

## **ENGLISH DEPARTMENT**

## **ENGLISH I TRANSITION: COURSE #151**

### **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.

## **ENGLISH I TRANSITION, FOUNDATIONS OF LITERATURE: COURSE #151**

**Course Frequency:** Full-year course, five times per week

**Credits Offered:** Five

**Prerequisites:** Successful completion of 8<sup>th</sup>-grade English

### **Background to the Curriculum**

This course continues to evolve from the original English I curriculum developed by teachers of the course in the summer of 1995.

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

The underlying purpose of the ninth-grade curriculum is to promote understanding of the "big questions" and the various ways peoples throughout the ages have answered them. A secondary purpose is that through this understanding students will come to value those universal ideals fundamental to civilization. To this end, the course is organized into four thematic units, each with theme-specific concepts: The Nature of the Universe/The Nature of Man, The Nature of Goodness/Virtue, The Nature of Love, and The Nature of Evil. There are two equally important strands in this curriculum, reading and writing. Through assignments in both, students will explore the four themes as expressed through literature and their own thinking on the concepts.

Through the study of Bible stories and myths, classics and contemporary works, students will gain an understanding of the following concepts:

#### Unit: The Nature of the Universe/The Nature of Man

- The nature of the hero
- Lessons on suffering
- Image of the journey
- Self-discovery
- Duality of man and of the universe
- Laws of nature

#### Core works in this unit

- *The Alchemist*
- *The Odyssey*

#### Unit: The Nature of Goodness/Virtue

- The ambiguity of goodness
- Questions man might consider to reach a judgment of goodness
- Ways of defining courage and justice

#### Core works in this unit

- *To Kill a Mockingbird*
- *Of Mice and Men*

Unit: The Nature of Goodness/Virtue (continued)

- Factors influencing ethical choices
- The effects of prejudice
- Appearance vs. reality
- Tolerance

Unit: The Nature of Love

- Various types of love
- Reason vs. passion
- Altruism vs. self-interest
- The nature of friendship
- Loss of innocence
- Sacrifice

Core works in this unit

- *Romeo and Juliet*

Unit: The Nature of Evil

- Self-knowledge of our capacity for evil
- Consequences of evil
- Manifestations of evil
- Sources of greed and jealousy
- Prejudice, indifference
- Appearance vs. reality

Core works in this unit

- *The Pearl*

The writing program includes personal, creative, and analytical writing.

Also important in this course is the development and refinement of language skills emphasized in previous grades:

- reading
- writing
- thinking
- speaking and listening
- vocabulary

## Course-End Learning Objectives

<u>Learning objectives</u>	<u>Corresponding State Standards, where applicable</u>
<p>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 appropriate Framework Strand and Standard.</p>	
<p><b>Reading and critical thinking skills</b> are listed by increasing level 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 mastery of advanced skills.</p>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1] Understanding of plot, characters, and setting</li><li>2] Literal interpretations of events</li><li>3] Understanding of theme</li><li>4] Understanding of characteristics of different genres</li><li>5] Observation of connections and patterns</li><li>6] Observation of similarities and differences among characters</li><li>7] Making of inferences about plot events, character, and theme</li><li>8] Interpretation of character</li><li>9] Awareness of literary devices</li><li>10] Observation and understanding of cultural values</li></ol>	<p>Lit. #9 Lit. #9 Lit. #11 Lit. #10</p> <p>Lit. #12, 13, 14 Lit. #16</p>
<p>In addition to the above general reading skills, students will understand: historical setting and culture, the way each work reflects the unit theme, and the sources of literary allusions.</p>	
<p>The <b>writing skills</b> listed below recognize that writing is a cumulative skill, with each level assuming the skills of the previous level. At this level, the student will:</p>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1] Make meaningful revision based on feedback.</li><li>2] Narrow a topic into a controlling idea.</li><li>3] Use topic sentences that reiterate the controlling idea.</li><li>4] Write with purpose, focus and unity.</li><li>5] Write well-organized, developed paragraphs to support controlling idea.</li><li>6] Write conclusions that bring closure to the paper.</li><li>7] Write with grammatical correctness.</li><li>8] Develop self-editing skills.</li></ol>	<p>Comp. #21, 22 Comp. #19</p> <p>Comp. #19 Comp. #21</p> <p>Lang. #5</p>

<p>In addition to the above general writing skills, students will understand the requirements of an MCAS type writing assignment and the requirements for papers of definition, comparison/contrast, and cause/effect.</p> <p>The <b>thinking skills</b> in this course will further develop the ability to apply the following to literature.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1] Observation and recall of information</li> <li>2] Understanding and translation of knowledge into new context</li> <li>3] Identification of components and patterns</li> <li>4] Drawing conclusions and making generalizations</li> </ol> <p><b>Speaking and listening skills</b> at this level provide opportunities for students to further develop and refine the following communication skills.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1] Reading aloud with understanding</li> <li>2] Participating in whole-class and small-group discussions</li> <li>3] Participating in a dramatic reading or interpretation</li> <li>4] Listening for understanding and meaning</li> <li>5] Listening to appreciate literature</li> </ol> <p><b>Vocabulary skills</b> will be developed through formal vocabulary study, analyzing vocabulary in context, and the generation of personal vocabulary lists.</p>	<p>Lit. #18 Lang. #1, 2 Lit. #18</p> <p>Lang. #4, Lit. #8</p>
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**Types of Assessment, Including Unit-end Assessments**

(In many instances grading rubrics accompany assessments to provide students a clear outline of expectations.)

- Combination test (e.g., identification and passage analysis and essay)
- Multiple choice/objective quiz/test
- Essay quiz/test
- Analytical paper
- Personal/creative writing
- Group writing assignment
- Group/individual teaching assignment

- Oral work (e.g., class participation, presentation, speech, recitation)
- Special project
- Dramatic presentation
- Reading log
- Checked/graded homework
- Short answer quiz/test

**Technology 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>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1] Students will word process and properly format papers.</li> <li>2] Students will follow computer use guidelines and the academic integrity policy stated in the Acton-Boxborough Regional High School Student Handbook.</li> <li>3] Students will see the value and the limitations of web sites offering literary assistance.</li> <li>4] Students will use and properly cite the internet for literary criticism.</li> </ol>		

**Materials and Resources**

The literature through which students will explore these themes consists of Bible stories, myths and other short works, in addition to classics and contemporary works.

**Required works**

- *The Alchemist*
- *The Giver* (Universe/Man)
- *The Odyssey* (Universe/Man)
- *To Kill a Mockingbird* (Goodness)
- *Of Mice and Men* (Goodness)
- *The Pearl* (Evil)
- *Romeo and Juliet* (Love)

The following instructional methods may be employed in this course.

Teacher-centered activities

- Instruction/transmission of information and board notes
- Webbing or mapping to gather and organize information
- Correction/discussion of writings on overhead
- Question and answer in full-class discussion
- Solution to teacher-posed problems as individuals or in small groups
- Completion of study sheets and homework questions

Student-centered activities

- Brainstorming
- Student generation of questions to consider
- Collaboration on solutions to problems
- Division of tasks by group; sharing of information
- Reflective or creative writings, shared with class
- Peer editing
- Projects and oral presentations