

# Pre-AP English Course Syllabus 2019-2020 School Year

**This Year's Theme: Identity and Joy**

**Course Schedule (subject to change) - 5 Units:**

1. September-October  
Foundations: Expository Essay, Writing Critiques
2. November-December  
Literature: Literary Analysis
3. January-February  
Research: Argumentative Essay, Synthesis
4. March-April  
Creative Nonfiction: Descriptive Essay, Narrative Essay
5. May  
Looking Forward: Extemporaneous Essay

## **Learning Objectives:**

In this course you will learn how to read critically, think deeply, and write clearly and effectively with style and sophistication.

This course will teach you to distinguish and employ audience, purpose, subject, and tone. You will become skilled with writing all different types of essays from the literary analysis to the research paper. What's more, you will gain familiarity with numerous writing strategies that create solid, winsome content including the use of rhetorical devices such as noun absolutes, metaphors, and personification, and complex syntax.

You will also gain confidence and familiarity with the basics of MLA format, including how to properly quote, paraphrase, summarize, and cite, and more.

This class will also help to prepare you for many future endeavors, such as college application essays, scholarship essays, SAT and AP testing, and more.

## Supplies Needed:

1. *The Outsiders* by S. E. Hinton. Please purchase this exact edition: Paperback, Deckle Edge, April 20, 2006 (New, rather than used, is strongly preferred so students can annotate in their books.)

[www.amazon.com/OutsidersSHinton/dp/014240733X/ref=sr\\_1\\_2?keywords=the+outsiders&qid=1552573991&s=gateway&sr=8-2](http://www.amazon.com/OutsidersSHinton/dp/014240733X/ref=sr_1_2?keywords=the+outsiders&qid=1552573991&s=gateway&sr=8-2)

2. *The Pearl* (a novella) by John Steinbeck. Please purchase this exact edition: Paperback, February 1, 1993 (New, rather than used, is strongly preferred so students can annotate in their books.)

[www.amazon.com/PearlJohnSteinbeck/dp/014017737X/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?keywords=the+pearl+by+john+steinbeck&qid=1552574252&s=gateway&sr=8-1](http://www.amazon.com/PearlJohnSteinbeck/dp/014017737X/ref=sr_1_1?keywords=the+pearl+by+john+steinbeck&qid=1552574252&s=gateway&sr=8-1)

3. *Student Resource Notebook* by Institute for Excellence in Writing, IEW, <http://www.iew.com/shop/products/student-resource-notebook>

*You can purchase the printed spiral notebook or the PDF, however, the student needs the actual book or printed version available for use in class.*

4. \$20 for the Blaze University notebook of reference material as well as handouts and worksheets. You will be issued the notebook and handouts.
5. Blue or black writing pens (*no pens of other colors please*)
6. yellow and orange highlighters
7. College-lined paper in a 3-ring notebook with dividers
8. 1 stack of regular size Post-It notes

## Paper Guidelines:

1. Typed papers are to be in a standard Times New Roman size 12 font; handwritten papers will not be accepted (except for in-class assignments).
2. In-class papers must be written in black or blue ink. No red or colored ink beyond blue or black.
3. Use standard 8 ½" by 11" white paper.
4. All essays must be double-spaced.
5. Number pages using the header page # function (½ inch from the top and flush with the right margin). Put your last name before the page number.

6. Always include a title. Do not bold, italicize, underline, or place your essay title in quotation marks; exception: use italics or quotation marks when referring to other works in your title. Write the title in Title Case, not in all capital letters. Some sort of title is necessary on every paper so I can understand quickly what I am looking at. If it is too early in the assignment for you to create an official title, at least title the paper with something that explains the content.
8. You can sparingly (only when absolutely necessary) use italics and exclamation marks for emphasis. Try to use no more than one exclamation mark per essay.
9. Use the serial, or Oxford, comma (comma placed after next to last list item and before the “and”); for example: item 1, item 2, and item 3.
10. Papers that belong together from one assignment must be stapled. Please do not staple multiple assignments together.
11. On your first page in the upper left corner put your full name: first last Pre-AP English, Date in month day, year format (e.g., May 21, 2019).

### **Strategies for Success (Student Responsibilities):**

This course has six important rules. If you choose to follow these rules, your odds of growing in language arts and earning a high grade in this class will improve greatly.

#### **1. Show Up (On Time Too)**

Students should attend every scheduled class in its entirety. If you must miss more than three classes per semester, a doctor’s note will be needed in order to prevent absences from affecting your grade. Please text me prior to class if there will be an absence.

Every student has three “free” unexcused absences. A fourth unexcused absence will result in a drastic cut in the student’s final class grade. This rule will help you prepare for college, where the attendance policy will likely be even stricter.

**Missing class will make the lessons and homework difficult because each class will be full of vital information.** As homeschoolers, we only get the opportunity to meet once a week, so we have to fit a lot into one class period. For this reason, it is imperative that you do everything possible to attend class.

Class starts promptly on time. For this reason, please make every effort to be punctual, even 5 minutes early if possible, which will help you get settled, find homework, ask questions, visit with peers, etc. On the other hand, if you arrive

even 3 minutes late, you may miss crucial information that could make an assignment difficult. Tests also tend to start right at the beginning of class.

Students who are on time or early, will get an extra point that day. Extra points will be rewarded with extra credit.

If you miss class it is your responsibility to get the lesson notes from another student and to find out from the teacher which assignments and tests need to be made up and when.

## 2. Do the Work

You should choose to do your very best work in preparing for each class session and completing all assignments. Please pay close attention to the details required for each assignment. Read instructions carefully. This class will require a high-level of attention to detail. Again, this skill will transfer to greater success in other areas of life.

## 3. Participate Actively

Choose to stay focused and involved in every class, offering your best comments, questions, and answers. Active discussion is expected of all students and can affect grades. (See the participation section.)

## 4. Electronic Devices

At the beginning of the year, we will have a keep-your-phone policy on a trial basis. However, if students struggle to not touch their phones during class, we will convert to a turn-in-your-phone-upon-arrival policy. If absolutely necessary, phones may be used during the brief mid-class break, however I strongly discourage it and expect that it will not happen on a regular basis. Cell phones should not be touched during class time.

## 5. Be Honest

Always act with integrity. Compromising your high standards is never worth it.

## 6. Be Respectful

Always treat everyone with respect and courtesy. This includes showing self-respect by acting in a way that deserves respect from others, including not

ridiculing other students and not talking back to the teacher. Our body language, word choice, and tone should all demonstrate respect.

### **Grading System:**

|                  |                |
|------------------|----------------|
| 75% of the grade | Writing Scores |
| 25% of the grade | Tests          |

A = 100%-90%

B= 89%-80%

C=79%-70%

D=69% or less

### Writing Scores:

Not every piece of writing will receive a letter grade. Some writing assignments will simply get a completion grade. But all major essays, among some other pieces of writing, will receive a grade.

According to our “Always Essay” policy, all essays and any other graded pieces of writing will receive one of only two possible grades: an “A” for accepted or an “N” for not finished yet. (This policy is partly credited to The Institute for the Excellence in Writing, IEW, who suggest the “A” and “N”.) Our policy is called the “Always Essay” because the student *always* has the opportunity to rewrite and turn the paper in again to get the grade elevated to an “A” before the end of each semester. Not only is this allowed, it is highly encouraged, not that we encourage late papers, but rather that we encourage rewriting papers until the you receive the “A”. Please take advantage of this policy—there is never a reason to settle for anything less than an “A”.

An “A” grade is worth 100%. An “N” grade is worth 50%.

One final note about grading. “A” papers are not perfect papers. They are papers that reflect the student’s effort and ability to continue to work at improvement

and exhibit growth. The “A” paper will also reflect current expectations at the corresponding point in the school year. For example, if we as a class have not covered how to cite in MLA format yet, the student would not be expected to execute that skill well, or if we have not covered transitions, the student would not be expected to demonstrate that skill well in order to achieve an “A”.

You have until the end of each semester to turn in any missing assignments. However, the class will get increasingly more difficult if late assignments pile up, especially because many writing concepts tend to build on one another. Also, missing assignments will drastically lower your grade.

#### Participation:

Students who actively engage in multiple ways including many comments and questions in class will receive one extra credit percentage applied to their overall grade per semester.

#### Tests:

Periodic tests and quizzes will be given usually once a month or at least at the end of a unit, maybe more. Tests will be given on vocabulary and writing concepts taught in class.

#### Extra Credit:

In addition to the opportunity to earn extra credit through participation, there will be three different poems available for memorization each semester, each of which will count for one extra credit assignment. Extra credit will be given in the form of two percentage points added to the overall grade. In order to receive credit, students must arrange a time outside of class to recite the poem perfectly from memory.

First Semester Selections: “Rebecca, Who Slammed Doors for Fun and Perished Miserably” by Hilaire Belloc, “Godfrey Gordon Gustavus Gore” by William Brighty Rands, and “The Height of the Ridiculous” by Oliver Wendell Holmes.

Second Semester Selections: “God Save the Flag” by Oliver Wendell Holmes, “What I Live For” by an unknown author, and “Project” by Mary Fabyan Windeatt.

All selections can be found online or in *Linguistic Development Through Poetry Memorization* by IEW.