

Syllabus and Agreement for English Language Arts: Introduction to Literature and Composition

Course Description: Learners in this class will develop their abilities to write for varied purposes and to understand and use the vocabulary of literature, which allows learners to think about, discuss and write about literature more precisely and with greater depth. My approach to teaching writing is based upon the belief that writing is a process, so learners need to budget time for planning, drafting, revising and editing. Learners will have daily out-of-class reading assignments, daily journal writing expectations, weekly vocabulary work, and regular formal writing assignments. We will read short stories, nonfiction, poetry, the novel, drama and the epic, taking into account learner interest when possible. The vocabulary will focus on Latin and Greek roots, prefixes, and suffixes. We will meet Monday through Wednesday at 1 p.m. for one hour each day, and learners should plan for an average of three additional out-of-class hours of work each week.

Course Goals: The main goal for the class is to develop the learner's understanding of and facility with the written word.

Specific goals that will help to achieve the main goal are identified in the attached standards checklist.

Learning Relationship: Educator

Learning Setting: Small group

Learning Resources: The main text for the class is *Elements of Literature, Third Course* (owned by North Fork Vision HCP). Supplemental texts include *Elements of Language* (grammar and usage study), a vocabulary list I developed, and novels selected with input from the learners.

A textbook will be checked out to learners, and they will be expected to bring it to class daily unless told otherwise.

Learners will need a notebook with loose-leaf, college-ruled pages for note taking and drafting (work to be turned in or organized) and a separate notebook, preferably spiral, for journal-writing (to be kept in the notebook). If learners have a computer available for typing their formal writing, they are free to use it. A computer is not required.

A planner or other organizational system for keeping track of assignments is highly recommended.

Learner Actions: Learners will use journal-writing to reflect upon their thinking, to try out more sophisticated writing, and to plan their work. Learners will study grammar, usage, and mechanics both as part of their editing and revising processes and as independent topics as needed. Learners will study roots, prefixes and suffixes in the context of weekly vocabulary lists, with a quiz each week and a review test periodically. Learners will work with the vocabulary of literature to develop familiarity with it. Learners will compose formal essays with tightly constructed paragraphs serving a variety of purposes (such as compare-contrast, explain, describe, persuade, instruct, summarize, etc.), revise their essays for content, organization and mechanics, usage, and grammar, and edit for final submission. The learner is expected to work on class assignments both in class and as homework. There will be daily reading assignments to complete outside of class. Writing assignments will begin in class, and learners are expected to complete their writing at home and bring the completed work back to class when it is due. Performance expectations include completing all written assignments by their due dates, completing all reading assignments on time in order to discuss them in class, and demonstrating progress in the body of knowledge for the course.

Educator Contact Information: mmerriam@tds.net, melindabmerriam@gmail.com,
(home phone) 527-6565, (work phone) 527-8766 (Mon.-Wed. only)

Course Assessments: Learner progress will be measured by performance on assignments, quizzes, and tests. I will use holistic scoring rubrics for assessing writing, will observe skill development in class, and will ask the learner to self-evaluate frequently.

- Assignments: Many learners do well with feedback on assignments, which is my preferred method. Grades will be based upon timely completion (a simple yes or no to both aspects—on time and complete). When necessary, assignments will be scored.
- Quizzes on vocabulary occur weekly, with periodic tests as review of the preceding weeks' work.
- Quizzes on literary terminology occur regularly.
- Each semester will end with a final exam or equivalent.

I believe that daily work (including regular quizzes with which learners quickly become familiar) is a better indicator of growth than high-pressure tests, so the final exam and other necessary exams will count for very little in the course grade.

The course will use a letter grade system A-F which will take into account learner preparation, class participation, assignment completion, quizzes, tests, writing progress, projects, journal-writing and final exam. Each semester is graded separately.

For learners in grade 9 or higher, ½ credit will be assigned each semester a passing grade (70% or better) is achieved.

Course Schedule and Location: We meet Monday through Wednesday from 1-2 p.m. at the North Fork Vision HCP office.

Unit I: Short Story; focus on elements of fiction

Unit II: Nonfiction; focus on critical thinking, discerning fact from opinion

Unit III: Drama; focus on elements of theater

Unit IV: Poetry; focus on elements of poetry

Unit V: Epic; review of all elements

Financial Matters:

The course, as part of the coordinated schedule, costs \$250 per semester per learner or \$200 when five or more learners enroll. Learners will be billed for the semester in October. (Spring Semester: February)

Melinda Merriam

August 29, 2011

I certify that I have read and understand the syllabus for my English class and that I am able and willing to complete all the work required on time.

LEARNER

DATE

I certify that my child understands the course requirements and is capable of completing all work required on time.

PARENT

DATE

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