

## **ENGLISH DEPARTMENT**

## **WRITING WORKSHOP: COURSE #148**

### **Contact Information**

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### **The Department's Educational Philosophy**

Proficiency in English is an essential component of education in the United States. An ability to understand and communicate in English is fundamental to the preservation of our democratic system and to the well being of its citizens.

### **Guiding Principles**

An essential component of education and the learning process is the development of proficiency in the arts of language. The ability to articulate and respond to complex ideas is a requirement of participatory citizenship and ultimately allows each of us to be more fully human.

- Speak and write clear, idiomatic English.
- Engage in the writing process, from pre-writing to editing and peer feedback to revision.
- Develop voice and depth in both personal and literary papers.
- Develop confidence, independence and critical judgment relative to one's own work.
- Understand as fully as possible what is read.
- Increase understanding of self and others through literature.
- Develop standards of judgment and taste in literature.
- Find enduring pleasure and value in reading good books.

## **WRITING WORKSHOP: COURSE #148**

**Course Frequency:** Semester Course, five times per week

**Credits Offered:** 2.5 credits

**Prerequisites:** English 1

### **Background to the Curriculum**

This elective was added to the English course offerings in 2008 and was developed by Acton-Boxborough teachers during a 2008 summer R & D and continues to undergo review and revision. The class was designed to provide students with good models of nonfiction writing covering the rhetorical modes taught across the high school's curriculum: narrative, description, comparison/contrast, analysis/division, cause and effect, and argument/persuasion. Writing models from various texts and contemporary media are used for discussion, as well as springboards for writing. Students will use a journal for process writing, select their own topics for drafting final writing products, and use a portfolio to set goals and evaluate progress. Issues of grammar, style, and mechanics will also be taught, reviewed, and applied during writing activities. All reading and writing exercises developed for this course closely parallel the Massachusetts English Language Arts Curriculum Framework expectations for grades nine through twelve.

### **Core Topics/Questions/Concepts/Skills**

This course is a workshop-based course, which allows students to write and revise during class, and then present drafts for peer and instructor feedback. The overall purpose of the writing workshop is to provide students ample opportunity to receive feedback so that they can improve their writing through revision. Students will first share proposals for their writing assignments with peers and their instructor, use feedback to refine their writing plans, present drafts during peer review sessions, and complete final writing assignments by utilizing constructive feedback and self-editing skills. In order to develop ideas for final writing pieces, students will complete daily writing exercises in class and for homework. In order to better understand issues of style and technique, students will also read and analyze professional writing models, including essays, magazine and newspaper articles, as well as other forms of media. Finally, the class stresses the importance of writing as a process, and the student portfolio centers around this idea.

### **Writing Workshop**

- Focuses on developing expository writing skills for writing across the curriculum.
- Provides opportunities to select topics of interest and to practice writing in key rhetorical modes.
- Provides students with opportunities to analyze professional writing models for style and technique.
- Develops integral writing skills utilized in the writing process: brainstorming, organizing, drafting, revision, editing, and proofreading.

- Explores the importance of purpose, audience, and voice in writing.
- Explores the importance of the drafting process in writing.
- Enables students to explore and develop their own writing styles and techniques.
- Develops editing and criticism skills, both in relation to students’ own writing and the writing of their peers.
- Develops active listening and discussion skills.
- Develops and utilizes objective standards of effective writing.
- Provides students an opportunity to explore and develop their own identity and creative nature.

**Course-End Learning Objectives**

The Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for English Language Arts is comprised of twenty-seven General Standards organized into four Strands: Language, Literature, Composition, and Media. The Learning Objectives for this course are matched to the relevant Framework Strand and Standard.

<b><u>Learning objectives</u></b>	<b><u>Corresponding state standards, where applicable</u></b>
<p><b>Reading and critical thinking skills</b> are listed by increasing levels of difficulty, moving from the concrete skills of observing and recalling to the more abstract skills of interpreting, synthesizing, analyzing, and evaluating. It is the goal of the English Department to move each student toward the mastery of the advanced skills.</p>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1] Identification of basic facts and main ideas in a text to use for the basis of interpretation.</li> <li>2] Examination of a text’s context or historical context in order to deepen understanding.</li> <li>3] Understanding of characteristics of different rhetorical modes and genres.</li> <li>4] Understanding of the purposes, structures, and elements of nonfiction.</li> <li>5] Understanding of elements of style and language, such as imagery, mood, and tone.</li> <li>6] Understanding of the techniques of media, the Internet, and emerging technologies to convey meaning.</li> </ol>	<p>Lit. #8            Lit. #9            Lit. #10            Lit. #13            Lit. #15            Media #26</p>
<p>The <b>writing skills</b> listed below recognize that writing is process and that skills are acquired by practicing this process.</p>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1] Ability to write with clear focus, logical organization, and effective use of detail.</li> <li>2] Understanding of purpose and audience.</li> <li>3] Understanding the importance of voice in writing.</li> <li>4] Understanding effective revision and editing (both self and peer) in the writing process.</li> </ol>	<p>Comp. #19            Comp. #20            Comp. #20, #21            Comp. #21</p>

<p>5] Knowledge of standard English conventions in writing, reviewing, revising, and editing.</p> <p>6] Understanding of how to organize writing to achieve purpose.</p> <p>7] Ability to gather, analyze, and evaluate a variety of sources to utilize in answering self-posed questions.</p> <p>8] Development and utilization of appropriate standards to evaluate writing before presenting to targeted audience.</p> <p><b>Speaking and listening skills</b> provide opportunities for students to further develop and refine the following communication skills:</p> <p>1] Reading aloud with understanding.</p> <p>2] Participating in whole-class and small-group discussions.</p> <p>3] Listening for understanding and meaning.</p> <p>4] Development and use of agreed-upon rules for small and large group discussions.</p> <p>5] Demonstration of understanding of purpose and audience during oral presentations and peer review sessions.</p> <p>The <b>thinking skills</b> in the course will further develop the ability to apply the following to literature and writing.</p> <p>1] Understanding and translation of knowledge into a new context.</p> <p>2] Identification of components and patterns.</p>	<p>Comp. #22</p> <p>Comp. #23</p> <p>Comp. #24</p> <p>Comp. #25</p> <p>Lit. #18</p> <p>Lang. #1, 2</p> <p>Lang. #2</p> <p>Lang. #1</p> <p>Lang. #3</p>
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## **Assessment**

(Rubrics accompany end-assessments to provide students with clear outlines of expectations.)

- Submission of portfolio with four written pieces and one evaluation at the end of two terms.
  - Term One: Narrative, Descriptive, Example, Comparison & Contrast, and Portfolio Review
  - Term Two: Analysis/Division, Cause & Effect, Argument/Persuasion, Choice Piece, and Portfolio Review
- Process writing journal
- Regular in-class and homework writing exercises
- Participation in peer review workshops, discussions of assigned writing models, and class activities
- Progress made toward established writing goals (both individual and instructor-determined)
- Effort and quality of revision and editing of final pieces
- Effect use of taught grammar, style, and usage rules

## **Technology and Health Learning Objectives Addressed in This Course**

(This section is for faculty and administrative reference; students and parents may disregard.)

<b><u>Course activity: skills and/or topics taught</u></b>	<b><u>Standard(s) addressed through this activity</u></b>
1] Students will word process and properly format papers. 2] Students will follow computer-use guidelines and the academic integrity policy stated in the Acton-Boxborough Regional High School Student Handbook.	

## **Materials and Resources**

Model texts, writing exercises, and assignments will be drawn from the following texts and additional supplemental materials as needed.

- The Brief Bedford Reader, 10<sup>th</sup> Edition (2009)
- Listening is an Act of Love: A Celebration of American Life from the StoryCorps Project, ed. Dave Isay
- This I Believe: The Personal Philosophies of Remarkable Men and Women, ed. Jay Allison and Dan Goldman

The following instructional methods may be employed in this course.

**Teacher-centered activities**

- Presenting prompts, exercises, and activities to generate ideas for writing.
- Modeling writing through the examination and analysis of professional work and/or student writing.
- Webbing or mapping to gather and organize information.
- Conducting mini-lessons on grammar, style, and usage.

**Student-centered activities**

- Brainstorming
- Free-writing, process writing, drafting, and editing
- Generating topics for writing
- Collaborating on solutions to problems or questions
- Peer review and editing
- Sharing of writing, both in-process and finished pieces, with class