

## **Pre-AP English I** **2011 – 2012**

**Mr. Matthew G. Martinez Room 269C**  
**mmarti20@houstonisd.org**

Pre-AP English I is a literature-based writing course that explores issues of identity, relationship, structure, motivation, and creativity with pen and paper. Grounding the course on these topics allows students the advantage of using their knowledge while connecting writing and literature to life experiences as they improve upon their current abilities in reading, writing, and thinking. This course is a step by step regimen that begins at the student's current skill level and pushes them toward college coursework and Advanced Placement (AP) performance in Standard English and writing skills. *It is crucial to student success that students make their best efforts to follow instructions. Students are preparing for college level work and should assume considerable responsibility for daily reading, reflections, and writing.*

**Writing:** Students in Pre-AP English I will practice a series of writing techniques designed to develop their individual styles and voices. Appropriate diction, effective imagery, rich detail, deft manipulation of point of view, and purposeful use of various sentence structures will inform student writing in our class.

**Revision**—literally “re-seeing” a piece of writing—is the heart of a writing program. Student writers will re-work their pieces through multiple drafts in order to produce maximum clarity, to achieve fully the writer's purpose, and to develop the writer's skill in using language effectively.

**Close Reading:** Our class will focus on reading for more than plot, more than detail, more than incidents or characters. Student readers will learn to look for patterns, to detect tone and tone shifts, to analyze symbols, and to perceive layers of meaning in literature, film, art, and music. This kind of reading is merely practice for the “real” work of reading that forms the primary task of human beings—the task of “reading” the world, life itself, as a text. Students will “read,” analyze, and interpret experiences they encounter outside of the literary world.

**AP Test Practice:** The curriculum for this course is in preparation for college-level reading, writing, and language study designed to help students gain the skills outlined so that he/she will be ready to pursue advanced studies in literature. To meet this goal, students will practice advanced placement multiple choice and essay questions throughout the academic year.

### **Classroom Expectations**

Be on time and be prepared for class each day by bringing all materials.

Have all homework and readings completed in preparation for daily work.

**There will be reading and writing assignments every night of the school year.**

The classroom is a professional working environment—no food or electronic devices allowed.

### **Absenteeism**

If students are absent, they will have **3 class days** to make up the missed assignment. Within the first few weeks of school, students will need to find a study partner to get notes from him/her. There will be a make up board for missed assignments and handouts.

### **Tutorials**

English tutorials are **Monday/Wednesday** from **3:30 – 4:30**. Tutorials are times when students can schedule one-on-one time for assistance. Tutorials are not the time for the teacher to “pre-grade” or proof an assignment before submittal. Students are to come with specific questions on an assignment for the instructor to help them.

### Supplies

- Loose leaf paper
- 2" binder with 2 dividers labeled Class Work and Copies
- Pens & a Highlighter
- 3" x 5" notecards (about 3 packs)
- USB/Flash Drive (mandatory)
- 2 Spiral notebooks OR 2 Composition Notebooks—  
1 for Dialectical Reader Notes and 1 for Class Notes
- Post-its/sticky notes (various sizes) for annotating texts

### Grading

Our evaluation of your work, both in and out of class, goes hand in hand with your own perception that you are making progress and becoming increasingly expert as a user and interpreter of language. You, your instructors, your peers, your parents, and others in the world around you best serve that function. As instructors we will assess your strengths and weakness as a reader and writer throughout the year.

All assignments will be graded on a total-point system consisting of but not limited to:

- Daily Work
- Essays, In-class writing, Dialectical Journals
- Vocabulary Study and Quizzes
- Text Based Discussions
- Style Analysis
- Research Process and Papers
- Highlighting and Annotation Checks
- Participation in Classroom Discussions (Seminar)
- Class Presentations
- Writing Conferences and Draft Revisions
- Projects

Scoring rubrics will be provided for assignments and writing exercises.

***Late work will be penalized 10% per day***

After 5 school days, the grade will reflect a '0' with no make up

1) **Daily Journal:** Students will keep a daily journal of written responses and 'quick-writes' to prompts related to the classroom work.

2) **Dialectical Reader Notebook:** Students will keep track of class notes, unfamiliar words, and resonant quotes for each reading assignment and text.

3) **Binder:** Students will maintain dated class notes and record daily discussion notes, questions, ideas, vocabulary, and literary devices.

4) **Work Folders:** Students will keep select pieces of writing in an ongoing folder to measure growth in the application of effective writing processes.

Grades are never discussed during class. Students will have to make an appointment after school to discuss grades.

**First 9 Wks** Aug 22 – Oct 14

**Second 9 Wks** Oct 17 – Dec 16

**Third 9 Wks** Jan 3 – Mar 9

**Fourth 9 Wks** Mar 19 – May 31

Report Card Date = Oct 21 (Friday)

Report Card Date = Jan 6 (Friday)

Report Card Date = Mar 23 (Friday)

Report Card Date = June 8 (Friday)

Texts to be used throughout the year, as well as some to be offered as independent study:

**Literature Grade 9** *textbook* Holt McDougal

**Mythology: Timeless Tales of Gods and Heroes** by Edith Hamilton

**The Odyssey** by Homer (excerpts only)  
translated by Robert Fagles

**The Catcher in the Rye** by J.D. Salinger

**Franny and Zooey** by J.D. Salinger

**The Road** by Cormac McCarthy

**Hiding Place** by John Sherrill

**The Color Purple** by Alice Walker

**The Lovely Bones** by Alice Sebold

**Cat's Cradle** by Kurt Vonnegut

**Slaughterhouse Five** Kurt Vonnegut

**To Kill a Mockingbird** by Harper Lee

**The Devil's Highway** by Luis Alberto Urrea

**The Demon in the Freezer** by Richard Preston

**A Confederacy of Dunces** by John Kennedy Toole

**The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet** by William Shakespeare

Though not mandatory, students are encouraged to purchase their own copies of the texts for ease of annotation and note-taking in them.

\*Note: Some texts above will be used as *excerpts* and some will be used in their entirety. Instructor will notify in advance which ones will be used in their entirety.

## **Pre-AP English I—Course Overview**

### ***The Journey Begins***

Introduction and orientation  
Skill level assessments in reading, writing and vocabulary  
Review and close reading of supplemental texts (fiction and non-fiction)  
Essay Writing & Rubrics (intro, definition, and usage)  
In-Class Essay—*Literary Elements and Thematic Meaning*  
Vocabulary Stems (prefixes, suffixes and roots)  
Character, Setting, Plot and Style  
In-Class Essay—*My Personal Journey*  
Dialectical Reader Notebook and writing procedures  
Questioning strategies and drawing conclusions  
Building paragraphs: Syntax and Grammar Study  
Independent reading and supplemental texts—close reading and annotation  
Maintaining a work folder of your select writings  
Use of rhetorical appeals and author's purpose  
Elements of poetry  
Poetry vocabulary, mechanisms and writing  
TPCASTT  
Selected essays and poems with analysis of poetic thought  
Literary circles  
Synthesis project

### ***A Hero's Journey***

*The Odyssey* by Homer  
Elements of the Epic  
Archetypes of the Journey  
Essay—*Comparison and Contrast*  
Literary vocabulary and devices at work in selected readings  
Elements of fiction  
Essay—*Literary Analysis*  
Supplemental readings and related discussion

### ***Relationships—Challenges and Choices***

Elements of Drama  
Essay—*Coming of Age*  
Intro to Shakespeare  
Sound devices and dialogue  
*The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet*—close reading  
Selected critical essays, supplemental readings, and related discussion  
Timed In-Class Essay—*Characteristics of Tragedy*  
Essay—*Recurring Themes and How They Play Out in the Work*

### ***The Quest for Justice and Equality***

Literary analysis and close reading  
Timed In-Class Essay—*Irony, Symbolism  
and Foreshadowing in the Novel*  
Supplemental readings and related discussion  
Essay—*Literature as History*  
Analysis of allegory

Selected short stories and nonfiction essays  
End of year work folder selections  
Independent non-fiction study