

Willis English 11—AP Lit. Course Rationales

This course is designed to comply with the curricular requirements described in the AP English Course Description. As such, the readings are primarily selected from a list of works that have previously been on the AP English exams. The readings are selected by their cultural, historical and/or social context, their genre (or uniqueness of writing style), student engagement, teacher expertise, and their appearance on previous AP exams (College Board). Using the above stated criteria, the English Department has carefully evaluated the AP book list as a whole and deemed it worthy for the AP Literature and Composition curriculum.

Beowulf translation by Seamus Heaney (700 AD)

The English Department has carefully evaluated *Beowulf* as a whole and deemed it worthy for the 11th grade English curriculum.

I. Plot Summary

Beowulf, an Anglo-Saxon epic poem, focuses on the eponymous hero as he attempts to destroy the monster terrorizing the Danish town of Heorot. Beowulf is able to defeat the terrible monster, Grendel, but as a consequence he provokes another monster into seeking revenge. The tale recounts the crucial battle to defeat this second monster, and the reward Beowulf earns for ending the terror haunting the kingdom. But Beowulf's journey to help Hrothgar's beleaguered kingdom only prefigures his only life and death as the leader of his own lands, providing a look not only at a journey across the sea, but also through life.

II. Rationale and Learning Objectives

The student will be challenged to evaluate the form and meaning of the poem; delving into the psychological impacts of war as they accompany Beowulf through his epic battles. The characteristics of heroism and sacrifice will occupy the student in our study of this demanding narrative. As even in translation, the features of Old English challenge even advanced readers with their symbolic and metaphoric complexities. Students will have an opportunity to study poetic form, foreshadowing, digression, epic formula, point of view, and juxtaposition.

III. Common Core Standards

Reading Standards for Literature

Key Ideas and Details	Grades 11 - 12
1. Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to	1. Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

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support conclusions drawn from the text.	
2. Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.	2. Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.
3. Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.	3. Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).
Craft and Structure	Grades 11 – 12
4. Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.	4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful. (Include Shakespeare as well as other authors.)
5. Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.	5. Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.
6. Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.	6. Analyze a case in which grasping point of view requires distinguishing what is directly stated in a text from what is really meant (e.g., satire, sarcasm, irony, or understatement).
Integration of Knowledge and Ideas	Grades 11 - 12
7. Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse formats and media, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.	7. Analyze multiple interpretations of a story, drama, or poem (e.g., recorded or live production of a play or recorded novel or poetry), evaluating how each version interprets the source text. (Include at least one play by Shakespeare and one play by an American dramatist.)
9. Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.	9. Demonstrate knowledge of eighteenth-, nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century foundational works of American literature, including how two or more texts from the same period treat similar themes or topics.
Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity	Grades 11 - 12
10. Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.	10. By the end of grade 11, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 11–CCR text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range. By the end of grade 12, read and comprehend literature, including stories,

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	dramas, and poems, at the high end of the grades 11–CCR text complexity band independently and proficiently.
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IV. Addressing Sensitive Subjects

Possible sensitive topics contained in *Beowulf*: graphic, violent depictions of battle. The student is encouraged to feel comfortable expressing his/her beliefs and views openly within the classroom environment. If the student is uncomfortable at any time, the student should meet with the teacher to discuss his/her concerns.

While some features of *Beowulf* are unique to this ancient work, sadly the violence contained within the work is not outside the experience of the modern audience. Seamus Heaney, the translator, says of the work, “Its narrative elements may belong to a previous age but as a work of art it lives in its own continuous present.” Students may be disturbed by the violence, but as an essential commentary on its time, as well as our own, this is a valuable experience.

Othello by William Shakespeare (1603)

With Film Adaptation (1995)

The English Department has carefully evaluated *Othello* as a whole and deemed it worthy for the AP Literature and Composition curriculum. The film adaptation is rated R, for some sexuality, but explicit sex is not shown in the classroom. This drama was meant to be seen and heard; the English department feels that the literary merit of this adaptation more than compensates for the inclusion of this sensitive subject matter.

I. Plot Summary

William Shakespeare’s tragedy, *Othello*, is a play about love, hate, jealousy, envy, and lust. In the opening scene, Iago announces his intention to avenge the wrong done him by Othello and Cassio. He devises elaborate schemes to turn Othello against Cassio by implicating Cassio in tryst with Desdemona, Othello's bride. The play concludes with the revelations of Iago’s deceptions, but not in time to stop the murder of Desdemona and the subsequent suicide of Othello.

II. Rationale and Learning Objectives

This classic Shakespearean play will serve as a focal point for the study of drama and, in particular, tragedy. The play will be read aloud in class, with frequent pauses to analyze both plot and the literary devices employed by Shakespeare to communicate his complex message. Students will carefully examine Iago’s scheming and intentions, with a particular eye toward persuasive speech and techniques. Students will have an opportunity to study sonnet form, irony, setting, characterization, and motivation.

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III. Common Core Standards

Reading Standards for Literature

Key Ideas and Details	Grades 11 - 12
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2. Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.	2. Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.
3. Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.	3. Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).
Craft and Structure	Grades 11 – 12
4. Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.	4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful. (Include Shakespeare as well as other authors.)
5. Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.	5. Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.
6. Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.	6. Analyze a case in which grasping point of view requires distinguishing what is directly stated in a text from what is really meant (e.g., satire, sarcasm, irony, or understatement).
Integration of Knowledge and Ideas	Grades 11 - 12
7. Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse formats and media, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.	7. Analyze multiple interpretations of a story, drama, or poem (e.g., recorded or live production of a play or recorded novel or poetry), evaluating how each version interprets the source text. (Include at least one play by Shakespeare and one play by an American dramatist.)
9. Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to	9. Demonstrate knowledge of eighteenth-, nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century foundational works of American literature, including how two or more texts from the same period treat similar themes or

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compare the approaches the authors take.	topics.
Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity	Grades 11 - 12
10. Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.	10. By the end of grade 11, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 11–CCR text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range. By the end of grade 12, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of the grades 11–CCR text complexity band independently and proficiently.

IV. Addressing Sensitive Subjects

Possible sensitive topics contained in *Othello*: sexuality, murder, and suicide. In the classroom, sensitive topics will be dealt with in a mature fashion, toward an understanding of why this material is included in the work. The English department feels that the literary merit of this classic more than compensates for the inclusion of this sensitive subject matter. The student is encouraged to feel comfortable expressing his/her beliefs and views openly within the classroom environment. If the student is uncomfortable at any time, the student should meet with the teacher to discuss his/her concerns.

While Shakespearean tragedy demands a literary category all its own, the universality of Shakespeare's villains and tragic heroes extends across time, community, and country. And as the characters are grappling with jealousy, ambition, dishonesty, race, these same concerns occupy the daily lives of students.

Pride and Prejudice by Jane Austen (1813)

With Film Adaptation (2005)

The English Department has carefully evaluated *Pride and Prejudice* as a whole and deemed it worthy for the AP Literature and Composition curriculum. The film adaptation is rated PG for some mild thematic elements.

I. Plot Summary

As a novel of social critique, *Pride and Prejudice* is centered on the Bennet family, whose matriarch is deadest on finding suitable spouses for each of her five daughters. As marriage is one of the few respectable options available to women at the time, and the family is in precarious financial and social straits, this task is made especially difficult. But perhaps an even greater challenge lies in the reluctance of her daughters to marry for anything less than true love and passion.

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II. Rationale and Learning Objectives

The student will compare and contrast Austen's novel with Mary Wollstonecraft's, *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*, evaluating the role of women in the 19th century. In addition, the student will analyze Austen's critique of social class. Finally, the student will identify character, setting, plot, point of view, and theme, demonstrating deeper understanding through both personal and focused written responses. As one of the earliest novels in English literature, this work serves as a point of reference in the study of many other works in the course.

III. Common Core Standards

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3. Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.	3. Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).
Craft and Structure	Grades 11 – 12
4. Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.	4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful. (Include Shakespeare as well as other authors.)
5. Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.	5. Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.
6. Assess how point of view or purpose	6. Analyze a case in which grasping point of view requires distinguishing what is directly stated in a text from what is really meant (e.g., satire,

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shapes the content and style of a text.	sarcasm, irony, or understatement).
Integration of Knowledge and Ideas	Grades 11 - 12
7. Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse formats and media, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.	7. Analyze multiple interpretations of a story, drama, or poem (e.g., recorded or live production of a play or recorded novel or poetry), evaluating how each version interprets the source text. (Include at least one play by Shakespeare and one play by an American dramatist.)
9. Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.	9. Demonstrate knowledge of eighteenth-, nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century foundational works of American literature, including how two or more texts from the same period treat similar themes or topics.
Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity	Grades 11 - 12
10. Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.	10. By the end of grade 11, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 11–CCR text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range. By the end of grade 12, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of the grades 11–CCR text complexity band independently and proficiently.

IV. Addressing Sensitive Subjects

Possible sensitive topics contained in *Pride and Prejudice*: reference to a couple living out of wedlock. In the classroom, sensitive topics will be dealt with in a mature fashion, toward an understanding of why this material is included in the novel. The English department feels that the literary merit of this novel more than compensates for the inclusion of this sensitive subject matter. The student is encouraged to feel comfortable expressing his/her beliefs and views openly within the classroom environment. If the student is uncomfortable at any time, the student should meet with the teacher to discuss his/her concerns.

Frankenstein by Mary Shelley (1818)

The English Department has carefully evaluated *Frankenstein* as a whole and deemed it worthy for the AP Literature and Composition curriculum.

I. Plot Summary

Frankenstein, or The Modern Prometheus, is the classic Gothic novel about man's struggle to play God and create the perfect human being. Ambition overcomes the goodness of his original medical implications, and Dr. Victor Frankenstein's fiendish creature torments his creator. The reason for revenge is simple- no one loves the abomination. Society takes one look at the

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creature, judges his nature wrongly, and turns him into the monster represented in movies and TV today.

II. Rationale and Learning Objectives

Victor and his monster present a unique opportunity for students to consider the nature of parent and child. The ethical implications of the choices made by Dr. Frankenstein and his creation to indulge their passions and meet their needs will occupy the conversation about Shelley's classic novel, as students examine how Frankenstein's actions have tragic influence on the lives of family, friends, and acquaintances. The student will consider allusion, frame narrative, setting, epistolary development, and theme as they compose AP practice essays.

III. Common Core Standards

Reading Standards for Literature

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1. Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.	1. Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.
2. Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.	2. Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.
3. Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.	3. Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).
Craft and Structure	Grades 11 – 12
4. Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.	4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful. (Include Shakespeare as well as other authors.)
5. Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.	5. Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.

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6. Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.	6. Analyze a case in which grasping point of view requires distinguishing what is directly stated in a text from what is really meant (e.g., satire, sarcasm, irony, or understatement).
Integration of Knowledge and Ideas	Grades 11 - 12
7. Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse formats and media, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.	7. Analyze multiple interpretations of a story, drama, or poem (e.g., recorded or live production of a play or recorded novel or poetry), evaluating how each version interprets the source text. (Include at least one play by Shakespeare and one play by an American dramatist.)
9. Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.	9. Demonstrate knowledge of eighteenth-, nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century foundational works of American literature, including how two or more texts from the same period treat similar themes or topics.
Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity	Grades 11 - 12
10. Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.	10. By the end of grade 11, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 11–CCR text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range. By the end of grade 12, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of the grades 11–CCR text complexity band independently and proficiently.

IV. Addressing Sensitive Subjects

Possible sensitive topics contained in *Frankenstein*: violence, murder. In the classroom, sensitive topics will be dealt with in a mature fashion, toward an understanding of why this material is included in the novel. The English department feels that the literary merit of this novel more than compensates for the inclusion of this sensitive subject matter. The student is encouraged to feel comfortable expressing his/her beliefs and views openly within the classroom environment. If the student is uncomfortable at any time, the student should meet with the teacher to discuss his/her concerns.

Jane Eyre by Charlotte Bronte (1847)

With Film Adaptation (2011)

The English Department has carefully evaluated *Jane Eyre* as a whole and deemed it worthy for the 11th grade English curriculum. The film adaptation is rated PG-13 for some thematic elements including a nude image in a painting and brief violent content.

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I. Plot Summary

Bronte’s novel follows the difficult, but ultimately triumphant, life of Jane Eyre. An orphaned governess, Eyre struggles against the social mores of Victorian England, the limitations of her family connections, and the complicated nature of her affection for her employer Rochester. The novel follows Jane throughout her life: from her childhood deprivations at the hands of her family to her own life as a mother. While Eyre’s life is filled with tragedy and impediments, she ultimately prevails and manages a rather unconventional “happily ever after.”

II. Rationale and Learning Objectives

Covering the spectrum of a nineteenth century life for women, Brönte’s novel is a unique combination of the semi-autobiographical, Victorian, Gothic, and Bildungsroman. As such, the novel presents an opportunity for students to experience a wide range of literary forms within its bounds. The themes of the novel are timeless, and its form is archetypal.

Questions of loyalty, forgiveness, and faith dominate this realistic novel as Jane struggles to navigate the sometimes rigid moral standards of Victorian England. Jane rejects many of the requirements and expectations of women during this period, consequently the novel is considered by many to be a proto-feminist text. Students naturally respond to Jane’s independence and personal fortitude in the face of oppression. Jane fits the mold of transgressive female narrators students have already encountered, having read *Pride and Prejudice* and is predictive of the types of narrators students will encounter in the remainder of the course curriculum.

III. Common Core Standards

Reading Standards for Literature

Key Ideas and Details	Grades 11 - 12
1. Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.	1. Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.
2. Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.	2. Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.
3. Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.	3. Analyze the impact of the author’s choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).

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Craft and Structure	Grades 11 – 12
4. Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.	4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful. (Include Shakespeare as well as other authors.)
5. Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.	5. Analyze how an author’s choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.
6. Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.	6. Analyze a case in which grasping point of view requires distinguishing what is directly stated in a text from what is really meant (e.g., satire, sarcasm, irony, or understatement).
Integration of Knowledge and Ideas	Grades 11 - 12
7. Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse formats and media, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.	7. Analyze multiple interpretations of a story, drama, or poem (e.g., recorded or live production of a play or recorded novel or poetry), evaluating how each version interprets the source text. (Include at least one play by Shakespeare and one play by an American dramatist.)
9. Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.	9. Demonstrate knowledge of eighteenth-, nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century foundational works of American literature, including how two or more texts from the same period treat similar themes or topics.
Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity	Grades 11 - 12
10. Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.	10. By the end of grade 11, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 11–CCR text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range. By the end of grade 12, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of the grades 11–CCR text complexity band independently and proficiently.

IV. Addressing Sensitive Subjects

Possible sensitive topics contained in *Jane Eyre*: child abuse, violence, sexuality, and references to adulterous affairs. The student is encouraged to feel comfortable expressing his/her beliefs and views openly within the classroom environment. If the student is uncomfortable at any time, the student should meet with the teacher to discuss his/her concerns.

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Sexuality in the Victorian world is carefully governed, and discussion of this topic may be of concern to some readers and parents. This aspect of the novel is essential to understanding Jane, who grapples with morality and loyalty before deciding sexuality should be contained by matrimony. By raising the fundamental importance of personal relationships to morality, the book helps students to explore their own emerging sense of virtue as it relates to this topic.

Students can, and should, be forewarned about the potentially upsetting discussion of sexuality contained in the novel. Considering the sexual extremes depicted daily on television, students need a vehicle to discuss the importance of individual morality in this area of their lives. As Jane says, “I am no bird; and no net ensnares me: I am a free human being with an independent will.” Brönte’s novel provides students an opportunity to seek for themselves the freedom promised by independent will.

Of Mice and Men by John Steinbeck (1937)

With Film Adaptation (1992)

The English Department has carefully evaluated *Of Mice and Men* as a whole and deemed it worthy for the 11th grade English curriculum. The film adaptation is rated PG-13 for some scenes of violence. To further understanding of setting as a literary device the student will compare the novel with the performance.

I. Plot Summary

Steinbeck's classic depression-era novel traces the journey of two outsiders in search of the American dream: a small plot of land to call their own and an independent life. The novella hinges on the friendship between these two, which requires George provide leadership, guidance, and caretaking for his friend. As a counter to their bleak migrant existence, George tells Lennie a story about their future, embroidered with stability, safety, and calm that their do not and will not have in their lives.

II. Rationale and Learning Objectives

Of Mice and Men serves to illuminate the historical condition of a critical moment in American history and provides one of the most powerful narratives in American literature. The central question of the work is connected to our conceptions of justice, an issue that students have traced from the earliest moments of the course. In order to protect Lennie from the world, George must make a heartbreaking decision to kill him. This moment challenges students to consider the grey in a world of black and white.

III. Common Core Standards

Reading Standards for Literature

Key Ideas and Details	Grades 11 - 12
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inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.	determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.
2. Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.	2. Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.
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4. Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.	4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful. (Include Shakespeare as well as other authors.)
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IV. Addressing Sensitive Subjects

Possible sensitive subjects in *Of Mice and Men*: reference to adultery and sexuality, vulgar language, manslaughter, mercy killing. The student is encouraged to feel comfortable expressing his/her views

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openly in the classroom. If the student is uncomfortable at any time, the student should meet with the teacher to discuss his/her concerns.

The conclusion of this novel is difficult. In the end, in order to protect Lennie, something he has done many times over the course of the work, George must kill him. While this moment has been foreshadowed, this takes many students by surprise. In order to process this tragedy, students have built a rapport and a venue. Steinbeck said, "It is true that we [humanity] are weak and sick and ugly and quarrelsome but if that is all we ever were, we would millenniums ago have disappeared from the face of the earth." The conversation about Lennie helps students consider this dichotomy and all its complexities.

The Great Gatsby by F. Scott Fitzgerald (1925) *With Film Adaptation (2013)*

The English Department has carefully evaluated *The Great Gatsby*, and its modern adaptation as a whole and deemed both worthy for the AP Literature and Composition curriculum. The film is rated PG-13 for some violent images, sexual content, smoking, partying and brief language.

I. Plot Summary

Fitzgerald's classic novel brings to life the exuberance and vitality of the Jazz Age, with its elaborate parties, sparkling personalities, and careless people. Nick Caraway narrates as the mystery of *Gatsby* unfolds, and the novel captures the nostalgia, narcissism, corruption, social climbing, hedonism and hope tied up in the era. *Gatsby's* American dream is the engine that drives it all, but the crushing impact of WWI and the hollow heart of The Lost Generation prove inescapable.

II. Rationale and Learning Objectives

The novel is occupied with quintessentially American themes related to meritocracy and regret. Students will have an opportunity to explore the impact of past action and future intentions on the lives and motivations of Fitzgerald's characters. A short story and poetry exploration will provide students with a look the way different texts address a similar theme. The student will consider symbol, foreshadowing, irony, paradox, and theme as they compose AP practice essays.

III. Common Core Standards

Reading Standards for Literature

Key Ideas and Details	Grades 11 - 12
1. Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the	1. Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

Curriculum Rationales: AP Literature

text.	
2. Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.	2. Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.
3. Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.	3. Analyze the impact of the author’s choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).
Craft and Structure	Grades 11 – 12
4. Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.	4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful. (Include Shakespeare as well as other authors.)
5. Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.	5. Analyze how an author’s choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.
6. Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.	6. Analyze a case in which grasping point of view requires distinguishing what is directly stated in a text from what is really meant (e.g., satire, sarcasm, irony, or understatement).
Integration of Knowledge and Ideas	Grades 11 - 12
7. Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse formats and media, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.	7. Analyze multiple interpretations of a story, drama, or poem (e.g., recorded or live production of a play or recorded novel or poetry), evaluating how each version interprets the source text. (Include at least one play by Shakespeare and one play by an American dramatist.)
9. Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.	9. Demonstrate knowledge of eighteenth-, nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century foundational works of American literature, including how two or more texts from the same period treat similar themes or topics.
Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity	Grades 11 - 12
10. Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.	10. By the end of grade 11, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 11–CCR text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range. By the end of grade 12, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of the grades 11–CCR text complexity

Curriculum Rationales: AP Literature

	band independently and proficiently.
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IV. Addressing Sensitive Subjects

Possible sensitive topics contained in *The Great Gatsby*: violence, sexuality, alcohol, murder, suicide. In the classroom, sensitive topics will be dealt with in a mature fashion, toward an understanding of why this material is included in the novel. The English department feels that the literary merit of this novel and film adaptation more than compensates for the inclusion of this sensitive subject matter. The student is encouraged to feel comfortable expressing his/her beliefs and views openly within the classroom environment. If the student is uncomfortable at any time, the student should meet with the teacher to discuss his/her concerns.

The Awakening by Kate Chopin (1899)

The English Department has carefully evaluated *The Awakening* as a whole and deemed it worthy for the AP Literature and Composition curriculum.

I. Plot Summary

Set in New Orleans and Southern Louisiana late in the nineteenth century, *The Awakening* tells the story of Edna Pontellier and her views on femininity and motherhood. Edna begins a journey of self-discovery that leads to an understanding of the limitations on women at this time period; her “solitary soul” and her need for both solitude and independence; the pleasure she discovers in music and the creation of art; and her romantic attachment to a young man.

II. Rationale and Learning Objectives

Through a series of personal and focused writing exercises, the student will analyze the author’s craft through use of dialogue and various rhetorical techniques including diction, theme development and analysis of character development. The student will also analyze the social and contextual aspects of the setting and their influence on characters and events, along with an examination of feminist theories and consideration of the journey to self-discovery. Further, the student will evaluate the influences of Romanticism, Realism, Naturalism, and Local Color.

III. Common Core Standards

Reading Standards for Literature

Key Ideas and Details	Grades 11 - 12
1. Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to	1. Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

Curriculum Rationales: AP Literature

support conclusions drawn from the text.	
2. Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.	2. Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.
3. Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.	3. Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).
Craft and Structure	Grades 11 – 12
4. Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.	4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful. (Include Shakespeare as well as other authors.)
5. Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.	5. Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.
6. Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.	6. Analyze a case in which grasping point of view requires distinguishing what is directly stated in a text from what is really meant (e.g., satire, sarcasm, irony, or understatement).
Integration of Knowledge and Ideas	Grades 11 - 12
7. Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse formats and media, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.	7. Analyze multiple interpretations of a story, drama, or poem (e.g., recorded or live production of a play or recorded novel or poetry), evaluating how each version interprets the source text. (Include at least one play by Shakespeare and one play by an American dramatist.)
9. Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.	9. Demonstrate knowledge of eighteenth-, nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century foundational works of American literature, including how two or more texts from the same period treat similar themes or topics.
Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity	Grades 11 - 12
10. Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.	10. By the end of grade 11, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 11–CCR text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range. By the end of grade 12, read and comprehend literature, including stories,

Curriculum Rationales: AP Literature

	dramas, and poems, at the high end of the grades 11–CCR text complexity band independently and proficiently.
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IV. Addressing Sensitive Subjects

Possible sensitive topics contained in *The Awakening*: suicide and sexual relations. In the classroom, sensitive topics will be dealt with in a mature fashion, toward an understanding of why this material is included in the novel. The English department feels that the literary merit of this novel more than compensates for the inclusion of this sensitive subject matter. The student is encouraged to feel comfortable expressing his/her beliefs and views openly within the classroom environment. If the student is uncomfortable at any time, the student should meet with the teacher to discuss his/her concerns.

The Stranger by Albert Camus (1942)

The English Department has carefully evaluated *The Stranger* as a whole and deemed it worthy for the AP Literature and Composition curriculum.

I. Plot Summary

Albert Camus' *The Stranger* is a novel about an unintended murder and the trial that follows. Meursault is a young man who appears to be indifferent to the world around him and is forced to face his own identity and ultimately, his own mortality.

II. Rationale and Learning Objectives

Camus' complex text, an example of existentialism and absurdism, challenges the reader to evaluate the concepts of alienation, spirituality, morality, and choice, encouraging comparison and evaluation of one's individual beliefs. Students will identify character, setting, plot, point of view, and theme, demonstrating deeper understanding through both personal and focused written responses.

III. Common Core Standards

Reading Standards for Literature

Key Ideas and Details	Grades 11 - 12
1. Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.	1. Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

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2. Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.	2. Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.
3. Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.	3. Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).
Craft and Structure	Grades 11 – 12
4. Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.	4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful. (Include Shakespeare as well as other authors.)
5. Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.	5. Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.
6. Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.	6. Analyze a case in which grasping point of view requires distinguishing what is directly stated in a text from what is really meant (e.g., satire, sarcasm, irony, or understatement).
Integration of Knowledge and Ideas	Grades 11 - 12
7. Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse formats and media, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.	7. Analyze multiple interpretations of a story, drama, or poem (e.g., recorded or live production of a play or recorded novel or poetry), evaluating how each version interprets the source text. (Include at least one play by Shakespeare and one play by an American dramatist.)
9. Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.	9. Demonstrate knowledge of eighteenth-, nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century foundational works of American literature, including how two or more texts from the same period treat similar themes or topics.
Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity	Grades 11 - 12
10. Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.	10. By the end of grade 11, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 11–CCR text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range. By the end of grade 12, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of the grades 11–CCR text complexity band independently and proficiently.

IV. Addressing Sensitive Subjects

Possible sensitive topics contained in *The Stranger*: murder (violence) and sexual topics. In the classroom, sensitive topics will be dealt with in a mature fashion, toward an understanding of why this material is included in the novel. The English department feels that the literary merit of this novel more than compensates for the inclusion of this sensitive subject matter. The student is encouraged to feel comfortable expressing his/her beliefs and views openly within the classroom environment. If the student is uncomfortable at any time, the student should meet with the teacher to discuss his/her concerns.

To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee (1960)

With Film Adaptation (1962)

The English Department has carefully evaluated *To Kill a Mockingbird* as a whole and deemed it worthy for the 11th grade English curriculum. The film adaptation is unrated, but parents are advised that the recommended rating is PG-13 for thematic material, some language, and references to rape.

I. Plot Summary

Lee's novel is narrated by Scout Finch and follows her family as they struggle against the entrenched racism of 1930s Alabama. Scout's father Atticus is a local public defender, called to confront bigotry and discrimination directly as the attorney for a black man named Tom Robinson. Tom has been falsely accused of rape and because the narration is provided from the perspective of a child, the crime in question is bewildering on many levels.

II. Rationale and Learning Objectives

To Kill a Mockingbird is vital to any study of literature. The novel, its characters, and Lee herself are frequently alluded to in popular culture and academia. But the value of the novel is not limited to its existence as a touchstone, the framework provided by Lee's work is ideal for the study of literary elements and story archetypes. Theme, motif, and allusion are particularly evident and easily accessible for students.

The motif of childhood that infuses the first portion of the narrative makes the novel particularly appealing to high school students. Readers naturally sympathize with Scout's escapades and the accessibility of Lee's prose makes the complexities of the novel manageable for students.

III. Common Core Standards

Reading Standards for Literature

Curriculum Rationales: AP Literature

Key Ideas and Details	Grades 11 - 12
1. Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.	1. Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.
2. Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.	2. Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.
3. Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.	3. Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).
Craft and Structure	Grades 11 – 12
4. Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.	4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful. (Include Shakespeare as well as other authors.)
5. Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.	5. Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.
6. Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.	6. Analyze a case in which grasping point of view requires distinguishing what is directly stated in a text from what is really meant (e.g., satire, sarcasm, irony, or understatement).
Integration of Knowledge and Ideas	Grades 11 - 12
7. Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse formats and media, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.	7. Analyze multiple interpretations of a story, drama, or poem (e.g., recorded or live production of a play or recorded novel or poetry), evaluating how each version interprets the source text. (Include at least one play by Shakespeare and one play by an American dramatist.)
9. Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.	9. Demonstrate knowledge of eighteenth-, nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century foundational works of American literature, including how two or more texts from the same period treat similar themes or topics.

Curriculum Rationales: AP Literature

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity	Grades 11 - 12
10. Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.	10. By the end of grade 11, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 11–CCR text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range. By the end of grade 12, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of the grades 11–CCR text complexity band independently and proficiently.

IV. Addressing Sensitive Subjects

Possible sensitive topics contained in *To Kill a Mockingbird*: profanity or vulgar language, reference to rape, and violence. The student is encouraged to feel comfortable expressing his/her beliefs and views openly within the classroom environment. If the student is uncomfortable at any time, the student should meet with the teacher to discuss his/her concerns.

Bigotry can be a sensitive issue in the classroom, and the undercurrent of violence that pervades the novel adds additional complexity. While the racism and injustice that feature in the narrative may seemingly have receded out of the public consciousness, certainly these issues remain relevant for students. Harper Lee has remained steadfastly silent on the book and its influence, but she once noted, “The book to read is not the one which thinks for you, but the one which makes you think.” To the extent the students will have an opportunity to think about crucial issues and conduct difficult literary analysis this is the book to read.