

**Advanced Placement Literature & Composition  
Curriculum Overview**

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**Quarter One: Cultural Constructs (and Chains)**

**Unit 1** (approximately 8 weeks)

**Theme = “the dark places of the earth”**

**Essential Questions:**

- What social responsibility do I have to society?
- What can we do to avoid repeating mistakes made in history?
- How can I effectively articulate my opinions and perspectives?
- How do I ensure that I am developing the skills that I will need to succeed on the AP Literature exam?

**Literary Critical Lenses:** Postcolonial, Psychological, Historical, Biographical

**Anchor Text:**

*The Poisonwood Bible* (1998), *Kingsolver* (summer reading)  
*Heart of Darkness* (1899), *Joseph Conrad* (summer reading)  
*Things Fall Apart* (1958), *Achebe*  
*Invisible Man* (1952), *Ellison*

**Supplemental Texts:** “The Hollow Men” (1925), T.S. Eliot

“An Image of Africa” (1975), Achebe  
“The White Man’s Burden” (1899), Kipling  
“The Astronomer’s Wife” (1936), Boyle  
Introduction to the textbook (DiYanni anthology)  
*Metamorphosis* (1915), Kafka  
selected articles of literary criticism regarding Conrad and, later, Kafka  
*Literature: Reading Fiction, Poetry, Drama, and the Essay*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, Robert DiYanni  
*How to Read Literature Like a Professor* (2003), Thomas C. Foster (summer reading)  
*Writers Inc.* as needed for writing reference and terms  
Outside novel of choice (selected from the College Board & AP Lit suggested reading lists)

**Developed Writings:**

- 3-5 reader response pieces (related to summer readings, both digital and print)
- 1-2 short close readings
- 4-5 major work reductions

**Formal Writings:**

2 literary analysis pieces (literary analysis using a postcolonial lens to view *The Heart of Darkness*; literary analysis including Achebe’s message concerning the cultural impact on the Ibo people, the village, and the protagonist in *Things Fall Apart*)

**Writing Skills Focus:** varied sentence lengths, forms, structures, and beginnings, parallelism, repetition for effect

epistrophe), effective thesis statements, integration of snippets of text into writing for support,  
5 Grammatical Brushstrokes, 13 Smiley Face Tricks, 6+1 Traits of Writing, punctuation variety,  
Bear Words, as well as a variety of additional minilessons related to grammar, mechanics, and craft

**Word Study Focus:** Vocabulary from context and tone vocabulary; Monday –Friday word study will begin (see AP vocabulary lists in corresponding curriculum units)

**Technology Focus:** summer blog, Google tools, online portfolio, library media information literacy skills, online presentation tools (such as Prezi), Google tools, podcasts

**AP Lit Exam Practice:** introduction to the structure and protocol of the AP Exam

- Full Pretest with Sample MC Exam and essay questions (prose, poetry, and open-ended)
- 1 timed AP open-ended essay (using *The Invisible Man*)
- Friday AP practice sessions begin

## **Quarter Two: Free to be Me**

### **Unit 2** (approximately 3 weeks)

#### **Theme = “the world around me”**

##### **Essential Questions:**

What is the effect of literary devices used in short stories?

##### **Genre Study: Short Story**

Short stories from the anthology, usually including “The A & P,” Updike; “Young Goodwin Brown,” Hawthorne; “Everyday Use,” Walker

**Course Textbooks:** *Literature: Reading Fiction, Poetry, Drama, and the Essay*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, Robert DiYanni  
*How to Read Literature Like a Professor*, Thomas C. Foster  
*Writers Inc.* as needed for writing reference and terms  
Outside novel of choice (selected from the College Board & AP Literature suggested reading lists)

##### **Developed Writings:**

1-2 reader response pieces  
1-2 short close readings

**Writing Skills Focus:** varied sentence lengths, forms, structures, and beginnings, parallelism, repetition for effect (anaphora), effective thesis statements, integration of snippets of text into writing for support, 5 Grammatical Brushstrokes, 6+1 Traits of Writing, punctuation variety, Bear Words, as well as a variety of additional minilessons related to grammar, mechanics, and craft

**Word Study Focus:** basic literary terminology; Monday –Friday word study (see AP vocabulary lists in corresponding curriculum units)

**Technology Focus:** summer blog, Google tools, online portfolio, library media information literacy skills

**AP Lit Exam Practice:** Friday AP practice sessions continue

Practice objective test with prose passages  
Practice essay (timed) with prose passage

### **Unit 3** (approximately 3 weeks)

#### **Theme = “this is just to say”**

##### **Essential Questions:**

What are the forms, structures, and purposed of poetry and how may I become a close reader of poetry at an advanced level?

**Genre Study:** Poetry (with a focus on explication)

**Anchor Text:** poetry selections from DiYanni anthology

**Supplemental Texts:** poetry selections

Selected articles of literary criticism and research (based on students’ selections)

**Course Textbooks:** *Literature: Reading Fiction, Poetry, Drama, and the Essay*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, Robert DiYanni  
*How to Read Literature Like a Professor*, Thomas C. Foster

##### **Developed Writings:**

1-2 reading response pieces  
1-2 short close readings

##### **Formal Writings:**

1 original emulation poem

**Writing Skills Focus:** varied sentence lengths, forms, structures, and beginnings, parallelism, repetition for effect (anaphora, epistrophe), effective thesis statements, integration of snippets of text into writing for support, 5 Grammatical Brushstrokes, 6+1 Traits of Writing, punctuation variety, Bear Words, as well as a variety of additional minilessons related to grammar, mechanics, and craft

**Word Study Focus:** Poetic devices and terminology, Monday AP Vocabulary Quizzes

**Technology Focus:** class blog, class poetry wiki or Google presentation (or other online collaborative device), online portfolio

**AP Lit Exam Practice:** Friday AP practice sessions continue, with a focus on poetry passages (objective and essay)

#### **Unit 4** (approximately 3 weeks)

**Themes = “imagining of the self” and “her position in the universe”**

**Essential Questions:**

What responsibility do I have to society?

How do I resolve my responsibilities to myself with those to my family, school community, and world?

To what extent am I governed or shaped by gender norms and constructs?

How have my experiences led me to an “imagining of the self?”

**Literary Critical Lenses:** Feminist, Historical

**Anchor Texts:** *Jane Eyre* (1847), C. Bronte

**Supplemental Texts:** “She Unnames Them” (1985), LeGuin

“When We Dead Awaken” (1979), Rich

“The Yellow Wallpaper” (1982), Gilman

“Why I Wrote the Yellow Wallpaper,” Gilman

excerpts from *Enlightened Sexism: The Seductive Message that Feminism’s Work is Done* (2010), Douglas

poems from the textbook: Rukeyser, Rich, Clifton, etc.

**Suggested Texts:** *The Awakening* (1899), Kate Chopin

*On Lies, Secrets, and Silence* (1979), Rich

*Backlash* (1991), Faludi

*Reviving Ophelia* (1994), Pipher

**Course Textbooks:** Literature: Reading Fiction, Poetry, Drama, and the Essay, 3rd Edition, Robert DiYanni

**Developed Writings:** 3-4 letter essays (dialoguing with a partner, 6-10 pages), 1 close reading piece, 1 major work reduction

**Formal Writings:** 1 film/documentary reflective response

**Writing Skills Focus:** varied sentence lengths, forms, structures, and beginnings, parallelism, repetition for effect (anaphora, epistrophe), effective thesis statements, integration of snippets of text into writing for support, 5 Grammatical Brushstrokes, 6+1 Traits of Writing, punctuation variety, Bear Words, as well as a variety of additional minilessons related to grammar, mechanics, and craft

**Word Study Focus:** literary terminology, AP vocabulary lists, terminology related to gender construction

**Technology Focus:** Google Documents, class blog, online portfolio, library media information literacy skills

**AP Lit Exam Practice:** Friday AP practice sessions continue (using AP-like assessments related to *Jane Eyre*)  
1 timed AP practice essay

#### **Unit 5** (approximately 1 week)

**Theme = “this is what it is to be happy”**

**Essential Questions:**

What leadership skills have I developed?

How do we, in the face of adversity and chaos, make our own happiness?

What are the characteristics of a Bildungsroman?

How might my own readings be enriched by my participation in a literature circle?

**Literary Critical Lenses:** Reader Response, Biographical

**Anchor Text:** novels for small literature circles, including

*The Bell Jar* (1963), *Plath The Color Purple* (1982), Walker

*Ordinary People* (1976), *Guest Catcher in the Rye* (1951), Salinger

*Siddhartha* (1922), Hesse

**Developed Writings:** 2-3 literature circle pieces, 1-2 blog entries (digital), 1 major work reduction

**Formal Writings:** 1 literary analysis piece

**Writing Skills Focus:** varied sentence lengths, forms, structures, and beginnings, parallelism, repetition for effect (anaphora, epistrophe), effective thesis statements, integration of snippets of text into writing for support, as well as a variety of additional minilessons related to grammar, mechanics, and craft

**Word Study Focus:** literary terminology, AP vocabulary lists

**Technology Focus:** class blog, online portfolio, library media information literacy skills

**AP Lit Exam Practice:** Friday AP practice sessions continue (objective & essays 1-3)  
1 timed AP practice essay

## Quarter Three: Creation and Damnation

**Unit 6** (approximately 5 weeks)

**Theme = “perdition catch my soul”**

**Essential Questions:**

What responsibility do I have to society?

What rules or principles do I use for how I treat others?

How important is reputation, and how do I (if possible) shape mine?

**Literary Critical Lenses:** Postcolonial, Psychological

**Anchor Text:** *Othello* (1622), Shakespeare

**Supplemental Texts:** Shakespearean sonnets

“Goats and Monkeys” (1965), Walcott

“The Development of Shakespeare’s Imagery,” Clemen

additional critical essays on *Othello*

Film clips from a variety of play versions, including *Othello* (1995), Dir. Oliver Parker

*Tough Guise* (2000), with Jackson Katz

**Suggested Texts:** other plays by Shakespeare

**Course Textbooks:** *Literature: Reading Fiction, Poetry, Drama, and the Essay*, 3rd Edition, Robert DiYanni

Outside novel of choice for Literary Legacies Research Project

**Formal Writings:** 1<sup>st</sup> research essay (Literary Legacies Project), 1 close reading (analytical, argumentative evaluation of the artistry and quality of *Othello*)

**Writing Skills:** varied sentence lengths, forms, structures, and beginnings, parallelism, repetition for effect (anaphora, epistrophe), effective thesis statements, integration of snippets of text into writing for support, 5 Grammatical Brushstrokes, 13 Smiley Face Tricks, 6+1 Traits of Writing, punctuation variety, Bear Words, as well as a variety of additional minilessons related to grammar, mechanics, and craft

**Word Study Focus:** literary terminology, Shakespearean language and terms

**Technology Focus:** podcasts, class blog, online portfolio, library media information literacy skills

**AP Lit Exam Practice:** Friday AP practice sessions continue  
1-3 time AP practice essays

**Unit 7** (approximately 4 weeks)

**Theme = “the best blessings of existence”**

**Essential Questions:**

What rules or principles do I use for how I treat others?

How do I resolve my responsibilities to myself with those to my family, school community, and world?

**Literary Critical Lenses:** Formalist, Historical, Feminist

**Anchor Text:** *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), Jane Austen

**Supplemental Texts:** excerpts from *What Jane Austen Ate and Charles Dickens Knew: From Fox Hunting to Whist—The Facts of Daily Life in Nineteenth-Century England* (1993), Daniel Pool

essays from Readings on Jane Austen, Swisher, ed.

“Nice to Eat with You,” HTRLLAP, Foster

selected articles of literary criticism regarding Austen and her contemporaries

**Suggested Texts:** additional Austen novels

additional period novels

**Developed Writings:**

1 reader response journal with multigenre entries,

1 film review

1 major work reduction

**Formal Writings:**

1-2 Austen emulation pieces

1 literary analysis (focus on style, feminist lens)

**Writing Skills Focus:** varied sentence lengths, forms, structures, and beginnings, parallelism, repetition for effect (anaphora, epistrophe), effective thesis statements, integration of snippets of text into writing for support, 5 Grammatical Brushstrokes, 13 Smiley Face Tricks, 6+1 Traits of Writing, punctuation variety, Bear Words, as well as a variety of additional minilessons related to grammar, mechanics, and craft

**Word Study Focus:** related literary terminology, Monday AP Vocabulary Quizzes

**Technology Focus:** class blog, online portfolio, library media information literacy skills

**AP Lit Exam Practice:** Friday AP practice sessions continue: objective, Essay 1, Essay 2, Essay 3  
2-3 AP practice essays

## Quarter Four: Chasing the Dream

**Unit 8** (approximately 3 weeks)

**Theme = “dreams deferred”**

**Essential Questions:**

What is the American Dream? Why do some achieve it while others are cut out?

What is the importance of being “well liked” and popular?

How do we form our identities?

How do capitalism and modernization affect American workers?

**Genre Study:** Plays AP

**Anchor Text:** *Death of a Salesman* (1949) Miller

Selected plays from DiYanni anthology and additional anthologies, usually including Course Textbooks: *Literature: Reading Fiction, Poetry, Drama, and the Essay*, 3rd Edition, Robert DiYanni

Outside novel of choice (selected from the College Board & AP Literature suggested reading lists)

**Developed Writings:** 1 close reading essay, 1 AP practice essay, 1 blog entry

**Formal Writings:** 1 literary interpretation piece, 2<sup>nd</sup> research essay (Literary Legacies Research Project)

**Writing Skills Focus:** varied sentence lengths, forms, structures, and beginnings, parallelism, repetition for effect (anaphora, epistrophe), effective thesis statements, integration of snippets of text into writing for support, 5 Grammatical Brushstrokes, 6+1 Traits of Writing, punctuation variety, Bear Words, as well as a variety of additional minilessons related to grammar, mechanics, and craft

**Word Study Focus:** Review of AP Vocabulary lists and AP Lit literary terms lists

**Technology Focus:** class blog, online AP practice exams, online portfolio, library media information literacy skills

**AP Lit Exam Practice:** Friday AP practice sessions continue

**Unit 9** (approximately 3 weeks)

**Theme = “imagining based on facts”**

**Essential Questions:**

How do I know that I am ready for the AP exam? (review)

What steps and strategies does a close reader practice? (review)

**Genre Study:** Short Stories, Poems, AP Exam Essays

**Anchor Text:** selected short stories from DiYanni anthology and additional anthologies, usually including O’Connor, Hemingway, and others

**Course Textbooks:** *Literature: Reading Fiction, Poetry, Drama, and the Essay*, 3rd Edition, Robert DiYanni

**Developed Writings:** 3+ final practice AP essays, drafts for Literary Legacies Research Project

**Writing Skills Focus:** varied sentence lengths, forms, structures, and beginnings, parallelism, repetition for effect (anaphora, epistrophe), effective thesis statements, integration of snippets of text into writing for support, 5 Grammatical Brushstrokes, 6+1 Traits of Writing, punctuation variety, Bear Words, as well as a variety of additional minilessons related to grammar, mechanics, and craft

**Word Study Focus:** Final Review of AP Vocab and AP Lit literary terms lists

**Technology Focus:** Various Web 2.0 tools, online AP practice exams, online portfolio, library media information literacy skills

**AP Lit Exam Practice:** 1-2 weeks devoted to **AP Final Preparation and Practice** (weeks leading up to exam)

**Unit 10** (approximately 3 weeks)

**Theme = “the breathings of your heart”**

**Essential Questions:**

How does one bid farewell to a life chapter with grace and sincerity?

How can I effectively communicate my opinions and perspectives?

How can I create the world in which I want to live?

What leadership skills will I take with me after graduation?

**Genre Study:** Research Writing, Original Poetry, Digital Media

**Anchor Texts:** Students’ choice novels for Literary Legacies Research Projects

**Formal Writings:**

2-3 poems contributed to the Class Anthology,

1 piece related to Literary Gift Exchange,

1 Farewell piece, 3rd paper for the Literary Legacies Research Project,

1 digital piece

**Field Trip:** 1 trip to neighboring university library to gather sources for 3rd paper of the Literary Legacies Project

**Writing Skills:** research writing, revision, publication preparation (the anthology, research projects, digital stories)

**Technology Focus:** digital (film) short or digital story, online portfolio, library media information literacy skills