



Updated September 18, 2024

## High School Course Description: English

Throughout our four-year English Literature course of study, GISB students read a variety of diverse, challenging authors and text types, including novels, short stories, speeches, plays, poetry, and media. Through rigorous class discussions that fuse traditional analysis with critical theory, analytical essays, presentations, and creative writing, students explore the intertextual nuances of poetry and prose while also creating their own works.

### Grade 9

Students are introduced to different genres and periods while learning to make connections, recognize elements, identify structures, build styles, analyze characters, and interrogate themes. Texts include novels, short stories, poetry, speeches, drama, and current articles and material. Students analyze the use of literary and rhetorical devices, evaluate arguments and evidence, and conduct research on topics generated from class and/or independent reading. They write original short stories, speeches, and create viable thesis statements for analytical essays and presentations. They also draft and edit essays, generate open-ended questions for class discussion, and develop timed writing skills. Ninth-grade English provides a place for students to access a wider range of genres and to begin more consciously developing personal writing and speaking styles, independently and in groups.

#### **Students learn about:**

- Modernism
- Victorianism
- Greek art and culture
- Elizabethan period
- Critical theory: feminist
- Gothic: psychological, satirical, early American, and Southern
- Parody
- Oral vs. textual narrative tradition
- Memory
- Framing
- Archetypes
- Elements of the short story
- Elements of the novel
- Tone
- Irony
- Unreliable narrator

#### **Students learn to:**

- Annotate a text
- Participate in a seminar discussion
- Identify and create sentence types
- Construct and defend a thesis statement
- Draft and construct a work of fiction
- Draft, construct, and deliver an original speech

**Representative authors and texts:** Daphne du Maurier's *Rebecca*, Irving's "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow," Oscar Wilde's "The Canterville Ghost," Tennessee Williams' *The Glass Menagerie*, Emily Wilson's translation of Homer's *Odyssey*, William Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, Joyce Carol Oates, Christina Rossetti, Robert Hayden, Seamus Heaney, Kimiko Hahn, Rita Dove

### Grade 10

Students closely examine novels, speeches, essays, short stories, drama, and other literary works to respond to essential questions concerning the theme of self-actualization. They continue to broaden their analytical reading, writing, and discussion skills while being introduced to critical theory and how to synthesize information from a variety of texts. They are encouraged to interpret, evaluate, and negotiate differing perspectives as they learn about the modernist and post-modernist periods and to explore creative nonfiction writing through personal narrative and *écriture féminine*. Tenth-grade English is a time to reflect on the self and the self in relation to others through writing, reading, and text-based discussion to become comfortable as part of a larger discourse.

#### Students learn about:

- Modernism and post modernism
- The Harlem Renaissance
- Dark Romanticism and Transcendentalism
- Point of view
- Elements of the short story
- Elements of poetry
- Types of journalism
- The constructed and deconstructed self
- Different types of irony
- Symbolism: contextual and universal
- *Ecriture feminine*

#### Students learn to:

- Identify and utilize sentence types
- Find, review, and cite sources
- Create and defend thesis statements with textual evidence
- Develop paragraphs and a five-paragraph essay
- Write a personal narrative using intentional dialogue, figurative language, and sensory detail

- Write original vignettes using *écriture féminine*, figurative language, and sensory detail
- Participate in seminars and Socratic discussions
- Annotate texts
- Take notes
- Accomplish tasks and contribute to projects in groups

**Representative authors and texts:** Zora Neale Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, Shirley Jackson's "The Lottery," Kate Chopin's "The Story of an Hour," Mark Twain's "The War Prayer," excerpts from Henry David Thoreau's *Walden*, Hawthorne's "Young Goodman Brown," J.D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye*, Sandra Cisneros' *The House on Mango Street*, and poetry by writers such as Richard Blanco, James Wright, Tracy K. Smith, Robert Frost, Edgar Allan Poe, Paul Laurence Dunbar, and Phyllis Wheatley

### Grade 11

Students use critical thinking and reasoning to meet rigorous academic standards. They interpret, interrogate, analyze, map, and evaluate text, ideas, and information, drawing evidence-based conclusions and synthesizing new learning with prior knowledge. To realize this, the course offers a challenging and relevant curriculum, providing students with exposure to traditional analysis and critical theory. Students learn that the arrangement of the parts and sections of a text, the relationship of the parts to each other, and the sequence in which the texts reveal information are structural choices and moves that contribute to the reader's interpretation of a text. Both timed and independent composition is emphasized and a significant aspect of the course is designated to researching, creating, and delivering oral presentations. The class is discussion-based and privileges small and whole-group collaboration.

#### Students learn about:

- Medieval, Enlightenment, Elizabethan, Romantic, Modernist, and Post-Modern Eras
- Narrative elements and techniques
- Critical theory: feminism, post-colonial, Marxist, deconstruction, New historicism, psychoanalytical
- Stream of consciousness, associative thinking
- Free indirect discourse
- Binary opposition
- Metafiction
- Evolution of English
- Rhetoric

#### Students learn to:

- Annotate increasingly complex texts to locate patterns

- Produce close reading analysis (summarize, create a precis (compress), synthesize)
- Identify and use rhetoric (modes of persuasion)
- Recognize intertextualization
- Create and present texts and presentations based on original thesis statements
- Develop a personal writing and presentation style

**Representative authors and texts:** Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse-Five*, Shakespeare's *King Lear*, James Joyce's *Dubliners*, Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, excerpts from Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*, Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own*, Charlotte Perkins Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper," F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*, short stories by Alice Munroe, Ann Patchett, Ernest Hemingway, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Flannery O'Connor, nonfiction by James Baldwin, Joan Didion, and Zadie Smith, and poetry by Camille Dungy, John Keats, William Wordsworth, T.S. Eliot, Robert Pinsky, Robert Frost, Emily Dickinson, and Marianne Moore

## Grade 12

This course focuses on reading, analyzing, and writing about literature and creative non-fiction from various periods. Students engage in close reading and critical analysis of imaginative literature to deepen their understanding of the strategies writers use to provide meaning and amusement. As they read, students consider a work's structure, style, and themes, as well as its use of figurative language, imagery, and symbolism. Writing assignments include expository, analytical, and argumentative essays that require students to analyze and interpret literary works by combining traditional analysis with critical theory. Analysis is an essential component of this course. Classes are discussion-based, and students' writing demonstrates increasing control over the elements of composition to communicate clearly, effectively, and with sophistication. The goal is to prepare students to live meaningful lives as creative, productive, and communicative citizens who contribute to civil discourse and engage in individual and collaborative inquiry.

### Students learn about:

- Speeches, the Nobel Prize for Literature
- Televised interviews
- Post-modernism, post-feminism, post-colonialism
- How writers use old forms to create new forms
- Advertising and different forms of social media, the advent of AI
- Technical English, e.g., science writing

### Students learn to:



- Analyze complex literary works, considering structure, style, themes, and use of figurative language
- Write sophisticated expository, analytical, and argumentative essays
- Engage in meaningful discussions about literature and its cultural contexts
- Evaluate and compare different forms of media, including film and social media
- Understand and apply concepts of post-modernism, post-feminism, and post-colonialism
- Improve linguistic precision and nuanced persuasion in writing

**Representative texts, authors, and media:** Toni Morrison's *Song of Solomon*, Toni Morrison's Nobel Prize speech, Vladimir Nabakov's "Good Readers, Good Writers," Shakespeare's *A Winter's Tale*, Henry David Thoreau's *Walden*, Faulkner's *Light in August*, Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions*, Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Ernest*, short stories by Nathaniel Hawthorne, Lydia Davis, Amy Tan, Raymond Carver, and Kelly Link, poetry by Claudia Rankine, William Shakespeare, Wallace Stevens, Louise Glück, and Audre Lorde, films such as *Citizen Kane*, and selected social media examples.

**Types of Large Assessments in this Course:**

Written exams, oral presentations, projects, essays, quizzes