

**American Literature & Composition**  
**10<sup>th</sup> Grade**  
**Syllabus 2020-2021**

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**Course Overview**

American Literature and Composition is a study of the major literary topics and themes across the history of the United States from pre-colonial times to present day. Students will focus on the major literary forms, analyze the literary themes and trends, and research and compose several essays, one speech, and other research-based presentations using representative forms of discourse.

The course allows students to write in several forms — narrative, expository, persuasive — on many different subjects from personal experiences to public policies, from creative literature to popular culture. But the overarching purpose is to enable students to read, analyze, speak and write effectively and confidently in their high school (and college) careers across the curriculum, and in their professional and personal lives in the future. This course will address the standards for reading, analyzing, public speaking and writing successfully for the rest of your (student's) life.

**Objectives:**

1. Students will analyze and interpret samples of literature, identifying and explaining an author's use of strategies and techniques, their purpose, style, message, etc.
2. Students will apply effective strategies and techniques in their own writing.
3. Students will create and sustain arguments based on readings, research, and personal experience, both written and oral.
4. Students will demonstrate understanding and correct use of standard written English and oratory as well as begin to develop stylistic maturity in their own writings.
5. Students will write for a variety of purposes.
6. Students will produce creative, expository, analytical, and argumentative writings that introduce a central idea and develop it, and in the case of research-based writings, with appropriate evidence drawn from legitimate and reliable source material, coherent explanations, and clear transitions.
7. Students will demonstrate understanding of the conventions of citing source material.
8. Students will move effectively through the stages of the writing process, with careful attention to research, drafting, revising, editing, presentation (and/or publishing) and review.

## 9. **Daily Materials:**

Students must have:

1. **A 3-ring binder dedicated solely to this class** with dividers to separate the following sections: Vocabulary/Grammar, Writing, and General Notes with loose-leaf paper to fill the above as needed throughout the course. **THIS IS NOT OPTIONAL.**
2. Student agenda
3. Pen or pencil
4. Textbook with book sock or other protective covering (covering required!)
5. Independent reading novel, magazine or other reading material daily (school appropriate and not work for other classes)
6. Any assignments due

## **Texts:**

- Glencoe/McGraw-Hill American Literature textbook
- We will be reading several works outside of the textbook. Copies will be provided as available. Students may opt to purchase a physical copy of the text at his/her own expense should he/she choose. This allows the student to take notes directly in the text, which can be helpful, but it is not necessary to purchase.

## **Google Classroom:**

This year, we will use Google Classroom daily. Material, activities, and assignments will be posted there. It is your responsibility to keep up with items on Google Classroom and check each day for any assignments.

## **Classroom Policies**

### **Attitudes:**

Everyone in class promotes the following attitudes:

1. Every person in the room is able to learn.
2. Treat others as you wish to be treated.
3. Polite behavior is a sign of respect.
4. Everyone begins this year with the same chance of success, regardless of last year's experience.

### **Expectations:**

All students are expected to do the following:

1. Follow all school and classroom rules.
2. Bring all daily materials.
3. Complete assignments on time.
4. Follow directions.
5. Participate in class.
6. Remain silent when others are speaking.

7. Come to class prepared.
8. Arrive to class on time.
9. All students are expected to manage their time to ensure that homework, class work, and projects are turned in promptly on their due date.

### **Classroom Rules:**

1. All school policies and rules printed in the Notre Dame High School Student Handbook will be enforced in the classroom. In addition, school and classroom policies which arise from unique situations will be enforced from that point forward. (i.e. Just because it doesn't specifically say in the handbook that you cannot do something, does not mean that it is appropriate for the classroom/school. Some things you should just know are wrong...)
2. Arrive to class on time. **You MUST be seated at your desk with required materials when the bell rings or you will be considered tardy.**
3. No food or drink (except water in a clear water bottle) allowed in class per school policy unless directed by physician.
4. Homework does not equal collaborative work. It is independent. Copying or using the internet for your homework, unless specifically told to use the internet, constitutes cheating. If you are caught copying, you and the other person will both receive a zero for the assignment.
5. Homework will be assigned throughout the year. Homework is not considered complete unless it is completely finished. No partial credit will be given for homework.
6. It is your responsibility to write down the homework assignment(s) for his/her class, complete the assignment(s), and turn them in.
7. It is your responsibility to keep all materials given in this class, including but not limited to handouts, notes, and old tests or quizzes.
8. Disruption of the teaching/learning process will NOT be tolerated. Any student disrupting the teaching and/or learning process will first be given a verbal or other warning (often a look is all it takes). If the student continues to be disruptive, that student will be removed from the classroom to work on his or her own without benefit of classroom instruction. All work will be due at the same time as those in the classroom. If the student continues to be a disruption from outside the classroom, he/she will be sent to the Administrative Discipline Office.
9. Class time is valuable! Passes to leave class will be written **only** for emergencies. You may not miss my class time to make up work in another class (or finish a test, etc.) without first getting permission from me.
10. All students (and parents/guardians) **must have and use** MMS (online access to assignments, announcements and grades). This is vitally important to make-up and late assignments and for the benefit of parents/guardians and students alike. Therefore, do not ask me to take class time to tell you what your grade is... you should know. And therefore, parents/guardian should also know when your child is not doing well. Please see the IT department if you do not currently have access to your MMS.

**Late Work:**

If you are absent, you have the number of days you were out to hand in any missed work unless otherwise agreed upon between the student and me.

Any unexcused late/makeup work will be penalized for each day it is late. Assignments will lose 10% of the grade each day for 10 days. After 10 days, it will not be accepted at all. This includes weekends.

Students must arrange a time to make up any excused missed tests and quizzes. If you are absent the day of the test but knew about it before your absence, you are expected to take the test the day you return. If you were not aware of the test before your absence, you have the number of days you were absent to make up the test. Make-ups must be scheduled with me in advance. Make-up tests and/or quizzes will only be given when appointments are initiated and made by the student. Furthermore, it is not the teacher's responsibility to remind individuals what they need to make up an assignment. It is your responsibility to discuss a make-up time with me. Students may meet with the teacher before school or stay after school to make up missed tests and/or quizzes as long as they have made an appointment.

All make up work must be completed 2 weeks prior to the end of the marking period.

**Recovery Policy:**

Opportunities designed to allow students to recover from a low or failing cumulative grade will be allowed when all work required to date has been completed on time and to the best of the student's abilities, and the student has demonstrated a legitimate effort to meet all course requirements including attendance.

Student and/or parents/guardians should contact the teacher concerning recovery opportunities. All recovery work must be directly related to course objectives and must be completed ten school days prior to the end of the marking period. When and how students with extenuating circumstances may improve their grades will be determined by the teacher on a case-by-case basis.

**\*\*\*\*\*PLAGIARISM POLICY\*\*\*\*\***

Plagiarism is the use of another's words or ideas and the presentation of them as though they were one's own. Acts of plagiarism might include, but are not limited to:

- using words or ideas from any source without proper documentation and/or if you were not supposed to use a source. Students may not use any outside sources unless explicitly told to.
- using the work of another student (e.g. copying homework, essay, or project partially or in whole)
- using excessive editing suggestions of another student, teacher, parent, or any other editor.

What constitutes “excessive editing”? Students learn to write well by doing just that: writing. Struggling independently through the writing process produces growth (as well as a certain amount of agony) will eventually reveal the student’s own style and voice. When well-meaning parents, siblings, friends, tutors, or others contribute their ideas, words, phrases, revisions, etc. to students’ writing, student writers miss the opportunity to achieve written self-reliance.

So what is the difference between helping and excessive editing? The answer is: questioning and signaling. For example: “Is this word strong enough? Specific enough?” “Can you think of another word that would fit better?” “Does this sentence seem awkward?” “What exactly did you mean when you wrote this?” “I don’t understand what you are trying to say here; can you say it more clearly?” These kinds of questions and hints allow the students to think and write *independently*. Students must be allowed to find their own styles and to develop their own writing skills.

**\*\*\*Plagiarism on any project, paper, or test will result in REDOING THE ENTIRE ASSIGNMENT (OR ANOTHER ASSIGNMENT AS NECESSARY) WITH A STARTING GRADE OF NO MORE THAN 80% OF THE POINTS AVAILABLE. This is for both the student who copied and the student who provided the work to copy.**

**\*\*\*Plagiarism on any classwork or homework will result in a ZERO on the assignment for both the student copying and the student who provided the work to copy.**

**\*\*\*All work will be checked for plagiarism using the Internet and TURNITIN.**

### **Tardy and Late Arrival Policy**

Any student who is not in the classroom when the bell rings is either late or tardy.

If you have a pass, you are considered to be late. If you are late, please enter the room quietly, place your pass on my desk, and sit in your seat. Please take out your necessary materials without talking. Check the whiteboard for the bell work and agenda. Do not disturb others by asking the people around you what we are doing. As soon as I have an opportunity, I will explain to you what you missed. If you need your pass back at the end of the period, just ask.

If you do not have a pass, you are considered tardy. Please do not offer an excuse when you arrive. Simply come in, sit down, take out your necessary materials, and check the whiteboard for the bell work and agenda. Do not disturb others by asking the people around you what we are doing. As soon as I have an opportunity, I will explain to you what you missed. If you would like to discuss your reason for being tardy, you can speak with me after class or at the end of the school day.

## **Grading**

Grades will be based on the total points earned out of total points available. Weighting of assignments will be done by total points available, not by category. For example, a quiz might be worth 25 or 30 points, a test worth 100 and a larger project perhaps 200 or 300 points.

Students will be given weekly employability points. Employability includes punctuality, active participation, effort, and overall attitude.

## **American Literature Unit Content**

**The order of these units may be changed at the teacher's discretion. Please note that the syllabus may be amended and altered as time and class needs demand.**

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### **UNIT 1: Native American and Pre-Revolutionary Literature**

Beginnings of American Literature, Review of Persuasive Writing, Language, and Vocabulary

Unit Synopsis: The Pre-Colonial and Colonial Periods in American literature will be introduced with sample literary works from the text. Emphasis will be placed on nonfiction, as well as on persuasive and expository writing. Students will research and analyze the various contributions of the American Colonial Period by developing both written and oral presentations. A review of persuasive texts will also help students incorporate persuasive writing techniques into a persuasive speech and presentation. Throughout the unit, various forms of nonfiction texts will be utilized by students to explore the characteristics of these periods in American literature. Content and SAT vocabulary will be studied, acquired, and applied throughout the unit. Students will apply this vocabulary throughout their study of American literature.

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### **UNIT 2: Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death**

Revolutionary Ideas in Revolutionary Literature

Unit Synopsis: Non-fiction and fiction texts from the American Revolutionary period will be studied and analyzed with an emphasis on their use of persuasive and rhetorical strategies. Emphasis will be placed on the lasting impact of these texts and their role in shaping an emerging nation and new form of government on the world stage. After whole class discussion of specific strategies and stylistic devices (parallelism, repetition, allusion, etc.), students will work in pairs and groups to analyze text and evaluate persuasive techniques. Students will practice incorporating newly learned rhetorical and stylistic devices into their own persuasive writing. Students will read and discuss representative American poetry and evaluate emerging American voices.

**ADDITIONAL MAJOR ASSESSMENT FOR UNIT 2: Researched Persuasive Speech**  
Compiling Information into a formal, documented MLA Research Paper/Persuasive  
Speech citing sources

Students will write an original, unique, persuasive formal speech and report that:

- makes use of multi-media research on a self-selected (and teacher-approved) topic;
  - uses outside legitimate source information to support a sufficiently-narrowed central idea;
  - integrates source information using unique ideas and paraphrased, summarized, and direct quotation of research sources;
  - demonstrates an understanding of MLA documentation style and uses correct grammar, punctuation, etc., and is accompanied by a properly formatted works-cited page;
  - and is delivered to the class in a formal presentation
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**UNIT 3: Romantic Concepts**

A National Literature Expands-- How does freedom spark a Renaissance in American Literature?

Unit Synopsis: Texts from the American Romantic Period will be examined, with an emphasis on poetry and on student generated writing. Skills of analysis and interpretation will be developed and practiced using the poetry of the period. Students will acquire and apply content vocabulary. Students will analyze and interpret an assigned poem in groups and create a written/oral presentation. Students will individually compose an expository essay analyzing and interpreting an assigned (and unfamiliar) poem using the correct content vocabulary and references to the primary document.

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**UNIT 4: Marching to the Beat of a Different Drum**

The Impact of Transcendentalism in American Literature

Unit Synopsis: The focus of the unit deals with American nonfiction and poetry. American transcendentalist texts will be analyzed to determine author's purpose, themes, and specific use of stylistic devices. Students will demonstrate comprehension by applying knowledge of literary devices to identify and to explain supporting evidence. Expository writing strategies continue. Content vocabulary will be applied throughout the study of nonfiction works. Patterns and themes related to recurring topics (the American Dream, individualism, classical influences, etc.) will be identified, analyzed, and validated. Students will respond to transcendentalist texts and will conclude with a

culminating activity that combines comprehension, writing, and listening, speaking, and viewing.

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### **UNIT 5: Realism and Naturalism in American Literature**

Unit Synopsis: This unit focuses on the literature Naturalism and Realism in American literature with an emphasis on expository writing. After studying and evaluating representative works of Realism and Naturalism along with their characteristics, students work individually, in small groups, and in the class as a whole to analyze and evaluate representative works. In addition, students will write a reflective essay.

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### **UNIT 6: The American Identity, the American Dream, and the American Hero in Modern Times**

Unit Synopsis: Students will analyze American Modern and Postmodern fictional texts to determine author's purpose, themes, and specific use of stylistic devices. Students will demonstrate comprehension by applying knowledge of literary devices to identify devices and explain with supporting evidence. Expository writing strategies will be refined. Content-based vocabulary will be applied throughout the study of fiction. Patterns and recurring topics (the American Dream, individualism, classical influences, etc.) will be identified and analyzed. Students will respond to fictional passages or texts and film both orally and in writing, culminating in a project activity that combines comprehension, writing, speaking and viewing a unique hero-based film appropriate to the era and school. The focus of the unit deals with American Modern and Postmodern fiction and nonfiction texts and film.

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### **UNIT 7: Drama in the Modern Era** Drama, creative writing, stylistic elements

Unit Synopsis: Dramatic literature will be the focus of this unit (*The Crucible*). The modern playwright's use of language and dramatic elements will be analyzed and responded to orally and in writing. Content-based vocabulary will be studied, acquired, and applied throughout the unit. Creative writing will be emphasized with a focus on writing dialogue. Literary and dramatic devices will be emphasized. The common themes and literary characteristics of works across times and political forces of these eras will drive class discussions and additional writing. Students will respond to dramatic passages based on personal experience and group research.

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## **UNIT 8: Novels in the Modern Era: *The Great Gatsby***

Unit Synopsis: The literary form of the novel will be explored by the class utilizing F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*. Focus will be on the major themes, character development, making predictions and understanding the author's purpose in writing this (or any) novel.

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***Each unit will contain additional short stories, poems, speeches, informational texts, etc.***

