Course Title: American Literature
Grade Level: 11 (or after satisfactory completion of English Skills)
Elective/Required: Required (for high school student entering in 08-09)
Length/Credits: 1 year/10 credits
Prerequisites: Screening/Benchmark

I. Course Description:
American Literature is an integrated English/language arts program emphasizing reading, writing, listening, speaking and researching for a variety of purposes. The course of study explores the ideas and ideals that have shaped our country through the exploration of primary documents as well as the literature that Americans have produced from pre-colonial times through the present.

II. Instructional Materials: Holt Elements of Literature – Fifth Course

Approved Core and Supplemental Literature:

To Be A Slave
Bless Me, Ultima
Caramelo
Animal Dreams**
The Poisonwood Bible
A Tree Grows in Brooklyn
Roots
Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglas
Uncle Tom’s Cabin
Silent Spring (non-fiction)
The Great Gatsby
Their Eyes Were Watching God
East of Eden
The Grapes of Wrath
Black Boy**
The Autobiography of Ben Franklin
The Old Man and the Sea

Walden
Moby Dick
Billy Budd
Nickeled and Dimed (non-fiction)
Spoon River Anthology (poetry)
A Streetcar Named Desire (drama)
The Glass Menagerie (drama)
The Joy Luck Club**
The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn
To Kill a Mockingbird
A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur’s Court
The Sun Also Rises
A Farewell to Arms
For Whom the Bell Tolls
The Scarlet Letter
Advanced students should be encouraged to read widely among the classics of literature. Check with Peggy Entz or your educational coordinator for suggestions.

III. Course Outline –

- The course is broken into four week blocks. There is a required writing assessment at the end of each unit. If work is completed successfully, one credit and a grade will be issued at the end of each four week period.
- A minimum of four approved novels must be read and a written response made during the school year in order for the student to receive full credit for the course.
- When questions are answered, the questions must be rephrased into the answers. Remember that the reader will not have the question in front of them when reading the response.
- All major writing assignments must be turned in with all notes and drafts. The final drafts should be typewritten, unless otherwise discussed with your educational coordinator, and turned in on top of the rough drafts and notes.

1. Encounters and Foundations to 1800 – In the Holt Elements of Literature, Fifth Course, students will read the essay entitled “Encounters and Foundations to 1800”, on pg. 6 and respond to the three questions posed before the essay (Think About...) and the short writing assignment given in the “Write About...” section on pg. 19.

Students will read and respond to the following writings:

- Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God
- The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano
- Selections from The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin, All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten, and Poor Richard’s Almanac.
- Speech to the Virginia Convention

Writing Assignment: Compare and contrast the views of the Puritans and the rationalists or Deists. (Jonathan Edwards’ sermon and Benjamin Franklin’s autobiography could give valuable insight into the two different views.) Use the general premise of the Jane Schaffer model for organizing your essay. Use sentence openers and dress-ups.

( Suggested Reading: The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin, The Crucible)*

*The reading suggestions at the end of each unit are only suggestions.

Four approved novels or plays need to be read through the school year, but students may choose from within the list and may pace their reading throughout each semester.
2. Foundations of the Nation – Liberty and Justice for All?
Students will read and respond to the following writings:
- The Crisis, No. 1
- The Autobiography: The Declaration of Independence
- The Iroquois Constitution
- Letter to John Adams
- Declaration of Sentiments of the Seneca Falls Woman’s Rights Convention

Writing Assignment: Students will write an editorial, or persuasive piece of writing exploring the question of whether people in the United States are all promised freedom and equality by our founding fathers and whether or not these promises have been fulfilled for all Americans. Dress-ups and sentence openers need to be used. Refer to the Writing Workshop at the end of Collection 1 entitled Writing an Editorial.
(Suggested Reading: Nickled and Dimed, Black Boy)

3. Research Paper – Students will choose a research topic (the subject will be limited to something or someone American) and use the Elements of Literature guide Reporting Historical Research to guide them. (It is found towards the end of Collection 4). An MLA Guide should be used, as well. A minimum of five sources should be used from a variety of formats.
(Suggested reading: Black Elk Speaks, Uncle Tom’s Cabin)

4. American Romanticism: 1800-1860 – Students will read and respond to the following writings:
- The essay entitled American Romanticism: 1800-1860
- Four selections from any combination of the following authors: Washington Irving, William Cullen Bryant, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, Edgar Allan Poe, Herman Melville. Each selection must be read and responded to with either text questions or other in-depth questions.

Writing Assignment: Students will write an essay in which they explain and support why one of the chosen authors of this section can be defined as a Romantic. They will use the characteristics of American Romanticism as given in the text’s essay on American Romanticism.
(Suggested reading: Billy Budd; The House of Seven Gables, Walden)

5. American Masters: Whitman and Dickinson
In Elements of Literature, Collection 3, students will read:
- Essay entitled American Masters – Whitman and Dickinson
- Three poems by Walt Whitman
- Three poems by Emily Dickinson.
• They will respond to each poem by using text questions or other in-depth inquiring questions.

Writing Assignment: Students will choose a topic and write a poem in the style of Whitman or Dickinson.

❖ If students fly through these assignments, have them immediately move to #6 which has much more reading.

(Suggested reading: Spoon River Anthology, Song of Myself, Caramelo)

6. The Rise of Realism: The Civil War to 1914
• Students will read the essay The Rise of Realism – The Civil War to 1914
• All of the selections included in Comparing Points of View – Slavery with accompanying questions.
• All of the selections included in Comparing Points of View – The Civil War with accompanying questions.
• The Story of an Hour with all accompanying reading and questions.
• “Douglass” and “We Wear the Mask” with all accompanying reading and questions.

Writing Assignment: Write a fictional story taking the point of view of a slave, a slave-owner, or a soldier in the Civil War. Include historical details and dates, but create your own characters and plot line.

(Suggested reading: Any book by Mark Twain, The Red Badge of Courage)

7. The Moderns: 1914-1939 –
• Students will read the essay The Moderns: 1914-1939.
• Students will read six poems by at least four different poets from this section of the text or from this time period. They will answer question about these poems.
• Students will read at least three short stories by any of the following authors: Ernest Hemingway, William Faulkner, F. Scott Fitzgerald, John Steinbeck, Eudora Welty, Katherine Anne Porter, James Thurber, or Flannery O’Connor. Comprehension and critical thinking questions need to be answered for each.

Writing Assignment: Students will write an analysis of one of the short stories or novels that they have read. They will use the assignment at the end of Collection 5, Analyzing a Novel, to guide them.

8. During April of the 2008-2009 school year, students need to read an approved novel and write a response to it. They may also use this time to finish any unfinished work from previous units. Students should also prepare for and take the STAR tests during this month. The Skills Review section at the end of each collection provides excellent practice.

(Suggested novels: The Joy Luck Club, The Color of Water, The Things They Carried)
9. Contemporary Literature – 1939 to Present
   • Students will read the essay **Contemporary Literature: 1939 to Present**
   • Read either the selection from *Night* or *Hiroshima* in Holt text, or other World
     War II writing. Comprehension and critical thinking questions must be
     answered.
   • Read and respond to three pieces from **Contemporary Fiction** section.
   • Read and respond to three pieces from **Contemporary Nonfiction** section.
   • Read and respond to four poems from **Contemporary Poetry** section.
   **Writing Assignment:** None for this time period. Grade will be based on reading and
   thorough responses.

10. Looking Back…Final Assessment
    In the last two weeks of the school year, students will look back over their writing and
    reading for the school year. An essay will be written, using sentence openers and dress-
    ups, that reflects on what they have learned and how they and their writing have grown
    and changed. This is a reflective paper that should discuss specific examples (e.g.: what
    they enjoyed or deplored, what was difficult, what was easy) and also look at bigger
    trends (e.g.: writing is easier for them now, a discovery of a love of poetry). The final
    copy, as always, should be turned in on top of the other drafts and notes.

IV. Grading
    Students will earn one credit every 4 weeks for satisfactory completion of work
    assigned. Grades will be based on the quality of work on smaller assignments and the
    grade given to the final writing project for each unit.
    • **A credit and grade will not be given until the work for a unit is completed to the
      educational coordinator’s satisfaction.**
    • **Students MUST complete four novels or plays in the two semesters. Written
      responses must be given for each work read.**