Semester 2 Unit: Ethics in Literature

Content Area: **Language Arts**
Course(s): **English 4CP**
Time Period: **Semester 2**
Length: **4 - 6 weeks**
Status: **Published**

Standards

R	Reading
RL.CR.11–12.1	Accurately cite strong and thorough textual evidence and make relevant connections to strongly support a comprehensive analysis of multiple aspects of what a literary text says explicitly and inferentially, as well as interpretations of the text; this may include determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.
RL.CI.11–12.2	Determine two or more themes of a literary text and analyze how they are developed and refined over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account or analysis; provide an objective summary of the text.
RL.IT.11–12.3	Analyze the impact of the author's choices as they develop ideas throughout the text 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).
RL.TS.11–12.4	Evaluate the author's choices concerning the structure and the effectiveness of 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) and how they contribute to its overall structure and meaning, as well as its aesthetic impact.
RL.PP.11–12.5	Evaluate perspectives/lenses from two or more texts on related topics and justify the more cogent viewpoint (e.g., different accounts of the same event or issue, use of different media or formats).
RL.MF.11–12.6	Synthesize complex information across multiple sources and formats to develop ideas, resolve conflicting information, or develop an interpretation that goes beyond explicit text information (e.g., express a personal point of view, new interpretation of the author's message).
RL.CT.11–12.8	Demonstrate knowledge of, analyze, and reflect on (e.g., practical knowledge, historical/cultural context, and background knowledge) documents of historical and literary significance for their themes, purposes, and rhetorical features, including how two or more texts from the same period treat similar themes or topics.
W	Writing
W.AW.11–12.1	Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
W.AW.11–12.1.A	Introduce precise, knowledgeable claim(s), establish the significance of the claim(s), distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and create an organization that logically sequences claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.
W.AW.11–12.1.B	Develop claim(s) and counterclaims avoiding common logical fallacies and using sound reasoning and thoroughly, supplying the most relevant evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both in a manner that anticipates the audience's knowledge level, concerns, values, and possible biases.
W.AW.11–12.1.C	Use transitions (e.g., words, phrases, clauses) to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships between claim(s) and reasons, between reasons and evidence, and between claim(s) and counterclaims.
W.AW.11–12.1.D	Establish and maintain a style and tone appropriate to the audience and purpose (e.g., formal and objective for academic writing) while attending to the norms and conventions

	of the discipline in which they are writing.
W.AW.11–12.1.E	Provide a concluding paragraph or section that supports the argument presented (e.g., articulating implications or the significance of the topic).
W.NW.11–12.3	Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.
W.NW.11–12.3.A	Engage and orient the reader by setting out a problem, situation, or observation and its significance, establishing one or multiple point(s) of view, and introducing a narrator and/or characters; create a smooth progression of experiences or events.
W.NW.11–12.3.B	Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, reflection, and multiple plot lines, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.
W.NW.11–12.3.C	Use a variety of techniques to sequence events so that they build on one another to create a coherent whole and build toward a particular tone and outcome (e.g., a sense of mystery, suspense, growth, or resolution).
W.NW.11–12.3.D	Use precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters.
W.NW.11–12.3.E	Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on what is experienced, observed, or resolved over the course of the narrative.
W.WP.11–12.4	Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, trying a new approach; sustaining effort to complete complex writing tasks; tracking and reflecting on personal writing progress (e.g., using portfolios, journals, conferencing); or consulting a style manual (such as MLA or APA Style), focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.
SL	Speaking and Listening
SL.PE.11–12.1	Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with peers on grades 11–12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
SL.PE.11–12.1.A	Come to discussions prepared, having read and researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from texts and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas.
SL.PE.11–12.1.B	Collaborate with peers to promote civil, democratic discussions and decision-making, set clear goals and assessments (e.g., student developed rubrics), and establish individual roles as needed.
SL.PE.11–12.1.C	Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that probe reasoning and evidence; ensure a hearing for a full range of positions on a topic or issue; clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions; and promote divergent and creative perspectives.
SL.PE.11–12.1.D	Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives; synthesize comments, claims, and evidence made on all sides of an issue; resolve contradictions when possible; and determine what additional information or research is required to deepen the investigation or complete the task.

Enduring Understandings

Literature raises important ethical questions that apply to our own decision-making.

Thought experiments are useful tools for unpacking the way we make choices of an ethical or moral nature.

Decisions of an ethical nature made by both individuals and groups often create a “ripple effect”, having larger repercussions on the community.

Essential Questions

How do we determine what is right / wrong?

How do individual decisions affect the larger community, and how do community decisions affect individuals?

How can the ethical dilemmas literary characters face help us reflect on dilemmas in our own lives?

Knowledge and Skills

Students will engage in discussion of thought experiments / classical ethical dilemmas.

Students will summarize, build on, and critique the work of moral philosophers.

Students will use the work of moral philosophers to analyze the decisions of literary characters and real people (including themselves) from an ethical standpoint.

Students will develop exhibitions (presentations, digital work, etc) to demonstrate their new understandings.

Assessment

Students will work toward a final project in which they work in pairs or small groups to create a podcast exploring an ethical dilemma presented in literature through multiple philosophical / ethical “lenses” provided by the nonfiction texts they have read alongside literature throughout the course.

Additional Resources

Full Length Literary Texts

Cormac McCarthy, The Road

Mary Shelley, Frankenstein

Albert Camus, The Stranger

Tennessee Williams, A Streetcar Named Desire

Toni Morrison, Beloved

Short Stories / Poetry

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, “Apollo”

Shirley Jackson, “The Lottery”

Ursula K. Le Guin, “The Ones Who Walk Away From Omelas”

Maggie Smith, “Good Bones”

Essays / Nonfiction

Radiolab, “How Do You Solve A Problem Like Fritz Haber?” (podcast)

Steven Pinker, “The Moral Instinct” (essay/article)

Peter Singer, *Ethics in the Real World* (essay collection)

Stephanie Ericsson, "The Ways We Lie" (in *Patterns for College Writing*)

Toni Morrison, "Goodness: Altruism and the Literary Imagination" (in *Patterns for College Writing*)

Transfer Goals

Students will be able to read and comprehend complex philosophical and literary texts.

Students will be able to use philosophical texts to prompt reflection on decision-making in literature and their own lives.

Students will be able to write and record a podcast.

Assessment

SGO Design

English teachers' SGO pre and post-assessments follow the design of the AP Literature and Composition prose analysis prompt. These assessments are scored using the department's shared scoring rubric.

Research Writing

As part of the District's schedule for research writing across the content areas, students write an extended literary research paper during junior year in all levels of English: English 3 OCR, English 3CP, English 3A, and AP language and Composition.

Uses of Assessment

Formative:

- Exit tickets
- Openings and Closings
- Strategic Questioning--higher order thinking/Philosophical thinking skills
- Think-pair-share
- Jigsaws
- Socratic Seminars
- Discussion
- Participation

- Four Corners
- Quick Writes
- Dialectical Notebook
- Walk and Talks

Benchmark Assessments:

- Research Simulation Exercises
- Vocabulary in context and analysis necessary for tracing the argument
- Synthesis Essays
- Evidence Based Selected Response Exercises
- Various Literary Analysis Tasks
- Grammar and Language Conventions

Summative:

- Formal Writing
- Game Design
- Socratic Defense
- Presentations
- Vocabulary
- Participation
- Four Corners
- Quick Writes
- Dialectical Notebook
- Walk and Talks

Each unit of study in English includes assessments that are used formatively as well as assessments that are used as summative, culminating experiences.

Formative assessments include low-stakes, exploratory responses written in the form of journal/learning log entries, quick writes, and free writes. Formative assessments also include announced and unannounced reading checks and exercises to determine the depth of students' understanding of key concepts. While formative assessments are often graded assessments, they are typically "lower-stakes" grades, and they help teachers and students develop an informed sense of each student's progress with the knowledge and skills targeted for a particular unit of study. The aim of such assessments and teacher feedback in response is to provide students with an accurate understanding of their performance relative to unit goals as well as actionable feedback to help them strengthen their performance.

Summative assessments include such tasks as essays, extended papers, objective and constructed response tests, Socratic seminar discussions, projects, and debates. While teachers also use these assessments formatively - by providing actionable feedback on written drafts or on Socratic seminar performance to guide student revision and improvement on subsequent tasks - summative assessments typically serve as "higher-stakes" grades.

Modes of writing assessed in English classes

Argumentative

- Literary analysis / argument
- Frame and case documented essay
- Argumentative essay

Explanatory

- Synthesis essay
- Prose analysis
- Rhetorical analysis
- Poetry analysis

Narrative

- Personal essay / creative nonfiction
- Exercises in prose style
- Alternative scenes, endings for fictional narratives

Additional Forms of Performance-Based Assessment

- Socratic seminar
- Debate
- Close-reading annotations, visual note-taking, and other artifacts
- Reading log entries
- Exploratory writing
- Speeches
- Google slide/Canva Presentations
- Podcasts

Alternative Assessment

With the exception of the occasional multiple-choice quiz or test questions, each classroom assessment in English focuses on an authentic, performance-based task.

Below are the listed examples of assessment:

Summative:

- Formal Writing
- Game Design
- Socratic Defense
- Presentations
- Vocabulary Quizzes
- Google Slide Group and Independent presentations
- End of Unit Tests
- Long Essays demonstrating Synthesis of disparate ideas
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Modifications

Student SubgroupContent, Process, Product & Environmental ModificationsSpecial Education (IEP)

• Content/Process: Provide accessible learning supports, including audiobooks synchronized with text, film adaptations, and curated educational videos.

• Process: Supply guided reading notes, graphic organizers for character/theme tracking, and previewed discussion questions prior to Socratic Seminars.

• Product: Permit open-note formats on select literary assessments and tests.

• Content: Focus close-reading assessments on core excerpted passages rather than full length texts where appropriate.

Students with 504 Plans

• Process: Provide digital access to teacher slide decks, class notes, and discussion prompts prior to lessons.

• Environment: Strategic seating during Socratic Seminars and group discussions to manage anxiety or attentional needs.

• Environment: Offer short sensory or movement breaks during extended reading stamina blocks.

• Environment: Alternate quiet testing environment for reading comprehension checks.

Multilingual Learners (ML / ELL)

• Content: Provide bilingual text versions or dual-language summaries when available.

• Process: Provide sentence frames and discussion prompts for active participation in Socratic Seminars and collaborative group discussions.

• Process: Pre-teach essential academic vocabulary, historical context, and literary devices before reading.

• Product: Allow visual responses, graphic representation, or oral explanations as alternative options for reading checks.

Students at Risk of Academic Failure

• Process: Chunk reading assignments into short, manageable daily targets to build reading stamina over time.

• Process: Structure collaborative partner reading and equitable small-group roles during literature circles.

• Process: Utilize periodic integrated "down days" to help students catch up on reading logs and class notes without falling behind.

• Product: Provide frequent low-stakes reading checks (Practice Work 50%) to track comprehension without high-stakes penalty.

Gifted & Talented Students

• Content: Integrate critical literary lenses (e.g., historical, philosophical, psychological) to analyze character motivation and thematic depth.

• Process: Assign student-facilitator roles during class discussions and Socratic Seminars to craft higher-order questions.

• Product: Offer choice-based extension projects (e.g., comparative analytical essays, creative adaptation, or philosophical synthesis linking literary texts to real-world issues).