

<p>1984 by George Orwell (1949) Approved for use in Composition I (Literature Circle choice)</p>	
<p>Summary: Orwell’s 1984 is a story of a future world that has been converted to strict totalitarianism. In this world, Big Brother watches over all. Winston Smith, a party member, continues to indulge in rebellious thoughts that go far outside the “acceptable norm.” The result is Winston deals with his own internal conflict of what is right and wrong as he is “convinced” by the party to conform to their ideals.</p>	<p>Connection to the Curriculum: Orwell’s criticism of powerful government is revealed in his bleak prediction of the future when/if man is not able to think for himself. The somber tone of this piece is critical to the understanding of Orwell’s message of an anti-utopian society. The novel provides the student of literature the opportunity to closely examine diction (specifically contrasting the use of language to describe the Proles vs. the Party members) and its use in portraying a message. Recognizing satire and political messages in writing is age-appropriate for these seniors as they are a mere year away from voting. The fine art of drawing the political inferences from Orwell’s work in addition to examining the character types provides higher-level thinking activities for honors students.</p>
<p>Common Core State Standards Addressed:</p> <p><u>Reading:</u> CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.11-12.1: Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain. CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.11-12.4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful.</p> <p><u>Writing:</u> CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.1.B: Develop claim(s) and counterclaims fairly and thoroughly, supplying the most relevant evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both in a manner that anticipates the audience’s knowledge level, concerns, values, and possible biases. CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.1.C: Use words, phrases, and clauses as well as varied syntax to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify relationships between claim(s) and reasons, between reasons and evidence, and between claim(s) and counterclaims.</p> <p><u>Language:</u> CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.11-12.3: Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.</p>	
<p>A Note on the Text: (The best way to evaluate and understand a novel or movie is to personally read the book or watch the film in its entirety.) Because it is a rather dark, bleak novel, readers should be aware that in this lies Orwell’s real message about over-powerful governments. In this futuristic novel, there is a relationship between an unmarried man and woman (with limited sexual references). A series of tortures (including rats, electric shock, and other abuses) are violent in nature. All of these negative scenes work together to develop the heart of this political novel. More information can be found at Common Sense Media: https://www.common Sense Media.org/book-reviews/1984</p>	<p>Assessment: Students will complete a series of close readings, small writing assignments, and a final analysis essay. They will also lead a 30-minute discussion for a small group on a section of the novel, using a variety of techniques.</p>
<p>If you have any questions or concerns, please call or email your student’s Composition I teacher: Ms. Erica Reed (217) 238-7875 (ereed@mattoon.k12.il.us) or Mrs. Amanda Bright (217) 238-7877 (brighta@mattoon.k12.il.us).</p>	

A Separate Peace by John Knowles

Approved for use in Composition I (Literature Circle choice)

Summary: Against the backdrop of WWII raging far away in Europe, a group of privileged East Coast prep school boys begin their summer session. Isolated from the madness of war, the boys embark on a typical idyllic summer: swimming in the local river, taking advantage of a more laid back faculty and making plans for mischief. Among these boys are Gene and Finny; as classic character foils, they discover the profound meaning of friendship through many escapades and, eventually, one shocking incident. These characters, and others, form “a separate peace” as the war moves ever closer to their eighteen-year-old lives.

Connection to the Curriculum: This novel is ideal for seniors as it follows a classic pattern of “coming of age” novels while delving more maturely into the complex, and sometimes darker, realm of young adult friendship. The novel is also a fine tool for following reoccurring symbols and other archetypes (particularly seasonal). Finally, *A Separate Peace* is a transition work of literature, bridging the gap between the students’ reading maturity from high school to college.

Common Core State Standards Addressed:

Reading:

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CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.11-12.4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful.

Writing:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.1.B: Develop claim(s) and counterclaims fairly and thoroughly, supplying the most relevant evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both in a manner that anticipates the audience’s knowledge level, concerns, values, and possible biases.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.1.C: Use words, phrases, and clauses as well as varied syntax to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify relationships between claim(s) and reasons, between reasons and evidence, and between claim(s) and counterclaims.

Language:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.11-12.3: Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.

A Note on the Text: (The best way to evaluate and understand a novel or movie is to personally read the book or watch the film in its entirety.) This text includes mild violence associated with adolescent boys’ behavior in a prep school setting. Readers encounter death of a character. This event contributes to the development of the story which leaves readers wondering what makes a true leader and what makes a true friend.

Assessment: Students will complete a series of close readings, small writing assignments, and a final analysis essay. They will also lead a 30-minute discussion for a small group on a section of the novel, using a variety of techniques.

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The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn by Mark Twain

Approved for use in Composition I (Literature Circle choice)

Summary: Set in the pre-Civil War South, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* is the story of a naive white boy and his journey down the Mississippi River with a runaway slave, Jim. Through their adventures and hardships, Huck comes to regard Jim as his friend and makes what he believes to be the ultimate moral sacrifice to free him. The novel invites the reader to examine the meaning of friendship and teaches the valuable lesson of judging people for the content of their character and not the color of their skin.

Connection to the Curriculum: *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* is one of the fundamental texts for the study of American Literature. Discussions of the book include the traditional literary examination of the text and/or discourse on the controversy surrounding the book. When students have completed their reading, they may examine the issue of race both historically and currently. Students may form opinions about how the time period of *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* provides context for its events and language.

Common Core State Standards Addressed:

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Language:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.11-12.3: Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.

A Note on the Text: (The best way to evaluate and understand a novel or movie is to personally read the book or watch the film in its entirety.) Although Huck Finn appears on many "banned" lists, it holds its own place in the American canon. Twain's use of the "n" word in the text reflects the society he is describing. Through his realistic narrative, Twain actually speaks against both slavery and racism through the eyes of young Huck.

Assessment: Students will complete a series of close readings, small writing assignments, and a final analysis essay. They will also lead a 30-minute discussion for a small group on a section of the novel, using a variety of techniques.

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Andromeda Strain by Michael Crichton

Approved for use in Composition I (Literature Circle choice)

Summary:

The United States government is given a warning by the pre-eminent biophysicists in the country: current sterilization procedures applied to returning space probes may be inadequate to guarantee uncontaminated re-entry to the atmosphere. Two years later, seventeen satellites are sent into the outer fringes of space to "collect organisms and dust for study." One of them falls to earth, landing in a desolate area of Arizona. Twelve miles from the landing site, in the town of Piedmont, a shocking discovery is made: the streets are littered with the dead bodies of the town's inhabitants, as if they dropped dead in their tracks, and the investigation begins.

Connection to the Curriculum: This sci-fi novel is heavy in both science and fiction, which leads interested students into long discussions on scientific possibilities and ethics. It also is written in a post-modern and non-linear format (with many graphs and charts included). The format and content lead students to think critically about space and government practices in order to foretell the future.

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Language:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.11-12.3: Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.

A Note on the Text: (The best way to evaluate and understand a novel or movie is to personally read the book or watch the film in its entirety.) With the exception of a few scenes of violence and graphic descriptions of the attack of the virus, most of the intense language is scientific in nature.

Assessment: Students will complete a series of close readings, small writing assignments, and a final analysis essay. They will also lead a 30-minute discussion for a small group on a section of the novel, using a variety of techniques.

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Brave New World by Aldous Huxley

Approved for use in Composition I (Literature Circle choice)

Summary: *Brave New World* is Aldous Huxley's 1930's classic criticism of the modern world. The novel takes a critical view of a futuristic society in which most aspects of life have been streamlined into assembly line simplicity; all aspects of human life have been regulated. The ramifications of the creation of such a strikingly different society and culture are explored.

Connection to the Curriculum: *Brave New World* is a rich source from which to teach a wide variety of literary concepts and devices along with evaluating the ethical obligations required of those involved in scientific advancement. Through Huxley's portrayal of a futuristic society, readers are strongly cautioned about the dangers for humanity when unbridled scientific advancement goes unchecked. Numerous literary concepts can be taught through the novel: allusion, metaphor, characterization, satire, archetypal imagery, and tone. Throughout the course of reading the novel, meaningful literary discussions regarding Huxley's warning, historical context, and current day relevance can occur. This novel is generally considered to be a must-read for college bound students, and it is a classic of modern literature.

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Writing:

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Language:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.11-12.3: Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.

A Note on the Text: (The best way to evaluate and understand a novel or movie is to personally read the book or watch the film in its entirety.) *Brave New World*, in its development of a futuristic society, introduces the ideas of "soma" (a drug to induce happiness so no sadness is felt), sex without emotion (as procreation is no longer needed when conveyors produce children), and a new class system (cloning people to be workers). These extreme ideas are essential to the development of Huxley's political commentary and predictions for the future.

Assessment: Students will complete a series of close readings, small writing assignments, and a final analysis essay. They will also lead a 30-minute discussion for a small group on a section of the novel, using a variety of techniques.

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Frankenstein by Mary Shelley (book: 1831; mini-series: 2004)

Approved for use in Composition I (Literature Circle choice)

Summary:

“The story of Victor Frankenstein, a scientist who oversteps the bounds of conscience, and the monster he created, a creature both ghastly in its malice and transfixing in its suffering, was a best seller in its day and remains one of the most spellbinding novels of all time.”

–Washington Square Press

Connection to the Curriculum:

Although *Frankenstein* is a novel of the Romantic Period, it is timely for readers today as issues of cloning and stem cell research face our society. The story begins in an epistolary form and then changes into a narrative, first with Victor Frankenstein as the narrator and then the creature as the narrator. At the end of the novel, the writing again becomes an epistolary form. Because of the change in style, the text is a great tool for teaching theme, diction, structure, syntax, and persuasion.

Common Core State Standards Addressed:

Reading:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.1: Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.2: Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

Writing:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10: Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence

Speaking & Listening:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.1: Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacherled) with diverse partners on grade 6 topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly.

A Note on the Text: (The best way to evaluate and understand a novel is to personally read the book in its entirety.) By the nature of its topic, this text deals with a man trying to create a monster, in effect, playing God with another’s life. This TV mini-series is not rated, but was considered appropriate for cable television. It has some brief sexual suggestion, some violence, and moderate horror. The Parents’ Guide on IMDB has a more detailed list of the content of this film:

http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0368730/parentalguide?ref_=tt_strypg

Assessment: Students will complete a series of close readings, small writing assignments, and a final analysis essay. They will also lead a 30-minute discussion for a small group on a section of the novel, using a variety of techniques.

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Kite Runner by Khaled Hosseini

Approved for use in Composition I (Literature Circle choice)

Summary: The unforgettable, heartbreaking story of the unlikely friendship between a wealthy boy and the son of his father's servant, *The Kite Runner* is a beautifully crafted novel set in Afghanistan, which is in the process of being destroyed. It is about the power of reading, the price of betrayal, and the possibility of redemption; and an exploration of the power of fathers over sons—their love, their sacrifices, their lies.

Connection to the Curriculum: This novel contains several motifs and themes that require closer inspection by the reader, including parallel stories and religious and cultural differences. Symbolism is rampant, and the timeless threads of familial relationships and friendships can be explored for both their positive and negative components.

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Writing:

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Language:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.11-12.3: Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.

A Note on the Text: (The best way to evaluate and understand a novel or movie is to personally read the book or watch the film in its entirety.) The novel includes graphic descriptions of extreme cruelty and violence, including homosexual rape, murder, beatings, and a suicide attempt. Alcohol and drugs are used in appropriate ways, though the righteousness of drinking's part of religious discussions about Islam. This novel deals with complex issues about religion, prejudice, forgiveness, and the nature of "goodness."

Assessment: Students will complete a series of close readings, small writing assignments, and a final analysis essay. They will also lead a 30-minute discussion for a small group on a section of the novel, using a variety of techniques.

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Ordinary People by Judith Guest

Approved for use in Composition I (Literature Circle choice)

Summary:

The Jarretts are the perfect family leading a perfect life in a perfect world: wealthy, respectable, an expensive house in an exclusive neighborhood, European vacations, Texas golf trips. But perfection comes at a price, and when older son Buck dies in a boating accident and surviving son Conrad attempts suicide, the difference between the American dream and American reality becomes painfully apparent. The mask of perfection cracks, and those who hide behind it find themselves emotionally unable to rebuild their lives.

Connection to the Curriculum: Guest challenges the typical portrayal of the American family and demonstrates how tragedy affects every individual differently. Thus, the novel provides the student of literature the opportunity to closely examine characters and their motivations, as well as analyze theme development over the course of the text.

Common Core State Standards Addressed:

Reading:

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Language:

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A Note on the Text: (The best way to evaluate and understand a novel or movie is to personally read the book or watch the film in its entirety.) In *Ordinary People*, characters use profane language, especially Conrad Jarrett, and there are tense arguments between Conrad and his parents. Suicide is present, as well violence and sexual references.

Assessment: Students will complete a series of close readings, small writing assignments, and a final analysis essay. They will also lead a 30-minute discussion for a small group on a section of the novel, using a variety of techniques.

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Pride and Prejudice by Jane Austen

Approved for use in Composition I (Literature Circle choice)

Summary: *Pride and Prejudice* follows Elizabeth Bennet, the second of five daughters living in 19th century England. Elizabeth struggles with navigating the expectations of society in England, particularly regarding marriage. Her struggles are brought to the forefront when Mr. Bingley and his friend Mr. Darcy arrive in town, and the various relationships that unfold following their arrival force Elizabeth and her sisters to grow and change. Elizabeth’s relationship with Darcy drives the novel forward.

Connection to the Curriculum: This text exposes students to 19th century British society. Students must also learn to read carefully so they can pick up on the dry humor of Mr. Bennet and Elizabeth Bennet. As they read, students must consider how first impressions and societal expectations influence how we interact with one another. By the end, they will have to decide what an individual must do in order to overcome the influence of pride and prejudice stemming from those first impressions and societal expectations. This novel has also been written about by critics, and students will have the opportunity to read a scholarly article about this book.

Common Core State Standards Addressed:

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Language:

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A Note on the Text: (The best way to evaluate and understand a novel or movie is to personally read the book or watch the film in its entirety.) *Pride and Prejudice* is a love story with some dry humor sprinkled in. Some of the characters engage in somewhat scandalous behavior—one character runs away with a criminal, claiming she is in love with him, much to her family’s chagrin. These types of events, though, are meant to make readers think about the ways in which social expectations can sometimes clash with personal desires. More information can be found at *Common Sense Media*:

<https://www.commonsensemedia.org/book-reviews/pride-and-prejudice>

Assessment: Students will complete a series of close readings, small writing assignments, and a final analysis essay. They will also lead a 30-minute discussion for a small group on a section of the novel, using a variety of techniques.

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Scarlet Letter by Nathaniel Hawthorne

Approved for use in Composition I (Literature Circle choice)

Summary: In a small Puritan society, Hester Prynne has committed the ultimate sin of adultery. She is labeled with an “A” on her chest and shunned by the community, as is her daughter, Pearl. Through their trials, Hester and Pearl manage to survive and even mature. Arthur Dimmesdale, the minister, and Roger Chillingworth, Hester’s husband, however, are consumed by their personal secrets which ultimately lead to their personal ruin.

Connection to the Curriculum: The *Scarlet Letter* is an excellent example of an author’s use of dramatic irony to demonstrate the ambiguous nature of character motivations. Additionally, the elevated diction and style facilitates developing close reading skills, which are essential for interpreting complex themes and characters. Hawthorne’s portrayal a community grappling with public transgression is a springboard for discussion of how to handle difficult conflicts within a community.

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Language:

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A Note on the Text: (The best way to evaluate and understand a novel or movie is to personally read the book or watch the film in its entirety.) Hawthorne reveals his concern of society’s judgment on sinners as the main character is forced to live in shame by wearing a symbol of the adultery she has committed. There is no explicit description of the adultery, as Hawthorne maintains a Puritan feel in the telling of the story.

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The Hobbit by J.R.R. Tolkien

Approved for use in Composition I (Literature Circle choice)

Summary: Bilbo Baggins was a hobbit who wanted to live quietly in comfort until the wizard Gandalf came along and changed his life. Bilbo was soon drawn into a wonderful adventure to Lonely Mountain. He faced many trials along the way and discovered not only gold, dragons, and trolls but he also discovered himself. In the end, he confronted the dragon and his own fears in this epic tale of triumph and courage.

Connection to the Curriculum: This novel is full of rich, colorful language, and imagery. It entices the imagination and draws the reader into the story. It is challenging and full of life with strong theme, plot development, and characters. It allows students to explore figurative language and symbolism. It is a classic that is culturally relevant and age appropriate. The rewarding story line leaves a lasting impression on the reader due to its strong merit and classic voice.

Common Core State Standards Addressed:

Reading:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.11-12.1: Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.11-12.4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful.

Writing:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.1.B: Develop claim(s) and counterclaims fairly and thoroughly, supplying the most relevant evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both in a manner that anticipates the audience's knowledge level, concerns, values, and possible biases.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.1.C: Use words, phrases, and clauses as well as varied syntax to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify relationships between claim(s) and reasons, between reasons and evidence, and between claim(s) and counterclaims.

Language:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.11-12.3: Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.

A Note on the Text: (The best way to evaluate and understand a novel or movie is to personally read the book or watch the film in its entirety.) This novel includes elements of fantasy such as wizards, trolls, and dragons. It also includes a battle scene at the end.

Assessment: Students will complete a series of close readings, small writing assignments, and a final analysis essay. They will also lead a 30-minute discussion for a small group on a section of the novel, using a variety of techniques.

If you have any questions or concerns, please call or email your student's Composition I teacher: Ms. Erica Reed (217) 238-7875 (ereed@mattoon.k12.il.us) or Mrs. Amanda Bright (217) 238-7877 (brighta@mattoon.k12.il.us).

The Things They Carried by Tim O’Brien (novel: 1990)

Approved for use in Composition I (Literature Circle choice)

Summary: *The Things They Carried* is a novel in the form of a collection of short stories following the experiences of Alpha Company in the Vietnam War. The stories are interwoven as chapters in such a way that they can stand alone, but are best understood as each short story/chapter builds to the next, filling in the gaps of memory and truth. Each of the soldiers carries with him the things that help him survive the war—from weapons and protective gear, drugs, love letters, a stocking, and a yo-yo. In these stories, the narrator Tim O’Brien explores the effects of war on the people involved. Most importantly, the novel explores the art of storytelling and how one can manage to tell the truth when the truth is sometimes shocking. O’Brien is telling these stories in order to explain how memory can sometimes be trusted and sometimes not, but ultimately, through memory and storytelling, he can save others and himself.

Connection to the Curriculum: Due to this novel’s themes and structure, it provides a variety of educational possibilities: cross-curricular connections with American and World History, studying literary styles and the art of storytelling, and making personal connections to the lives and issues of students. The novel is also structurally interesting (in the form of short stories and also interlinked as a novel), providing students with a successful reading experience in an innovative piece of fiction.

Common Core State Standards Addressed:

Reading:

CCSS.11-12.R.I.2.: Determine two or more central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to provide a complex analysis; provide an objective summary of the text.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.11-12.4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.6: Analyze a case in which grasping a point of view requires distinguishing what is directly stated in a text from what is really meant (e.g., satire, sarcasm, irony, or understatement).

Writing:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.1.B: Develop claim(s) and counterclaims fairly and thoroughly, supplying the most relevant evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both in a manner that anticipates the audience’s knowledge level, concerns, values, and possible biases.
CC.11-12.W.2.b.: Develop the topic thoroughly by selecting the most significant and relevant facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience’s knowledge of the topic.
CC.11-12.R.L.1.: Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

Language:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.11-12.3: Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.11-12.5: Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

Speaking:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.4: Present information, findings, and supporting evidence, conveying a clear and distinct perspective, such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning, alternative or opposing perspectives are addressed, and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and a range of formal and informal tasks.

A Note on the Text: (The best way to evaluate and understand a novel is to personally read the book in its entirety.) *The Things They Carried* was the winner of the *Chicago Tribune* Heartland Prize, a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in 1990, and a finalist for the National Book Critics Award in 1990. The novel uses profanity and coarse words, including racial slurs, violence in the context of the reality of war, drug use, and sexual innuendo. For more information, please visit <http://www.pluggedin.com/book-reviews/things-they-carried>.

Assessment: Students will complete a series of close readings, small writing assignments, and a final analysis essay. They will also lead a 30-minute discussion for a small group on a section of the novel, using a variety of techniques.

If you have any questions or concerns, please call or email your student’s Composition I instructor.

To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee (book: 1960; film: 1962)

Approved for use in Composition I (Literature Circle choice)

Summary: Over the course of three summers during the 1930's, the main character, Scout, her brother, Jem, and summer neighbor, Dill, experience the trials and tribulations of growing up in a racially-prejudiced community in Alabama. Weaving together stories about neighbors (the reclusive Boo Radley; the opinionated Mrs. Dubose; the nicest person they know, Maudie Adkins), a controversial trial of an African American (Tom Robinson) accused by a white man, and the familial every day happenings of the Finch Family, Miss Lee delivers an unforgettable story. The children's father, Atticus Finch, is the moral lightning rod who teaches the children and the reader that "you never really know someone until you walk around in their shoes....consider things from their point of view."

Connection to the Curriculum: This book engages students in an easier text to read but with more challenging theme and subject matter. Several of the topics are timely and, as a coming of age story. It allows opportunities for writing about text, including comparison and contrast. In addition, it connects with any study on diversity that will prepare high school students for the college environment.

Common Core State Standards Addressed:

Reading:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.11-12.1: Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.11-12.4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful.

Writing:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.1.B: Develop claim(s) and counterclaims fairly and thoroughly, supplying the most relevant evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both in a manner that anticipates the audience's knowledge level, concerns, values, and possible biases.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.1.C: Use words, phrases, and clauses as well as varied syntax to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify relationships between claim(s) and reasons, between reasons and evidence, and between claim(s) and counterclaims.

Language:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.11-12.3: Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.

A Note on the Text: The film is not rated, but is considered appropriate for cable television. It contains references to sexual assault, brief violence, and some vulgar language. The Parents' Guide on IMDB has a more detailed list of the content of this film: http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0056592/parentalguide?ref_=tt_stry_pg

Assessment: Students will complete a series of close readings, small writing assignments, and a final analysis essay. They will also lead a 30-minute discussion for a small group on a section of the novel, using a variety of techniques.

If you have any questions or concerns, please call or email your student's Composition I teacher: Ms. Erica Reed (217) 238-7875 (ereed@mattoon.k12.il.us) or Mrs. Amanda Bright (217) 238-7877 (brighta@mattoon.k12.il.us).

A Lesson Before Dying text by Ernest Gaines; movie directed by Joseph Sargent (1999)

Approved for use in English IV

Summary:

Set in the late 1940s in a Cajun community, two young African -American men forge a bond when one of them visits the other in prison on Death Row. The lessons they both learn along the way surprise them.

Connection to the Curriculum: This novel discusses issues and themes related to issues of race and the death penalty that will allow for cross-curricular discoveries. This work contains figurative language and other literary devices that will allow students to see how an author uses language for a particular purpose.

Common Core State Standards Addressed:

Reading:

R.L. 4, 5, 6, 9: Students will be able to use strong, textual evidence to analyze texts, as well as determine author's choices (style, word choices, allusions, point of view, etc.) and analyze their impact on the text at appropriate levels.

R.L. 7, 10: Students will be able compare and contrast a variety of media with varying cultural contexts at appropriate level.

Writing:

W 7, 8, 9-10: Students will be able to synthesize multiple sources and incorporate research to compose an effective text that avoids plagiarism and follows a standard format for citation.

Language:

L 6: Students will be able to demonstrate sentence fluency (sentence variety, structure) at the appropriate level.

A Note on the Text:

Winner of National Book Critics Circle Award for Fiction, *A Lesson Before Dying* contains racially sensitive issues as well as capital punishment, scenes of violence, brief strong language and some sensuality.

Movie: PG-13

Assessment: Students will complete quizzes and a test over the content and concepts of this play, as well as analyze the theme with supporting documentation.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact your student's senior English teacher.

Macbeth text by William Shakespeare; film directed by Rupert Goold, 2010 (Rating TV14-V)

Approved for use in English IV

Summary: Three witches' prophecy that he will be king begins to plot (with his wife) the murder of the current king, Duncan. After the death of both the king and a fellow officer, Banquo, he is haunted by both his own conscience and Banquo's ghost. His guilt, the suicide of his wife, and the patriotic actions of Macduff, prove to be his undoing. He is beheaded and Malcolm, Duncan's first-born son, is crowned the rightful king.

Connection to the Curriculum: The play is a piece of classical literature that is a part of the collective knowledge of the educated public. Seniors enjoy vacillating between love and hatred for the clearest tragic hero in the sophomore curriculum. In addition, young people benefit from the analysis of the effects of overwhelming ambition that suppresses the ability to reason. The play serves as a vehicle for analyzing literary elements such as character development, theme, irony, motif, dialogue, and poetic devices. Students also benefit from an in-depth exploration of the stage directions and language constructs that drive the action of the play, in addition to a review of Shakespearean theater basics.

The film is an adaptation of William Shakespeare's famous tragedy Macbeth. As an extension of students learning about the importance of stage directions and language constructs that drive the action of the play, students will evaluate the artistry of the film by using their new film knowledge.

Common Core State Standards Addressed:

Reading

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.11-12.3](#): Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.11-12.5](#): Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure 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) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.

Writing

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.1](#): Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

Language

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.11-12.6](#): Acquire and use accurately general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

A Note on the Text: (The best way to evaluate and understand a novel or movie is to personally read the book or watch the film in its entirety.) The story of Macbeth begins with witches foretelling what will happen to him. Although the movie also includes violence, including an execution and other murders, these situations add to the development of the plot, specifically the conflict. The result is Shakespeare's revealing of the dangers of lusting for power. Once again Shakespeare proves himself to be an observer of humans' faults. The Parents' Guide on IMDB has a more detailed list of the content of this film.

Assessment: Students will complete several quizzes and a final unit test over the story. Students will complete a quiz over the film terms learned. Over the course of watching the film, students will take detailed notes using their new film elements knowledge and incorporate those notes into a movie review (evaluation) of the film. Students will compose a definition essay with connections to the play and real world.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact your student's senior English teacher.

A Streetcar Named Desire by Tennessee Williams (play: 1947; film: 1951)

Approved for use in English IV

Summary: Widely considered a landmark play, *A Streetcar Named Desire* deals with a culture clash between two symbolic characters, Blanche DuBois, a pretentious, fading relic of the Old South, and Stanley Kowalski, a rising member of the industrial, urban immigrant class. The play presents Blanche DuBois, a fading but still-attractive Southern belle whose pretensions to virtue and culture only thinly mask alcoholism and delusions of grandeur. Her poise is an illusion she presents to shield others, but most of all herself, from her reality, and an attempt to make herself still attractive to new male suitors.

Connection to the Curriculum: This play explores the theme of *discrimination* within several social contexts, such as gender and mental illness. In addition, internal conflicts and biases will be discussed within the time period of the play, as well as with more modern connections.

Common Core State Standards Addressed:

Reading:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.11-12.3: Analyze the impact of the author’s choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).

CCSS.11-12.R.I.2.: Determine two or more central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to provide a complex analysis; provide an objective summary of the text.

2.A.5b.: Evaluate relationships between and among character, plot, setting, theme, conflict and resolution and their influence on the effectiveness of a literary piece.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.11-12.4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful.

Writing:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.1.B: Develop claim(s) and counterclaims fairly and thoroughly, supplying the most relevant evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both in a manner that anticipates the audience’s knowledge level, concerns, values, and possible biases.

CC.11-12.W.2.b.: Develop the topic thoroughly by selecting the most significant and relevant facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience's knowledge of the topic.

CC.11-12.R.L.1.: Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

Language:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.11-12.3: Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.

CC.11-12.W.2.c.: Use appropriate and varied transitions and syntax to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships among complex ideas and concepts.

A Note on the Text: (The best way to evaluate and understand a novel or movie is to personally read the book or watch the film in its entirety.) *A Streetcar Named Desire* was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in 1948. Both the play and the film (which is rated PG) include “thematic elements” including: no nudity but sexual innuendo and an implied rape, drunken acts of violence/abuse (non-gore), a few ethnic slurs (“chinaman” and “Pollock”), alcoholism and smoking. The Parents’ Guide on IMDB has a more detailed list of the content of this film.

Assessment: Students will complete quizzes and a test over the content and concepts of this play, as well as analyze the theme with supporting documentation. A compare/contrast essay will be written at the conclusion of both this play and another text.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact your student’s senior English teacher.

