This Is the Modern (and Post-Modern) World: Drama, the Absurd, and the Search for Meaning and Purpose

Content Area: **English Language Arts**
Course(s):
Time Period: **Marking Period 2**
Length: **8-10 Weeks**
Status: **Published**

Brief Summary of Unit

While building upon the previous unit's introduction to the Advanced Placement test's format and the function and necessity of close reading, Unit 2 will move headlong into the complex, vexing, and particular milieus of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The unit will consider the human condition and its treatment in fiction throughout the last century as well as in the opening decades of the new millennium. Students will grapple with various forms of drama, prose, and verse that sprang from the minds of artists throughout the modern (1914-1945) and post-modern periods (1945-present). Particular attention will be paid to modernism, the absurd, existentialism, and magical realism, as well as formalistic and psychological approaches to literary criticism.

This unit is designed to be part of a developmental progression across grade levels and make interdisciplinary connections across content areas including physical and social sciences, technology, career readiness, cultural awareness, and global citizenship. During this course, students are provided with opportunities to develop skills that pertain to a variety of careers. When completing this course, students can make informed choices and pursue electives that further their study and contribute toward the formation of career interest.

Revision: June 2024

Standards

In accordance with New Jersey's Chapter 32 Diversity and Inclusion Law, this unit includes instructional materials that highlight and promote diversity, including: economic diversity, equity, inclusion, tolerance, and

belonging in connection with gender and sexual orientation, race and ethnicity, and religious tolerance.

This unit challenges students to locate, evaluate, and use information effectively. Information literacy includes, but is not limited to, digital, visual, media, textual, and technological literacy. Lessons may include the research process and how information is created and produced; critical thinking and using information resources; research methods, including the difference between primary and secondary sources; the difference between facts, points of view, and opinions, accessing peer-reviewed print and digital library resources; the economic, legal, social, and ethical issues surrounding the use of information.

The identified standards reflect a developmental progression across grade levels and make interdisciplinary connections across content areas including social sciences, technology, career readiness, cultural awareness and global citizenship. The standards that follow are relevant to this course in addition to the associated content-based standards listed below.

L.SS.11–12.1	Demonstrate command of the system and structure of the English language when writing or speaking.
L.VL.11–12.3	Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grades 11–12 reading and content, including technical meanings, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.
L.VL.11–12.3.D	Consult general and specialized reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronunciation of a word or determine or clarify its precise meaning, its part of speech, its etymology, or its standard usage.
L.VL.11–12.3.E	Verify the preliminary determination of the meaning of a word or phrase (e.g., by checking the inferred meaning in context or in a dictionary).
L.VI.11–12.4	Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings, including connotative meanings.
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.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.
RI.TS.11–12.4	Evaluate the author's choices concerning structure and the effectiveness of the structure an author uses in his or her exposition or argument, including whether the structure makes points clear, convincing, and engaging.
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).
W.IW.11–12.2	Write informative/explanatory texts (including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/experiments, or technical processes) to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.
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.
W.RW.11–12.7	Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes.
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.II.11–12.2	Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) in order to make informed decisions and solve problems, evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source and noting any discrepancies among the data.
SL.UM.11–12.5	Make strategic use of digital media (e.g., textual, graphical, audio, visual, and interactive elements) in presentations to enhance understanding of findings, reasoning, and evidence and to add interest.

Essential Questions

- Does man truly have free will?
- How can the majority of the characters in this unit be viewed as individuals struggling to find order and purpose in an irrational and incomprehensible world?
- How do evidence and reasoning develop a complex argument?
- How do the various works in this unit conform to or depart from the literary models of the previous centuries?
- How does historical context help a reader to understand the broader significance of a text?
- How does language support an author's purpose?
- How does language work to persuade audiences?
- How does one define man's modern dilemma? Why or how does this dilemma differ from those struggles man has faced since time immemorial?
- How does one write in a stylistically strong manner?
- What are the characteristics of critical readers and writers?
- What is the antihero and is he particular to the modern era?
- Why and how does laughter seem to be such a crucial element in the majority of the works in this unit?

Enduring Understandings

- A speaker or writer's tone conveys purpose and intent
- An author's use of setting, character, narration, plot, and figurative language helps to illuminate theme
- Purposeful selection of precise language helps convey concrete meaning
- Understanding how writing serves as a form of inquiry

Students Will Know

- A variety of diction to define and articulate an author's tone
- How to calibrate and score essays using the AP rubric
- How to critically read and analyze an AP objective passage
- How to organize and draft a literary analysis AP-style essay -- longer fiction, novels and plays
- How to organize and draft a literary analysis AP-style essay -- poetry
- How to organize and draft a literary analysis AP-style essay -- prose, short fiction
- How to read critically using pre-reading, interpretive, synoptic, and post-reading strategies
- Key strategies and devices used in argumentative and persuasive writing

Students Will Be Skilled At

- Accurately calibrating AP-style essays
- Discerning a writer's purpose and audience
- Integrating quotations and paraphrases from sources into written responses
- Reading complex texts for deep understanding
- Structuring different modes of writing to meet College Board/AP expectations
- Utilizing appropriate terminology to analyze literature

Evidence/Performance Tasks

Developmental progression across years in both reading and writing is evidenced by multiple benchmark assessment screeners, administered three times per year. Follow up diagnostic assessments are used to target skill remediation. Student proficiency allows for additional or alternative assessment based on demonstration or absence of skill.

Students demonstrate differentiated proficiency through both formative and summative assessments in the classroom. Based on individual student readiness and performance, assessments can be implemented as formative and/or summative.

The performance tasks listed below are examples of the types of assessments teachers may use in the

classroom and the data collected by the district to track student progress.

Formative:

- Teacher Observations
- Accountable Talk, Socratic Seminars/Fish Bowls
- Analysis of multimodal text sets
- Analysis of critical commentary, literary criticism
- Writers Notebook (quick writes/drafts/prewrites), emphasizing author's craft
- Close reading analysis of text using evidence as substantiation
- Conferences: Individual and small group, accompanying conference notes
- Reflective exercises and assessments
- Oral Reading and Interpretation
- Peer and self-evaluations of learning
- Entrance and Exit Tickets
- Open-Ended Responses in Journal

Summative, including Alternative Assessments:

- On-demand Writing Assessments, timed and untimed
- Researched Presentations
- Performance Assessments
- Project-based Learning
- Problem-based Learning
- Personalized Learning
- Visual Literacy Prompts
- Digital Portfolios
- Online Discussion Forums

Benchmark:

- Benchmark reading and writing assessments, scored using rubrics, district-created and standards-aligned; based on NJSLA, reported twice per year
- Engage in text set analysis using visual literacy and close reading analysis strategies to compose a claim and use evidence as support
- Grade-level Standards-based Rubrics
- Common Lit Reading Benchmark, three times per year
- Advanced Placement Test
- SAT

Additional AP-Specific Formative and Summative Assessments:

- Independent close reading, annotation, and analysis of complex, AP-style non-fiction texts

- Articulation and analysis of rhetorical strategies and techniques used in complex texts
- Calibration of AP-style essays using the College Board rubric to develop understanding of the holistic scoring system
- Collaborative reading, discussion, and analysis of longer fiction and non-fiction texts
- Completion of AP-style objective questions in conjunction with complex reading and analysis tasks
- Completion of timed objective AP-style quizzes
- Drafting of appropriate critical reading responses using evidence from the text as support
- Substantiation of written and verbal rationales for AP objective responses
- Timed writing of AP-style poetry, prose/short fiction, and longer fiction essays

Learning Plan

Instructional time for reading will be divided into thirds; one third of the time will be dedicated to whole class text instruction; one third will include literature circles; one third, independent reading. The intent is for student-readers to have clear modelling through whole-class instruction. These strategies are practiced through literature circles in a group setting of peers and through independent practice monitored through teacher conferencing with students. An emphasis will be based on the transfer of skills instruction, teaching the reader, not merely the content of the text. The text complexity and rigor of reading will be appropriate for grade 12 and follow the guidelines set forth by the Advanced Placement College Board; materials selection for whole-class and literature circles will be from the book list approved by the Board of Education. Classrooms will house rich and diverse independent reading libraries of both contemporary and canonical works.

The reading of text during the eleventh grade targets not only comprehension, but also analysis, and synthesis. Students will read both long-and short-form, exceprted and full-length, print and electronic, fiction and nonfiction texts. Study will include the analysis of visual texts including film clips, art, infographic, maps, charts, graphs, cartoons, graphic novel. Technique and terminology specific to a genre of reading is examined. Research tasks are embedded throughout the year and a minimum of one task is completed during each unit. Vocabulary instruction will be chosen from the reading material.

Students write in all modes of rhetoric including narration/description, argument/persuasion, and exposition. Various forms of writing including digital writing are emphasized as well. Grammar instruction is embedded in writing instruction through mini-lessons, holding students accountable for skills taught and practiced; modelling is done through mentor texts, both published and student-crafted. Teachers focus on process in addition to product with an emphasis on synthesizing texts with nuanced understanding; teacher-created multi-modal text sets as well as text sets gleaned from APCentral.collegeboard.org will be used as materials. High- and low-stakes, timed and untimed pieces are all important.

Students will be taught how to speak and listen in addition to being assessed on these skills.

While the unit may begin with both a reading and viewing of Samuel Beckett's Waiting for Godot, students might look deeper into modern man's search for meaning and purpose in Camus' The Stranger, Ken Kesey's One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest, Zadie Smith's On Beauty, and Junot Diaz's Brief Wondrous Life

of Oscar Wao.

For this particular unit, teachers may do some or all of the following:

- Use Stephen Crane's late nineteenth-century poem, "A Man Said to the Universe," as an early literary nod to the existential crisis artist's would wrestle with throughout the coming century.
- Alert students to how often notable works of the modern and post-modern periods appear on the AP exam and why these works are wise choices for the open-ended essay prompts.
- Complement discussions and handouts on existentialism with Professor Robert Solomon's lectures on the philosophy and its particular school of critical theory.
- Employ the 2001 Michael Lindsay-Hogg version of Beckett's Waiting for Godot—in concert with Professor Nick Mount's lecture on the play—in order to compare and contrast the play's text to an acclaimed production.
- Introduce the objectives, structure, and components of the AP Literature and Composition Examination.
- Discuss relevant literary terms and techniques necessary in the close consideration of fiction and that will be useful in class discussion and essay writing.
- Require students to access, assess, and employ literary criticism in both their discussions and written responses to my queries and AP prompts.
- Use successful student essays to model effective writing strategies.
- Require students to sit for timed essays and multiple choice exercises.
- Task small groups of students to draft first paragraphs in response to past AP open-ended prompts.
- Have students employ a generic AP rubric to consider and grade essay responses.

Materials

The materials used in this course integrate a variety of leveled instructional, enrichment, and intervention materials that support student learners at all levels in the school and home environments. Associated web content and media sources are infused into the unit as applicable and available.

Teachers must refer to the district-approved Core Book List while selecting whole-class or small-group leveled resources.

Instructional Materials

Common Reading:

Selections from *Literature and Composition* (Bedford, Freeman, and Worth, 3rd edition, 2022) by Renee

Shea; Robin Dissin Aufses; Lawrence Scanlon; Katherine E. Cordes; Carlos Escobar; Carol Jago

College Board Website (AP Classroom):

* Unit Guides

*Daily Videos

* Topic Questions

* Progress Checks

* Question Banks

* Instructional Reports

* Practice Exams/Released Questions

Common Reading:

Fictional Text (Novel, Short Story, Poetry)

- Ernest Hemingway's The Sun Also Rises
- Jennifer Egan's A Visit from the Goon Squad
- Jonathan Franzen's The Corrections
- DBC Pierre's Vernon God Little
- Poetry by Stephen Crane
- Poetry by Walt Whitman
- Select modern and post-modern short stories and poetry from Perrine's Literature: StructureSound and Sense
- Samuel Beckett's Waiting for Godot
- Camus' The Stranger
- Ken Kesey's One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest
- Zadie Smith's On Beauty
- Junot Diaz's Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao.
- Kafka's *The Metamorphosis*
- Tennessee Williams' *A Streetcar Named Desire*
- August Wilson*s'* Fences
- Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*

- Selections from Bedford's *Literature and Composition*

NonFiction Text (Short, Long)

Varied AP Non-Fiction selections from APCentral.collegeboard. org

Selected articles from *The New York Times*

Selected works from *The New Yorker*

Selected pieces from *The Atlantic*

Selected articles from *Time*

Visual Text (Art, Photography, Infographic, Film)

Varied AP Visuals from APCentral.org including charts, graphs, comics, paintings, and images presented in connection with AP prompts

https://www.guggenheim.org/collection-online/ The online Guggenheim Museum, NYC
https://nmaahc.si.edu/ The National Museum of African American History and Culture, Washinton DC
http://hispanicsociety.org/museum/ The Hispanic Society Museum, NYC
https://asiasociety.org/new-york/ Asian Society Museum, New York
https://www.metmuseum.org/ Metropolitan Museum of Art, NYC
https://www.moma.org/ Museum of Modern Art, NYC
https://www.amnh.org/ American Museum of Natural History, NYC
https://www.nyhistory.org NY Historical Society,NYC
https://whitney.org/ Whitney Museum of American Art, NYC
https://thejewishmuseum.org/ The Jewish Museum, NYC
https://www.themorgan.org/ The Morgan Museum, NYC
https://nmai.si.edu/visit/newyork/ National Museum of the American Indian, NYC

Independent/Small Group Reading:

Various selections from Commonlit.org

Speaking and Listening

Selected TEDTalks

www.american rhetoric.com (Rhetorical devices in sound and speeches)

Writing (Narrative, Informational, Argument):

Sample essay prompts from APCentral.collegeboard.org

www.fas.harvard.edu/~wricntr/resources.html (The Writing Center at Harvard)

Owl.english.purdue.edu (Purdue's Online Writing Lab)

Research:

Use of Purdue Online Writing Lab at owl.english.purdue.edu

Modern Language Association at mls.org

Cranford High School Media Center Database Collection:

- JStor
- Ebsco Host
- Facts on File
- Follet Fiction Ebooks
- Gale Reference Ebooks
- New York Times
- Salem History Database
- Salem Literature
- Goodreads
- Readingrants
- Historychannel

Cranford Public Library Online Resources: http://cranford.com/library/

Additional Student Resources:

- Chromebooks/laptops
- Google Classroom Suite
- Turnitin.com
- AP Classroom
- Albert IO
- Common Lit
- Google Tools including Docs Voice Typing
- Audible
- Writing Portfolios
- Writer's Notebook/Journal
- Padlet
- Socrative.com
- Poll everywhere
- Soundcloud
- Podcasting equipment
- Film production equipment
- Netflix
- YouTube

Teacher Resources

- David Lodge’s The Art of Fiction

- Thomas C. Foster's How to Read Novels Like a Professor
- Harold Bloom's Modern Critical Interpretations: Song of Solomon
- MH Abrams' A Glossary of Literary Terms
- Prompts and practice materials listed on APCentral.collegeboard. org
- *5 Steps to a 5: 500 AP English Language Questions to Know by Test Day,* Allyson Ambrose
- *Literature and Composition: Reading, Writing, Thinking,* Jago et. al.
- *Readicide*, Kelly Gallagher
- *A Novel Approach*, Kate Roberts
- *When Kids Can't Read*, Kylene Beers
- *Beyond Literary Analysis,* Allison Marchetti & Rebekah O'Dell
- *Writing with Mentors*, Allison Marchetti & Rebekah O'Dell
- *Argument in the Real World*, Kristen Hawley Turner and Troy Hicks
- *Writing Instruction that Works: Proven Methods for Middle and High School Classrooms*, Arthur Applebee and Judith Langer
- *Teaching Adolescent Writers*, Kelly Gallagher
- *Write Like This,* Kelly Gallagher
- *Book Love*, Penny Kittle
- *The Journey is Everything*, Katherine Bomer
- *How to Read Literature Like a Professor*, Thomas C. Foster
- *The Digital Writing Workshop*, Troy Hicks
- *Crafting Original Writing*, Troy Hicks
- *Fearless Writing: Multigenre to Motivate and Inspire*, Tom Romano
- *The Art of Styling Sentences*, Ann Longknife and K.D. Sullivan
- *The Well-Crafted Sentence*, Nora Bacon

Suggested Strategies for Accommodations and Modifications

Content specific accommodations and modifications as well as Career Ready Practices are listed here for all students, including: Special Education, English Language Learners, At Risk of School Failure, Gifted and Talented, Students with 504.

Possible accommodations include:

- Access speech-to-text function on computer
- Use visual presentations of all materials to include organizers, charts
- Allow students to set individual goals for writing/reading
- Offer graphic organizaers, note-taking models, strategies for summarizing, and questioning techniques
- Offer oral assessments
- Supply study guide questions and access to class notes
- Work in partnerships
- Give responses in a form (verbal or written) that is easier for the student
- Take additional time to compete a task or project
- Scaffold by chunking material and texts

- Individualize reading choices based on ability and level
- Take frequent breaks
- Use an alarm to help with time management
- Small group and one on one assessment
- Mark text with a highlighter or other manipulative such as a post-it
- Receive help coordinating assignments
- Answering fewer questions or completing shorter tasks
- Modify the length and quantity of assignments to fit individual
- Differentiate roles in discussion groups
- Use digital technology, eBooks,, audio version of printed text
- Create alternate assignments or homework
- Provide distinct steps in a process; elminate unnecessary steps, as needed
- Use art, music, and film to convey alternate interpretation of literature and assessment
- Manage executive function by scaffolding process and amending deadlines

Possible modifications to content during writing workshop include, but are not limited to:

- Adhere to all modifications and accommodations as prescribed in IEP and 504 plan