

## Pre-IB English I

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### Course Goals

The **purpose** of the course is to prepare students for IB-level English by facilitating high order thinking about literary texts, and to foster an appreciation of literary texts so that students may find personal value in reading. In order for a student to appreciate the purpose of the course, he or she must be willing to think, listen, and reflect to achieve greater understanding of literary texts and him or herself as a critical reader. I **believe** that personal achievement is a function of diligent effort and practice, and that reading is about finding yourself, not an arbitrary concept, within a text. The **essential questions** we will address in this course are: What is a text? What makes a text “literature”? What is the proper function of literature? To what extent is a work of literature effective? What role does literature play in people’s lives? Does literature tell the truth?

### Course Objectives

#### **Content covered:**

*The Sound of Waves* by Yukio Mishima

*Romeo and Juliet* by William Shakespeare

*Night* by Elie Wiesel

*Maus: A Survivor’s Tale* by Art Spiegelman

*Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck

*Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury

A selection of short stories and poetry

*Vocabulary Workshop: Level D* by William H. Sadlier.

**Skills honed:** literary analysis; use of graphic organizers; public speaking; composition; research and MLA documentation; organization and time management; note-taking and study skills; appropriate use of technology.

I **expect** every student to come prepared to participate in class activities in a courteous and mature manner. As a matter of respect for the class and teacher, each student must bring a three-ring binder to organize handouts and homework; the text we are studying; a black or blue pen for assessments; and an agenda. Students who choose to bring a laptop to school should be prepared for restrictions during class time.

Literature is inherently a product of history and a craft like art. As students become IB thinkers, I encourage them to make other **cross-disciplinary** and cultural connections, and to share their insights with the class.

## Teaching Strategies and Resources

Due to a diverse learning atmosphere, **teaching strategies** will vary. Students will read aloud to the class, will listen to audio tapes, or the teacher read. Students will approach literary analysis by practicing with graphic organizers such as the literary aid *SCASI*, and color-marking and close reading of short passages. Class periods will regularly involve discussion, including think-pair-share, teacher-facilitated whole group, and teacher and student-facilitated inner-outer circle. Drama, art, music, and creative writing are supplementary strategies of equal effect. Public speaking drills, free writing, and essay organizers are important practice for assessments.

Technology will be one of your greatest **resources** this year. The course blog (address at the top of syllabus) offers access to the grade book (each student will receive a random ID number once or twice a quarter), helpful links, handouts, and a tentative schedule. If a student has a question about missed work during an absence, upcoming assignments, or a grade, he or she can access the blog from school or home in lieu of a face-to-face meeting or email conversation with the teacher. Graphic organizers (e.g. *SCASI*), IB rubrics, and other important resources (e.g. Significant Statement Exercise, Making Meaning Protocol) are accessible through the course blog.

## Assessment

Grades are based on a **total points system**, where each assignment receives a total possible point value and students can earn points up to the total. The total point value of a quarter varies since assignments and assessments vary. Weight of the total points depends on several factors including how much time and effort is expected. Grades of lower weight assignments (e.g. homework, reading “pop” quizzes) are typically based on effort and/or quality completion. Grades of higher weight assessments (e.g. essays, oral presentations) are calculated using modified IB rubrics so that students learn the language of the IB. Grading criteria for other assignments and assessments is provided before assessment. Every student receives a participation, effort and attendance/preparedness grade at the end of every quarter which counts for approximately 25% of the quarter grade.

**I cannot give a quarter grade until you complete the work.** Failure to complete outstanding assignments and assessments after progress reports each quarter may result in a MULT (make-up learning time) opportunity during lunch periods until the work is complete. Keep in mind: the later the work, the less credit earned.

End of year grades are determined by percentages. Each quarter counts as 20% of your end of year grade and the mid-term and final exams each count as 10%.

## Important Note

Pre-IB English I will have a significant in-class and at home technological component. Students without access to a computer and/or the internet, and/or computer skills should speak with Ms Fenney privately.