

# Honors English 3

## Course Description — English 3 Honors 2018 - 2019

Honors English 3 comprises both a survey of American literature and an advanced composition class. (It is **not** a creative writing class.) Students' required summer assignments will familiarize them with movements in American thought and writing styles from the early Puritans through the late 20th Century. During the year we will be reading additional short selections and studying other plays and major novels including Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*, Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Toni Morrison's *Beloved* or Zora Neal Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, Tennessee Williams's *A Streetcar Named Desire*, and F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*. We will conclude the course with Shakespeare's tragedy *MacBeth* or another play to be determined. Outside reading assignments, which all students must read and analyze, include Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse-Five*, Arthur Miller's *The Crucible and Death of a Salesman*, Ken Kesey's *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, Edith Wharton's *Ethan Frome*, and Ernest Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms* or other selected works by Hemingway (see "Book Party," below).

In addition to studying literature, students will write a number of literary analysis papers and timed in-class essays. Some of the writing may require research, use of critical materials, and ALL will require proper MLA (Modern Language Association) formatting, citation, and bibliographic forms. Major assignments during the year include the following:

1. Complete the summer assignments as described on the attached sheets.
2. One semester, each student will give a period-long presentation on one or two poems. This is the "Era Presentation." Detailed instructions for this assignment will follow in August when we begin class.
3. The other semester, the student will be part of a group that hosts a "Book Party" on one of the following: Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse-Five*, Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*, and *The Death of a Salesman*, Ken Kesey's *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, Edith Wharton's *Ethan Frome*, or Ernest Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms*. (We may add or substitute additional titles to this list).
4. Second semester each student will create a personal anthology of American literature.
5. Some students may opt to take the AP English Language test, and we will do some preparation for that May test.

Writing and literary analysis expectations and standards for Honors students are **significantly higher** than those required of regular English 3 students. **Because we spend very little time reviewing writing fundamentals that students already should have acquired, unless you have mastered essay-writing and grammar and usage fundamentals and have become an insightful reader, you will struggle in this class. Please carefully read the "Comments Key" you were provided at the February meeting. This summarizes the "essay-writing and grammar and usage fundamentals" you are required to have mastered BEFORE the beginning of Honors 3 English.**

### Class Participation

Class participation may significantly affect your grade. We expect students **both** to do their homework and required reading **and** to show **daily** that they have done so by participating in class discussions. One major benefit of this class is the opportunity to share ideas with other committed and insightful students, and **all** must join in. Learning to express ideas orally is an important part of the class. If students choose to become spectators rather than participants, their grades may well reflect this choice.

### **Absences**

Even if all of your absences are **excused** absences, regular attendance in an honors class is essential. You may be obliged to do extra work to make up for missed class participation and discussion. More than **five absences of any type** a semester is excessive under normal circumstances.

### **Cheating**

Cheating is unforgivable, and **plagiarism** (the act of taking and passing off as one's own **the ideas or writing** of another) is a particularly heinous form of cheating. We rigorously enforce the District's policy on academic honesty and plagiarism. We may require that you upload essays written outside of class to the Turnitin.com website.

### **Homework**

Students should plan on *at least* one hour of homework, usually reading or Rereading, per night. When papers and projects are assigned, plan on significantly more than one hour of homework per night. Because of the rigor of this class, and the high expectations for projects and papers, you must be very organized.

### **Make-up Work**

Students who are absent are responsible for finding out what they have missed, obtaining any necessary materials, and quickly making up missed work.

If a student misses a quiz or group presentation, we reserve the right to give that student a writing assignment to make up for the missed quiz.

You can expect a very challenging, but intellectually invigorating year. We are delighted to have the opportunity to work with you.

Sincerely,

The Honors English Teachers for 2018-19

## **Honors English 3 Summer Assignments**

So that you will have an overview of American literature already when the school year begins next August, in *the Responding to Literature* anthology that all LL juniors use, read and take notes on the following descriptions of American literary periods as well as on the short literary pieces (short stories or long poems) that accompany most of the literary era descriptions.

When school begins in the fall, we will cover the timeline quickly, so having completed the reading and taken detailed notes will be to your distinct advantage. **The second or third day of school, students will take a major test on the material from *Responding to Literature*.**

**We also strongly recommend that you read, along with the attached guiding questions, John Steinbeck's 450 page novel, *The Grapes of Wrath*. Within the first few weeks of school, students will write an in-class essay and take a comprehensive test on *The Grapes of Wrath*.**

1. For each literary era we *strongly recommend* that you take notes in some type of **easily readable, easily accessible outline format** in which you effectively use **indentation** and **letters and numbers to indicate major topics and subtopics** for **each era**. In your outlined notes, you will want to include the approximate **dates** of each era; characteristics of each era's writing, historic events and attitudes that affected the writing; explanations of literary terms associated with the era; and, finally, the names of each era's important authors and the titles of their important works.
2. For **each** piece of short literature (short story or poem), we suggest you do the following:
  - a. Read it.
  - b. Describe briefly what it's about.
  - c. Describe briefly what is the work's theme or themes. Note that a theme is a **complete thought** stated with **both a subject and a verb**; it can never be either just a single noun or topic such as "revenge" or "perseverance" or "forgiveness" or a noun and its modifiers such as "the importance of perseverance" but must indicate what point(s) the author is making about the topic.

A good way to make sure that you state a theme as a complete thought is to begin the sentence in which you will state the theme with something such as the following: "In her short story "Roman Fever," Edith Wharton shows that ..." Then after the word *that*, state your thesis. **Putting the theme after the word *that* will force you to state the theme as a complete thought.**

When stating a work's theme, universalize the topic so that it applies to a larger group of people than to just the piece of literature's characters. Also go beyond just making obvious or simplistic statements such as "If everyone in the world treats others as equals, then the world will be a better place." Finally, never mention specific characters or events from the literary work in stating a theme.

- d. List **major** literary techniques that the author uses. For suggestions, see the attached handout providing page numbers in the anthology on where to find definitions of literary terms. For your convenience, the definitions of these literary terms is attached.
- e. Note briefly what about that piece makes it fit into its particular category/era of American literature.

As noted, **you will be assigned to read all of John Steinbeck's 450 page novel, *The Grapes of Wrath* in the first two weeks of school.**

If you are a slow reader, **we strongly suggest you read the novel over the summer, and then REREAD the pages as they are assigned in the first two weeks.** There will also be other projects assigned in the first fortnight of school in addition to this reading. *The Grapes of Wrath* is a classic of American literature that all Americans (especially

Californians) should read at least once. **Use the attached questions to guide your reading.**

**Literary Eras and Works of Short Literature to Read This Summer**  
(the works of short literature are indented below their corresponding Literary Eras)

- "The Original Land" (focus on the Puritans) (26-27)
- "Expressions of American Thought" (focus on the Puritans) (62-63)
- "Early Romantics" (86-87)
  - "The Devil and Tom Walker" (88-96)
- "Romantics with a Darker Vision" (120-21)
  - "The Pit and the Pendulum" (161-71)
- "The Transcendentalists" (182)
  - From "Self-Reliance" (184-188)
- "The Civil War" (210-11)
  - From *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave* (212 -218)
- "Individualism and Nationalism in Poetry" (236-37)
- "The Frontier" and local color realism (262-63)
  - "A Wagner Matinee" (264-69)
  - "High Horse's Courting" (288-92)
- "Naturalism and Psychological Realism" (**Note: They are not the same.**) (298-99)
  - "Roman Fever" (318-27)
- "The Harlem Renaissance" (378-79)
  - "How it Feels to Be Colored Me" (388-391)
- "The Modernist Vanguard" (396-97)
  - "William Faulkner's Nobel Prize Acceptance Speech" (460-461)

We hope that you will enjoy the reading because we will be discussing these works all year.

If at any time before school starts next fall, you decide that you would rather not undertake the commitment that Honors English 3 requires, let **the counseling office** know **as soon as possible**. Informing the school early will help ensure that there will be room for you in a regular English 3 class next year.

Happy reading.

**Things to know for the test on the summer reading  
(from a student who worked exceptionally hard and earned an “A” in HE3)**

- I. Literary eras
  - A. Major authors in each era
    - 1. Which authors wrote which stories (authors of all works)
  - B. Major works in each era
    - 1. Which stories belong in each era (which you’ll know if you know the above)
  - C. When each literary era occurred
    - 1. The order of literary eras (helps to know timeframe)
  - D. Characteristics of each era’s writing
- II. Stories
  - A. Major symbols in stories
  - B. Major themes
  - C. Point of view in each story
  - D. Settings
  - E. Plots
    - 1. Time periods
  - F. Authors’ tones
  - G. Which stories have ironic endings and what makes the endings ironic
  - H. Subject with which each literary work deals
- III. Characters and Author (in regard to the stories)
  - A. Authors’ views of their characters—how an author wants readers to regard characters
  - B. Main characters’ names in some stories—especially if the name is symbolic
  - C. Characters’ states of mind and attitudes toward themselves and other characters
  - D. Characters’ personality traits
  - E. Characters’ motives and internal justifications
- IV. Poetry
  - A. Recognize some lines from poems (identify from which poem the lines come)
  - B. Be able to recognize/identify literary techniques
  - C. For poetry, be able to recognize and analyze lines—be able to define words and identify literary and poetic techniques in lines, etc.