

English Language Arts Program

The **English Language Arts** curriculum at Harrison High School prepares students with the necessary language skills to become college and career ready. Students learn to read, write, listen, and speak for information and understanding, for literary response and expression, for critical analysis and evaluation, and for social interaction. Works of literature whose range extends across genres, cultures, and centuries offer profound insights into the human condition and serve as models for students' own thinking and writing. Through wide and deep reading of literature and literary nonfiction of steadily increasing sophistication, students acquire cultural schemata that will serve them in the development of their ability to analyze and evaluate intricate arguments.

The writing program prepares students to assert and defend claims demonstrating expertise on certain subjects. College-and career-ready writers consider their task, purpose and audience as well as their vocabulary, syntax and structure to communicate effectively in writing.

They are also adept at researching topics, evaluating sources, citing material accurately, and drawing conclusions and reporting their ideas in a clear and cogent manner. Throughout the program, students are exposed to the use of technology for communicative purposes and are expected to make use of it strategically when creating, refining, and collaborating on writing.

ENGLISH 9

This course links literature to the study of big ideas and essential questions related to **"Coming of Age"**. Our rigorous instructional framework is organized around thematically-based units containing scaffolded activities that lead to performance-based Embedded Assessments. A range of multi-cultural texts in multiple genres is analyzed through a multitude of critical theories and lenses and serves as the foundation for analytical thinking and writing across the humanities.

Major works of literature include (but are not limited to): Beah, Cisneros, Ford, Hansberry, Laiz, Lee, McBride, Santiago, Shakespeare, Steinbeck, and Walls. In writing, particular emphasis is placed on the writing process through prewriting, drafting, revising and final editing.

Students are expected to demonstrate their writing skills through the development of narrative, descriptive, expository, persuasive and creative/expressive pieces. Vocabulary, grammar and other language conventions are instructed in the context of the assigned readings. Public speaking opportunities, in small and large group settings, are also a key part of the English program for the ninth grade. During the course, students begin their preparation for the Comprehensive English Regents and for future advanced study of literature, language, and composition.

ENGLISH 10

Through a thematic approach to the study of literature, this course addresses the Essential Question: **"How do the choices we make affect who we are and how others perceive us?"** Our rigorous instructional framework is organized around thematically-based units containing scaffolded activities that lead to performance-based Embedded Assessments.

Readings include a variety of novels, short stories, plays, poetry, and essays. Texts range from the classical works of Sophocles and Shakespeare to more modern authors such as J.D. Salinger, Kurt Vonnegut, and William Golding. Students continue to develop their skills through narrative, descriptive, expository, persuasive, and creative/expressive writing. Vocabulary, grammar, usage and mechanics are also addressed throughout the year in the context of the literature read. Additionally, students continue to develop their public-speaking skills in this course. In preparation for advanced study in the IB Diploma Program, additional emphasis is placed on the development of close reading skills and literary analysis through the writing of formal essays.

ENGLISH 11

The eleventh grade curriculum focuses on the theme of **The American Dream** in literature by incorporating numerous learning strategies from the College Board's official Pre-AP program, SpringBoard. Each Unit addresses essential questions and focuses on specific learning goals that provide a clear understanding of what students will be learning. The curriculum has been supplemented with numerous literary genres that reinforce the concept of the American Dream. Students read **The Great Gatsby**, by F. Scott Fitzgerald, **The Crucible**, by Arthur Miller, and **Into the Wild**, by John Krakaur, along with the texts included in SpringBoard. The focus for writing is in the form of literary analysis, as well as a variety of other writing formats.

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ENGLISH 12

This year-long course focuses on differing perspectives. We begin by analyzing an ensemble-cast film as text to appreciate varying points of view. Stephen King's novella "**Rita Hayworth and the Shawshank Redemption**" is next studied to illustrate that one should find hope in the most unlikely of situations. Perspective is then turned upside down in the analysis of Ray Bradbury's dystopian novel **Fahrenheit 451**, and it is followed by the multiple perspectives of the Vietnam War displayed by Tim O'Brien's characters in **The Things They Carried**. The culminating unit of study involves media with a close examination of the present and future role of newspapers. The treatment of a selected topic in the media will underscore that there is never one point of view.

AP ENGLISH LANGUAGE (OPTION)

The course 'English 12 AP Language and Composition' is designed to help students read, analyze, and write with the same level of skill and sophistication offered in a first-year composition course in college. *The Language of Composition* textbook utilized in class offers a diverse collection of over 100 college-level readings-including nonfiction, fiction, and poetry-that are both interesting and suitable for a high school audience. Instruction focuses on the identification and application of rhetorical strategies in both reading and writing, with special attention paid to synthesizing information and visual analysis skills. Students take the AP Language and Composition exam in May.

IB ENGLISH HL YEAR 1 & YEAR 2

The English HL course at Harrison High School achieves a meaningful synthesis of the IB mission through an appreciation of the English language and its linguistic structure. Through challenging, active learning, this two year college-level course develops students' understanding of both oral and written discourse, with a focus on expanding their analytic and composition skills.

The course exposes students to a wide range of literature from various time periods and global cultures. Through literary criticism and analysis, students will examine conflict and challenges within a multi-cultural context, affording them a broadened international perspective on literature, human thought and civilization. This global-minded approach to literature prepares learners to appreciate diversity while encouraging a deeper understanding of one's own culture and place in the world.

Students will learn to read and respond reflectively, speak with empathy, listen actively, and communicate with greater understanding. The world literature element of the course is designed to enrich the students' international awareness, developing the qualities outlined in the IB learner profile, tolerance, empathy, and a genuine respect for perspectives different from their own. Coursework includes essays and oratory, drama, poetry, and fiction from IB prescribed lists. Development of presentation and essay writing skills in preparation for IB oral and written assessments is emphasized. Summer and extensive outside reading are required for this course.

ELECTIVE COURSES

CREATIVE WRITING I

This course is designed for students who enjoy writing and who wish to express their creativity in prose or poetry, in fiction, or nonfiction. In moving away from traditional expository writing, these self-motivated authors will develop their own imaginative voices. They will analyze and critique models of different genres to understand the techniques that creative writers employ. They then create original texts in selected literary genres. Students are encouraged to submit their work to the school's literary magazine, IMAGINE.

CREATIVE WRITING II AND III

Students in these courses will continue tapping into their imagination and creativity to develop their own voices and individual styles. They will focus on writing as a personal, emotional, and expressive experience and in doing so will hone their craft as writers. In a writing workshop setting, students practice writing skills and techniques, becoming more comfortable as creative writers. Analysis of writing samples and improvement of students' vocabulary and grammar are topics for the course in addition to individual and group discussion of creative work for revision. Student work is frequently published in the school's literary magazine, IMAGINE.

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JOURNALISM I

In this introductory course students learn how to brainstorm for article ideas, cull information from sources, analyze findings and edit their own and others' writing. Students learn the fundamentals of news writing and layout by using as models news articles, features, editorials, and sports pieces from *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal* and *The Journal News*. They learn how to prepare for and conduct interviews and how to incorporate quotations into their writing. Students' articles are edited by the teacher and by Journalism II and III students. Once edited, pieces are chosen for publication in the school newspaper, *Husky Herald*.

JOURNALISM II

In this intermediate course students learn about editing, production and investigative journalism and the accompanying skills that help them grow into school newspaper editors. They also learn how to hone their critical thinking skills in regard to the larger world of the media. In addition to using articles from *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Journal News*, and other publications as models for, and examples of, trends and topics, they learn "to read between the lines" and to analyze how print and online sources cater to particular readerships. Special emphasis is placed on creating work for publication in the school newspaper, *Husky Herald*.

JOURNALISM III

Students in Journalism II and III meet together in the same classroom during the same periods; many of the students who enroll in Journalism III are staff editors for the school newspaper. In addition to engaging in Journalism II activities, students in Journalism III determine layout, write headlines and select articles for publication. They also edit articles, arrange and meet with administrators, and tackle the paper's most challenging topics.

SAT / ACT VERBAL PREP

This introductory SAT/ACT course focuses on developing test-taking skills by providing students with strategies to answer the types of questions found on the test: *sentence completion* questions which measure the ability to understand how the different parts of a sentence fit together and *critical reading* questions which measure the ability to synthesize and analyze information. The *Writing* section measures students' ability to identify appropriate expressions in standard written English, detect errors in usage and structure, choose effective revisions to sentences and paragraphs, and recognize appropriate writing strategies. Students are taught the skills necessary to compose a well-organized, fully-developed essay under timed conditions.