

**Williamsville East High School**  
**Advanced Placement English Language and Composition**  
**2009- 2010**

Advanced Placement English Language and Composition is a rigorous, college-level course of study that students may choose *in place* of the English elective program when they are juniors. Students are recommended for the course by a panel of English teachers who know their work and believe it to be above average in composition and language usage. In May, the A.P. students take an exam created by the Educational Testing Service in Princeton, New Jersey. The exam is graded on a one through five scale, and students who score three, four, or five on the exam may receive college credit. The score required and the numbers of credits granted vary from school to school. The course does not end with the A.P. exam, but continues to the end of the school year.

Although the A.P. Language course is like the regular English 10-12 courses to a certain extent, it differs from other English courses in a number of ways. Students will read a broad and challenging array of nonfiction prose and political commentary often selected from current periodicals such as *The New Yorker*, *The Atlantic Monthly*, *Harper's*, *Scientific American*, *Smithsonian*, etc. They will view political cartoons, films and excerpts from graphic novels and listen to audio essays from NPR. Through close reading, viewing, listening and discussion, students will begin to develop a language of discourse for non-fiction writing and become well-read in non-fiction writing, an area that is sometimes emphasized less in high school English classrooms. Voice, tone and diction, as well as rhetorical strategies, are emphasized in the course, and understanding these elements give students an understanding of the importance of rhetoric and argument in a civilized society and the change that can happen in the world because of non-fiction writing.

The course teaches research skills, and a biography-based, multi-genre research project will be assigned.

As part of their coursework, AP Language students participate in a study of works of fiction. This study of fictional texts provides students with the opportunity to focus on how specific authors use rhetorical strategies and techniques. Reading fiction serves to heighten students' critical analysis of text, allowing them to comprehensively examine voice, style and use of literary elements and techniques. The students are required to purchase their own texts so that they may fully learn and utilize text annotation strategies. This fiction study helps our students to prepare for and meet the demands of our local final exam and the New York State English Regents Exam.

As the school year progresses, students begin to prepare for both the English Regents Examination (in January) and the AP English Language & Composition exam (in May) by completing practice exams, reading model exam question responses, and reading and discussing scoring commentaries.

During the summer, in preparation for the course, students are required to complete the following reading and writing assignments. You must bring the three written assignments to class at the beginning of the year.

**SUMMER 2009 READING ASSIGNMENTS:**

**Essay**

You must read:

Ralph Waldo Emerson      *Self Reliance*  
(Dover, ISBN-13: 978-0486277905, \$3.50)

You must also choose 1 fiction and 1 nonfiction book from the following lists:

**Fiction (choose 1)**

Edith Wharton      *The Age of Innocence* (Signet, ISBN-13: 978-0451530882, \$6)

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**Fiction (continued)**

Ann Patchett      *Run*    (Harper Perennial, ISBN-13: 978-0061340642, \$10.16)

Susan Frasier King    *Lady Macbeth* (Three Rivers Press, ISBN-13: 978-0307341754, \$10.20)

**Nonfiction (choose 1)**

David Brooks      *On Paradise Road Drive: How We Live Now (And Always Have) in the Future Tense*  
(Simon and Schuster, ISBN-13: 978-0743227391, \$12.60)

Barbara Ehrenreich    *Nickled & Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America*  
(Holt Paperback, ISBN-13: 978-0805088380, \$11)

Marjane Satrapi      *Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood*  
(Pantheon, ISBN-13: 978-0375714573, \$10.15)

**SUMMER 2009 WRITING ASSIGNMENTS:**

Once you have finished reading each book, you will need to write a response to your reading (see below). Be sure to read actively, margin note, and record the page numbers of your favorite parts of the book so that you can locate them when you are writing.

**INSTRUCTIONS FOR *Self Reliance* RESPONSE**

Choose one of Emerson's essays and *write a letter to Emerson* about the topic at hand. Feel free to ask him questions, make connections to your life, our society, history, literature or world events.

**INSTRUCTIONS FOR FICTION RESPONSE**

Write a response in which you nominate a character from your novel for a "Most Vivid Character Award". Support your choice with quotations, examples, descriptions, evidence of character growth and lessons learned. Please be sure to note the title and author of the book in your response and avoid plot summary.

**INSTRUCTIONS FOR NONFICTION RESPONSE**

Write a response in which you choose *one specific chapter* from the nonfiction book you chose to analyze the writer's main idea, purpose and specific literary and stylistic elements(for example figurative language, comparison and contrast, tone, etc.) used by the writer to make the point clear to the reader. Be specific with examples from the text.

**Bring responses and a copy of your books to class on the first day of school.**

To access current reviews on the books listed, go to the WCS D homepage at <http://www.williamsvillek12.org/>, select *Our Schools*, then *East High School*. Select *Libraries & Research* from the left column. Click on the related link, Williamsville East High School Library WITS Page. You will need to use your student's username and password to access this site. The second listing on the right will take you to a variety of resources containing current book reviews.