

Welcome to English II HADV with Mr. Wolf!

#CVHSclassof2027

bwolf@houstonisd.org



COURSE CONTENT

The central goal of Pre-AP English II is two-fold—1) to sharpen your skills as a **careful** and **reflective reader**, and 2) to solidify your voice as a **creative** and **scholarly writer**. Provided that you invest the commensurate time, energy, and focus in your work, Pre-AP English II will lay a strong foundation for success in AP Language and Composition, AP Literature and Composition, AP Capstone, and PSAT/SAT.

- **LITERATURE:** Our literature study will include both American and world literature. We will study a variety of genres.
- **WRITING:** Your writing assignments this year will vary according to content, purpose, and audience, and will include **creative, narrative, informational, argumentative, analytical, and research writing**. You will be introduced to the AP English Language and Composition essays (**synthesis, rhetorical analysis, argument**), as well as the AP English Literature and Composition essays (**poetry analysis, prose analysis, analysis of a specific concept, issue, or element in a work of literary merit selected by the student**). By learning these modes of essay writing, you will be more than prepared to write an outstanding STAAR essay in the spring. You will also become familiar with the rubrics used to assess all the aforementioned essays. You also will have the opportunity to try your hand at short fiction, poetry, drama, and other creative forms. Finally, you will add many tools to your revision skillset.
- **SENTENCE STYLING:** The first goal of our sentence styling work is to **analyze** and **appreciate** important **elements of style** in the works of various authors. The second goal—and the more important one—is **to cultivate a sophisticated writerly voice that is entirely your own**. To that end, we will explore how and why an author chooses to employ certain phrasing, syntax, and other elements of style, and we will experiment with the use of those very elements in our own sentences, paragraphs, and essays.
- **VOCABULARY:** Our vocabulary study will be in the context of the literature we read. Enrichment lists will include additional words you are likely to encounter on the PSAT and SAT and in your future AP English courses.

GUIDING QUESTIONS & COMMON MOTIFS

For every unit of study, we will explore a set of guiding questions that fall under the thematic arc of identity, community, and justice. The guiding questions are related to topics such as self-discovery, empathy, assimilation, freedom, power, heroism, and redemption.

We will explore a set of common motifs that allow us not only to better understand the literature itself, but also to compare how different works of literature explore these motifs in unique and thought-provoking ways. These motifs include mob mentality, individual conscience/moral courage, social (or collective) conscience, redemption, vengeance, the intersection of virtue and power, alienation, assimilation, and moral hierarchies and moral absolutes. The exploration of these motifs will make for some lively discussion and writing!

GRADES

- Grading categories and weights are as follows:
 - **Summative Assessments** are **50%** of your average and include tests, projects (may include presentations), portfolios, extended writing assignments, timed writing assignment, dialectical journals, and graded discussions.
 - **Formative Assessments** are **25%** of your average and include various forms of literary analysis (written and oral), including close reading, stages (or steps) in the writing process, vocabulary.com list mastery, vocabulary practice quizzes on Canvas, sentence style assessments, checks for understanding, and comparable tasks.
 - **Skill Development Work** is **25%** of your average and includes vocabulary sentence writing, revision using elements of sentence style, online grammar (SAVVAS, NoRedInk, Quill.org, etc.), Outline of Common Errors practice, test prep, meaningful class participation, and comparable tasks.
- Except for assignments that are due within class or by the end of the class period, **all online assignments are due by 8:30 a.m. on the due date, unless otherwise indicated in writing, and all handwritten assignments finished outside of class are due when the bell rings to start class.**
- When turning in work on Canvas, **always** submit the work itself by copying and pasting it into the text box, or by uploading a pdf. **Submitting a link to your work (this includes a link to a Google Doc or any similar online platform) instead of the work itself will earn a zero. There are no exceptions.** The reason for this is that a Google Doc is a live document that can be edited or deleted at any time (the same applies to any similar online platform). The only way for me to have a record of your work **at the time it is due** is for you to copy and paste it into the box or to upload a pdf to Canvas. The only time you will ever submit a link to a Google Doc is when I specifically ask you to do so.
- Late Work is accepted **one school day past the due date for a maximum of 70%, *provided that the work is 100% complete and done to the best of your ability (this means that every question must be answered, every requirement must be met, and it must be your best work, or you forfeit credit).*** No late work will be accepted beyond the one school day. The “Extensions” section below provides you with a means to avoid late work altogether.
- Handwritten work **must be in blue or black ink**, with the one exception of vocabulary sentences, which may be written in pencil, provided that the writing is dark, clear, and not smudged. Remove fringe from the side of all paper (if you have torn the paper out of a spiral notebook or manuscript book) before submitting handwritten work.
- **Illegible work will receive a zero. No exceptions.** If handwriting is challenging for you, **see me ahead of time** so that we can discuss the matter and work together toward a feasible solution.
- If a student does not engage in an assignment for which time in class is provided, **the student will earn a zero and the assignment will not be eligible for a late grade, an extension, or a partial credit salvage grade.**
- **The PowerSchool gradebook is the one and only official gradebook.** Please note that while some platforms, including Canvas, might provide feedback on formative assessments and skill development tasks, students and parents must check the PowerSchool gradebook for official grades and averages.
- Please use **ONLY** official HISD email for questions or conversations about grades. Please do not ask questions about grades using Teams, Remind, or any platform not maintained by HISD.

PORTFOLIO ASSESSMENT

My mission is to allow students multiple means of demonstrating mastery of course objectives. I believe that a student’s grade should reflect not only achievement, but effort and improvement as well. I also believe that self-reflection is essential to learning. As such, a student’s body of work will be considered in the determination of cycle grades, final exam grades, and semester grades.

RETAKES

- Students are allowed **two retakes per grading cycle, only** when the following conditions have been met:
 - the original score is below 70%,
 - the student has **attended sufficient tutorials** so that **the teacher deems the student to be prepared for the retake**, and
 - the student has had **no missing work in the current grading cycle**.
- Retakes must be requested via HISD email by the student (not the parent) within twenty-four hours of the grade being posted in PowerSchool and **completed within one week of the original assignment, or before the end of the current grading cycle, whichever is sooner**.
- The highest that a student can earn on a retake is 70%.
- Failure to show up for a scheduled retake counts as a taken retake.
- There are **NO** retakes for assessments that cover literature and/or reading assignments of any kind.
- There are **NO** partial retakes (retesting just one portion of a test, for example).
- Final exams are not eligible for a retake.

EXTENSIONS & PARTIAL CREDIT SALVAGE GRADES

Students enrolled in Pre-AP and AP courses will develop skills in task management, especially in terms of planning, focus, and follow-through. As you develop these skills, you might sometimes find yourself with what seems like more work than you can complete by the assigned due dates. If you anticipate a problem completing an assignment on time, please alert me via HISD email **prior to the due date**—the earlier, the better, but even the night before is fine. You should not count on the approval of unlimited extensions, as two (2) per cycle will be the standard. After the second request for an extension within a grading cycle, a parent conference will be arranged to discuss further means of supporting your progress. **Your well-being is my paramount concern; I am here to work with you.**

If you have not requested an extension and do not have an assignment completed when it is due, you have only one day under the late work policy to submit it. Any work turned in beyond that one day without an extension will be held (with no grade given) until the last week of the grading cycle. At that point, as long as you have **no other missing assignments beyond the one for which you are applying**, you may **apply** for a **partial credit salvage grade** by a) entering the name of the assignment into a Google Form I will provide, and b) submitting a hard copy of the work to me. **Partial credit will be awarded if and only if that credit would result in a change to the letter grade for the grading cycle (C to B, etc.); otherwise, the grade will remain a zero. Assignments for which answers have already been shared or published are ineligible for a partial credit salvage grade.**



ANTICIPATED READING LIST

- Incoming Summer Reading: *Bless Me, Ultima* (novel—magical realism) by Rudolfo Anaya and related literary analysis essays
- “Recitatif” by Toni Morrison (short story) and “The Genius of Toni Morrison’s Only Short Story” by Zadie Smith (analytical essay)
- “Condolences to Every One of Us” by Allan Gurganus (epistolary short story), in conjunction with Allan Gurganus interview and craft essay (published interview and essay)
- *The Catcher in the Rye* by J.D. Salinger (novel) and related readings by Jessie Thompson, Emily Temple, Cristina Cabrera-Ayers, Zoe Heller, and Josef Benson (articles, essays, and excerpts from longer works)
- *This Boy’s Life* by Tobias Wolff (memoir)
- “The Displaced Aristocrat as Tragic Hero in Tobias Wolff’s *This Boy’s Life*” by Myles Weber (literary analysis essay)
- “The Years of My Birth” by Louise Erdrich (short story)
- Self-Portrait Poetry by Billy Collins, Chen Chen, Prince Bush, Afaa Michael Weaver, Adam Zagajewski, Nathan Hoks, Mary Jo Bang, Jennifer Grotz, and Tove Divletsen
- *Medea* by Euripides (Greek drama)
- Poetry of Anne Sexton, Marina Del Vecchio, Augusta Webster, Sylvia Plath, Chelsea Rathburn, and others
- “Mother Tongue” by Amy Tan and “Welcome to Jurassic Park” by Constance Wu (essays)
- *Bone* by Faye Myenne Ng (novel) and related literary criticism essays
- *Julius Caesar* by William Shakespeare (play) and related readings
- *Exit West* by Moshin Hamad (novel—speculative fiction)
- “Walking with the Kurds” by John Hockenberry (personal essay)
- “A Palestinian Poet’s Perilous Journey out of Gaza” by Mosab Abu Toha (personal essay)
- “The Tragedy of Israel’s 135,000 Displaced Citizens” by Gid’on Lev (news article)
- “Displaced and Distressed: Responding to the Wartime Distress of Israel’s Refugee Teenagers” (opinion)
- “If Black English Isn’t a Language, Then Tell me, What is” by James Baldwin (essay)
- “How to Tame a Wild Tongue” by Gloria Anzaldua (essay)
- *The Color Purple* by Alice Walker (novel) and related analytical essays
- Poetry of Phyllis Wheatly, Frances E.W. Harper, Amanda Gorman, Tracy K. Smith, Audre Lorde, Rita Dove, Gwendolyn Brooks, Gwendolyn Bennett, Margaret Walker, Nikki Giovanni, and Natasha Tretheway
- Essays and speeches by Barack Obama, Ta-Nehisi Coates, Frederick Douglass, Olaudah Equiano, Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X, Brent Staples, Shelby Steele, and Kamala Harris

I will always provide you with ample notice before we begin a new book so that you may purchase your own copy. In some instances, I might have a few school copies to check out. For some works, I might have a pdf that I can share with you.

The online textbook for the course is Pearson’s *My Perspectives ELA Texas*. The textbook can be accessed via Canvas by clicking the “Resources” tab, then “HISD Digital Resources,” and then scrolling down to “English/Language Arts.”

APPROACH TO LITERATURE

This year we will study literature that reflects a variety of experiences and perspectives, some of which may be controversial. We will approach this literature with the goal of seeking to understand, appreciate, and respect the diverse experiences and attitudes of not only the characters we meet, but also the authors who created them.

Some of the texts we will read portray characters whose attitudes, beliefs, and/or values differ from our own. When this occurs, we will examine the characters in a way that seeks to understand not only the characters themselves, but also the reasons why an author might have created a character potentially mired in controversy. Often we will realize that an author has created such a character in order to do one of two things: to offer the reader insight into some aspect of human nature, or to raise questions—questions that it is up to us as readers to explore further.

Likewise, when we encounter a text in which a character behaves in ways our societal norms might deem inappropriate, the inclusion of such a text in the curriculum is in no way an endorsement of such behavior. For example, when we encounter a character who uses language that we know to be offensive—even hateful, we are in no way granting anyone license to use that language. The same will hold true when we encounter one character mistreating another character. In such cases, we will recognize that such mistreatment of others is almost always an indictment—*not* an endorsement—of the offending character and/or the social or cultural context in which the character lived. We will maintain the same perspective as we read literary works in which it is society as a whole—and not just one character—that is responsible for the marginalization of certain groups of people.

As an example, *The Catcher in the Rye* presents readers with a narrator who fails out of school, and instead of going straight home as he should, spends several days on his own in New York City. Studying this literary work condones neither Holden's behavior, nor the language he sometimes uses, nor the prevalent disregard that society conveys toward this lonely and disaffected teen. Instead, a deeper analysis of *The Catcher in the Rye* will offer the reader an opportunity to glean a fuller understanding of the tools (point of view, plot, setting, symbolism, and the like) that J.D. Salinger employs in his rendering of those few days in the life of Holden Caulfield, and the deep and complex history of a young man beset with grief and isolation who nonetheless takes what stand and action he can for those in his world whose marginalization he witnesses.

CELEBRATION OF MULTICULTURALISM

In this class, we will celebrate the diversity of voices, American and non-American alike, past and present, including and especially those that may have been marginalized in their own or even in current times. We will respect all characters, regardless of gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, religion, creed, ethnicity, national origin, physical or mental ability, social or economic status, and regardless of what circumstances, obstacles, or misfortunes they might have faced in their lives. Ultimately, we will discover that these voices from literature offer us a true wealth of experiences and insights that when coupled with our own have the capacity to enrich our lives in ways that are often as surprising as they are profound.

SUPPLIES

Every day you will need a fully charged HISD laptop, a three-ring binder (for English class only), one set of dividers, an ample supply of notebook paper, a blue or black pen, and a highlighter. The dividers are to be labeled as follows: Course Documents, Literature Handouts, Vocabulary, Sentence Style, and Grammar.

ATTENDANCE

Your attendance is essential to your success. In the event of an absence, it is your responsibility to make up, in a timely manner, all assignments that you have missed. Students have 3 school days to submit missing work for every one day of absence. The make-up time cannot exceed 15 school days. Whenever you are absent, please a) check Canvas for assignments and handouts, and b) email me directly so that I can make sure that you have the work that you need, so that I can answer any questions you might have, and so that we can arrange target dates for completing work assigned during your absence and schedule a time for you to make up in person any quizzes, tests, assessments, or activities that you missed during your absence. **Make-up quizzes, tests, assessments, and other activities must be scheduled ahead of time** so that I will have your work ready for you **and** so that you can participate in the scheduling process.

COURSE EXPECTATIONS

- **Be present for our work together**—not just physically, but mentally, too! This means coming to the classroom with an open mind and heart, ready to participate, explore, grow, and reflect every day!
- **Have the courage to take risks!** Be willing to try on new ideas, explore different perspectives, think, write, and create in unfamiliar and unconventional ways, engage in friendly debate, and be brave when learning how to do new things.
- **Have a fully charged HISD-issued laptop in class every day.** There will be no allowances, exceptions, or extensions for students using non-HISD-issued devices. Even if you have a personal laptop that you adore, **having an HISD-issue laptop is MANDATORY.**
- Earbuds, headphones, AirPods, and the like **MUST BE REMOVED PRIOR TO YOUR ENTERING THE CLASSROOM.**
- **Disconnect** from **ALL** personal electronic devices and other forms of distraction, including but not limited to phones, smartwatches, earbuds, headphones, and AirPods **by securing them inside your backpack.** Thank you in advance for your cooperation!
- **Participate in class** and **conscientiously complete assignments and tasks**, including independent close reading, vocabulary/sentence styling, writing tasks, and all other assignments.
- **Closely read all assigned texts.** Students who attempt to read study aids like Spark Notes in lieu of the actual text will be unsuccessful in this course. Not surprisingly, such students also find the course (and the texts) more difficult and less enjoyable to read. The use of an audio book will in no way replace the independent reading of text. While you are welcome to enjoy audio books for your leisure reading, Pre-AP English II students are expected to read assigned texts without the audio book. If you find a text especially challenging, I am more than happy to provide appropriate resources to support your reading and to make the text more accessible to you as a reader rather than a listener.

CONDUCT

- Students are expected to follow all rules for appropriate behavior as outlined in HISD's Code of Student Conduct and Carnegie Vanguard High School's Student Handbook. Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with these expectations.
- **All instances of academic dishonesty and all violations of in-class assessment policy will result in a zero, a conduct grade of P (or lower for repeat offenses), a referral to the Assistant Principal, and notification of the National Honor Society sponsor.**
- The **in-class assessment policy** is as follows: A student is prohibited from having any device, including but not limited to cell phones, ear buds, headphones, internet-capable watches, tablets, or laptops anywhere on their body, in their possession, in their clothing, or on their desk or seat while taking an assessment or while any other student in the room is taking an assessment. Students are responsible for keeping their work entirely covered at all times throughout the duration of a test. Students must not engage in any verbal or nonverbal communication with another student, consult any written, electronic, or other resource, or look at another student's work during an assessment.
- **Academic dishonesty** includes, but is not limited to unauthorized use of AI; copying, screenshotting, photographing, receiving, or sharing work of another student; sharing your work with another student; submitting work that contains content or ideas not generated by you; taking pictures or screenshots of assessments; sharing pictures or screenshots of assessments; sharing content or answers from assessments (electronically, verbally, or by any other means); using online resources for writing; receiving unauthorized assistance from anyone; any and all forms of plagiarism; and anything generally construed as cheating.
- Please remember that grooming, chewing gum, eating, drinking anything but water, and conducting candy/food/fundraiser sales during class are prohibited.

ONLINE LEARNING PLATFORMS

Please use the codes listed below to join our online learning platforms.

REMIND

Text "@wolfpap2" to 81010

Myap.collegeboard.org

Period 1: RGQVPL

Period 5: QV9MWE

Vocabulary.com

Period 1: <https://vocab.com/join/1CVY5JV>

Period 5: <https://vocab.com/join/31ZX42N>

No RedInk

Period 1: <https://www.noredink.com/join/sincere-coat-30>

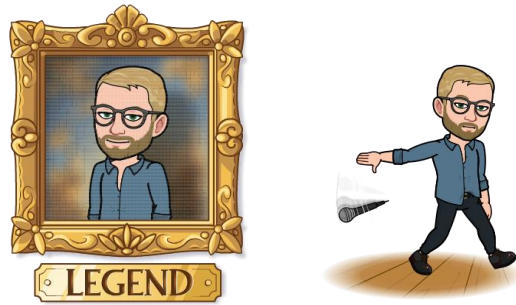
Period 5: <https://www.noredink.com/join/fresh-vest-84>

Quill.org

Period 1: quill.org/join/porch-fence

Period 5: quill.org/join/almond-welcome

Let's have a FANTASTIC year!



Pre-AP English II

Carnegie Vanguard High School

Brian Wolf

Room 108

bwolf@houstonisd.org