that includes 1) a claim that requires defense with evidence from the text and 2) the evidence itself.

# Personal Progress Check 1

ONLINE ONLY

Multiple-choice: ~20 questions

ONLINE OR PAPER

Free-response: 2 passages with shorter task

Contemporary Prose: short story excerpt or microfiction (partial)

#### Personal Progress Check 2

ONLINE ONLY

Multiple-choice: ~20 questions

ONLINE OR PAPER

Free-response: 2 passages with shorter task

20th-Century/Contemporary Poetry (partial)



# Longer Fiction or Drama I

# UNIT 4

# **Short Fiction II**

# **5**

# Poetry II

## ~17 Class Periods

# specific textual details reveal about a character, that character's perspective, and that character's motives.

- 1.B Explain the function of a character changing or remaining unchanged.
- 2.A Identify and describe specific textual details that convey or reveal a setting.
- 3.E Explain the function of a significant event or related set of significant events in a plot.
- **3.F** Explain the function of conflict in a text.
- 7.A Develop a paragraph that includes 1) a claim that requires defense with evidence from the text and 2) the evidence itself.
- 7.B Develop a thesis statement that conveys a defensible claim about an interpretation of literature and that may establish a line of reasoning.
- 7.C Develop commentary that establishes and explains relationships among textual evidence, the line of reasoning, and the thesis.
- 7.D Select and use relevant and sufficient evidence to both develop and support a line of reasoning.
- 7.E Demonstrate control over the elements of composition to communicate clearly.

# ~17 Class Periods

- specific textual details reveal about a character, that character's perspective, and that character's motives.
- **CHR 1.C** Explain the function of contrasting characters.
- 1.D Describe how textual details reveal nuances and complexities in characters' relationships with one another.
- **2.B** Explain the function of setting in a narrative.
- 2.C Describe the relationship between a character and a setting.
- **3.A** Identify and describe how plot orders events in a narrative.
- **3.D** Explain the function of contrasts within a text.
- **4.A** Identify and describe the narrator or speaker of a text.
- **4.B** Identify and explain the function of point of view in a narrative.
- 4.C Identify and describe details, diction, or syntax in a text that reveal a narrator's or speaker's perspective.
- 7.B Develop a thesis statement that conveys a defensible claim about an interpretation of literature and that may establish a line of reasoning.
- 7.C Develop commentary that establishes and explains relationships among textual evidence, the line of reasoning, and the thesis.
- 7.D Select and use relevant and sufficient evidence to both develop and support a line of reasoning.
- 7.E Demonstrate control over the elements of composition to communicate clearly.

# ~17 Class Periods

- **3.C** Explain the function of structure in a text.
- 5 Distinguish between the literal and figurative meanings of words and phrases.
- **5.B** Explain the function of specific words and phrases in a text.
- **5.D** Identify and explain the function of an image or imagery.
- 6 6.B Identify and explain the function of a metaphor.
- **6.C** Identify and explain the function of personification.
- **6.D** Identify and explain the function of an allusion.
- 7.B Develop a thesis statement that conveys a defensible claim about an interpretation of literature and that may establish a line of reasoning.
- 7.C Develop commentary that establishes and explains relationships among textual evidence, the line of reasoning, and the thesis.
- 7.D Select and use relevant and sufficient evidence to both develop and support a line of reasoning.
- 7.E Demonstrate control over the elements of composition to communicate clearly.

# Personal Progress Check 3

ONLINE ONLY

Multiple-choice: ~20 questions

ONLINE OR PAPER

# Free-response: 2 questions

- 20th-Century/Contemporary Prose (partial)
- Literary Argument

#### Personal Progress Check 4

ONLINE ONLY

Multiple-choice: ~30 questions

ONLINE OR PAPER

# Free-response: 1 question

 20th-Century/Contemporary Prose (partial)

# Personal Progress Check 5

ONLINE ONLY

Multiple-choice: ~25 questions

ONLINE OR PAPER

# Free-response: 1 question

■ Pre-20th-Century Poetry



# **Longer Fiction** or Drama II

# ~17 Class Periods

- 1.A Identify and describe what specific textual details reveal about a character, that character's perspective, and that character's motives.
- **1.C** Explain the function of contrasting characters.
- **1.E** Explain how a character's CHR own choices, actions, and speech reveal complexities in that character, and explain the function of those complexities.
- **3.A** Identify and describe how plot orders events in a narrative.
- 3.B Explain the function of a STR particular sequence of events in a plot.
- **3.D** Explain the function of contrasts within a text.
- **4.C** Identify and describe details, NAR diction, or syntax in a text that reveal a narrator's or speaker's perspective.
- **4.D** Explain how a narrator's reliability affects a narrative.
- **5.C** Identify and explain the FIG function of a symbol.
- LAN **7.B** Develop a thesis statement that conveys a defensible claim about an interpretation of literature and that may establish a line of reasoning.
- LAN **7.C** Develop commentary that establishes and explains relationships among textual evidence, the line of reasoning, and the thesis.
- LAN 7.D Select and use relevant and sufficient evidence to both develop and support a line of reasoning.
- **7.E** Demonstrate control over the LAN elements of composition to communicate clearly.

# **Short Fiction III**

## ~17 Class Periods

- **1.B** Explain the function of a character changing or remaining unchanged.
- **1.D** Describe how textual CHR details reveal nuances and complexities in characters' relationships with one another.
- 2.B Explain the function of setting in a narrative. 2
- SET **2.C** Describe the relationship between a character and a setting.
- 3.A Identify and describe how plot STR orders events in a narrative.
- STR 3.B Explain the function of a particular sequence of events in a plot.
- NAR 4.D Explain how a narrator's reliability affects a narrative.
- 5.C Identify and explain the function of a symbol.
- 5.D Identify and explain the function of an image 5 or imagery.
- **6.A** Identify and explain the FIG function of a simile.
- 6.C Identify and explain the FIG function of personification.
- LAN **7.B** Develop a thesis statement that conveys a defensible claim about an interpretation of literature and that may establish a line of reasoning.
- 7.C Develop commentary that LAN establishes and explains relationships among textual evidence, the line of reasoning, and the thesis.
- 7.D Select and use relevant and sufficient evidence to both develop and support a line of reasoning.

# **Poetry III**

# ~17 Class Periods

- **3.C** Explain the function of structure in a text.
- STR **3.D** Explain the function of contrasts within a text.
- **5.B** Explain the function of FIG specific words and phrases in 5
- **5.C** Identify and explain the function of a symbol.
- FIG 6.B Identify and explain the function of a metaphor.
- FIG 6.D Identify and explain the function of an allusion.
- LAN **7.B** Develop a thesis statement that conveys a defensible claim about an interpretation of literature and that may establish a line of reasoning.
- LAN **7.C** Develop commentary that establishes and explains relationships among textual evidence, the line of reasoning, and the thesis.
- LAN 7.D Select and use relevant and sufficient evidence to both develop and support a line of reasoning.
  - **7.E** Demonstrate control over the elements of composition to communicate clearly.

#### Personal Progress Check 6

ONLINE ONLY

Multiple-choice: ~25 questions

ONLINE OR PAPER

# Free-response: 2 questions

- Pre-20th-Century Prose
- Literary Argument

#### Personal Progress Check 7

ONLINE ONLY

Multiple-choice: ~35 questions

ONLINE OR PAPER

Free-response: 1 question Contemporary Prose

#### Personal Progress Check 8

ONLINE ONLY

Multiple-choice: ~20 questions

ONLINE OR PAPER

Free-response: 1 question

Metaphysical Poem

# Longer Fiction or Drama III

# ~17 Class Periods

	CHR	1.B	Explain the function of
	1		a character changing or
			remaining unchanged.

- 1.E Explain how a character's own choices, actions, and speech reveal complexities in that character, and explain the function of those complexities.
- 3.E Explain the function of a significant event or related set of significant events in a plot.
- **3.F** Explain the function of conflict in a text.
- 4.C Identify and describe details, diction, or syntax in a text that reveal a narrator's or speaker's perspective.
- 7.B Develop a thesis statement that conveys a defensible claim about an interpretation of literature and that may establish a line of reasoning.
- 7.C Develop commentary that establishes and explains relationships among textual evidence, the line of reasoning, and the thesis.
- 7.D Select and use relevant and sufficient evidence to both develop and support a line of reasoning.

# Personal Progress Check 9

ONLINE ONLY

Multiple-choice: ~15 questions

ONLINE OR PAPER

Free-response: 2 questions

- Pre-20th-Century Prose
- Literary Argument