

# English

## Requirements:

Grade 9      English 9

Grade 10     English 10

Grade 11     English 11

Grade 12     Senior Electives or AP English

## **English**

Horace Mann's Department of English trains students to be good readers: of texts, of the world around them, and, ultimately, of themselves. From ninth grade on our students develop their analytical skills through the study of a broad range of challenging texts, lively and probing seminar style discussions, and focused, challenging critical and creative writing assignments.

“Show don't tell” is a familiar refrain in our classrooms, shorthand for our emphasis on working from particulars to a general theory. In that sense, we foster a culture of evidence rooted in close reading. We assign fewer texts in order to emphasize attention to the details that give a work of literary art its richness and complexity. Seminar style classes put students' critical engagement with the texts at the center of our practice.

Grades nine, ten, and eleven have set curricula determined by each teacher. Senior electives, intensive one-semester courses designed by faculty, culminate the study of English at Horace Mann. In addition, we offer one section of English AP. Admission is competitive.

### **Requirement:**

Continuous enrollment in English, grades nine through twelve.

## **English Nine, Ten, and Eleven**

In grades nine through eleven, the course of study in English is organized around the major literary genres: Poetry, Drama, and the Novel. In their senior year, students take semester electives focused on authors, literary movements and themes, or creative writing. In the year-long courses freshman through junior year, individual faculty members develop their own curriculum at each grade level and for each genre, with an eye to including a diversity of literary voices from a broad range of literary traditions, time periods, and cultures. This approach not only expands students' awareness of literature's multifarious scope, but it also helps students identify connections between seemingly disparate works.

In the past, students have studied Shakespeare's *The Tempest* in tandem with Aime Cesaire's *A Tempest*, Genesis with *The Odyssey*, and *Frankenstein* with *The Turn of the Screw* and *Benito Cereno*. These juxtapositions broaden our awareness of the shared concerns and different approaches across different literary traditions. Exposure to multiple traditions also presents students with multiple ways of defining and engaging with a literary canon.

**English 9 (0012)**

All ninth graders begin their work in English with an ungraded writing unit. Students write every day, in class and at home, and in a variety of styles, ranging from dialogues to poems, detailed descriptions to longer personal narratives. Daily writing is accompanied by daily feedback. We teach writing as a process. The class is taken pass/fail, a practice which allows us to keep the focus on the students' work and the teacher's feedback, and to give students the space to take risks and experiment. The following term involves the reading and analysis of literary texts, and the study of grammar.

**English 10 (0014)**

Students in tenth grade continue their literary studies in courses designed by their teacher. All tenth grade students study drama, poetry, and prose fiction with a continuation of our grammar curriculum.

**English 11 (0016)**

In English 11, genre study intensifies with extensive units on poetry, drama, and the novel. All English 11 students complete a major research paper that brings together skills they have been working on since ninth grade: close reading, building from evidence to argument, comparative analysis, and independent critical thinking. Depending on the class, research engages students in comparative literary-critical analysis, individual author studies, or New Yorker-style profile pieces. Regardless of the project, students work step by step, from searching for, sorting, and synthesizing a range of primary and secondary sources to developing from that material an extended critical-analytical study of their own.

**Senior Electives (0018) (E12)**

*All seniors not in Advanced Placement English take two semester-long electives. With the permission of the Department, these electives may be taken by eleventh grade students in addition to English 11.*

The offerings each semester cover a broad range of literary periods, themes, and genres. Some courses stress expository or analytic writing; others engage students in writing original poems or short stories. The Department varies electives in response to its own changing composition and the changing needs of our students.

Senior Electives recently offered:

Man's Search for Meaning  
Cultural Perspectives in Literature  
Shakespeare and the Genres  
Metamorphosis: A Thematic Approach to the Novella  
Intro to Translation Studies  
Toni Morrison  
British Romanticism: Visions and Revisions  
Money in American Literature  
The Bible as Literature  
The Short Story  
Emily Dickinson  
Melville's Moby Dick  
Writing Nature, Writing Ourselves  
New York Poets  
The Poetics of Hip-Hop  
Poets of Moment: Billy Collins, Pablo Neruda, and Naomi Shihab Nye  
Tolstoy  
Now You See It: Magic and the Magician in Realist Literature  
Americas: Other Voices in American Fiction  
Anything Goes: British Eighteenth Centuries  
Bad Girls: Exploring Female Misbehavior  
Posthumanism: Freaks and Cyborgs

**AP English (0020) (APE)**

*The department offers one section of Advanced Placement each year. Admission is competitive. For consideration, students should have grades in English which average closer to an A- than to a B+, as well as the permission of the department. Applicants are also required to provide a writing sample.*

*Meets every day*

The curriculum of AP English consists of readings in poetry, Shakespearean drama, the essay, and prose fiction. Works considered in the current school year include *The Turn of the Screw*, *The Tempest*, *Heart of Darkness*, *To The Lighthouse*, *Beloved*, *King Lear*, and *Waiting for Godot*, among other works. Major units cover satire in its various forms and contemporary critical theory. Extensive written work accompanies the texts and emphasizes analysis of literary themes, styles, and techniques. Students in AP English are required to take the Advanced Placement Examination.