

Ten Things You Can Do to Support Your Child's Writing

by Jim Burke

1. Create a dedicated, comfortable space for writing. Preferably they have a desk and decent chair, both of which demonstrate a commitment to them and their studies while sending the message that their work is important. They need quiet; they may also prefer to listen to music that seems impossible to write to: let them listen to it or they will be more distracted.
2. Buy them books. Many studies show that reading has profound effects on our writing ability. Reading provides models of style and thinking that help shape our own voices as writers. Books are great presents that again show interest in them; they are also—or can be—random gifts that come during a time when your relationship is going through some serious renegotiations. Also, you should try to read yourself and let them see this; talk to them about what you read and ask them about what they are reading so they know you are interested in them.
3. Provide them with good reference books. Every student needs a good college level dictionary (*American Heritage* is excellent; the *Oxford Desk* is good). Also recommended: *The Synonym Finder* or *21st Century Dictionary of Synonyms and Antonyms*.
4. Buy your child a computer. If possible, buy your child a computer for schoolwork. Used models with a printer and software are available for as little as \$200.00. If this is difficult to manage try to provide transportation to and from the local libraries where they access computers, or arrange to drive them early or pick them up later from school so they can use the school's facilities. This investment in your child shows that you are interested in them and that their writing is important.

5. Ask to read their work. It shows interest in them and their work; it shows you take them seriously. It allows you to monitor their progress. It allows you to say, "I've got some extra time tonight—do you want to work on this together a bit?"

6. Write the assignment yourself. You can each do the assignment on your own and then compare what you came up with; this creates an opportunity to talk, clarify, or think together, activities that are hard for teens and parents.

7. Use writing in your house. The family journal exemplifies this best. Get a nice (but not too nice) journal and keep it near the kitchen table (or wherever your family's central spot is). Write notes, questions, observations to each other, to improve your writing—and theirs. I know people who swear this saved their relationships.

8. Buy them writer's gifts. If you are at the office supply store, buy them some colorful post-it notes, nice paper, a cool pen—anything that will please them and make working with writing more fun to them.

9. Celebrate their successes with movies, specials meals, or a bulletin board in the kitchen...

10. Play family games that involve language such as Balderdash, Scrabble, or Magnetic Poetry...



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Welcome to Plainfield
South High School!

Advanced Placement Literature & Composition



Grace Bogdan
Jeff Jarot

Syllabus

Welcome to AP Literature!

The Advanced Placement Literature and Composition course was created as a beginning level college writing and reading course according to the College Board and, therefore, will be treated as a college class. Exploring complex literature and poetry at the collegiate level through class discussion, writing, presentations, and creative projects is the foundation for this course. We will spend an ample amount of time writing AP style timed essays, working with AP multiple choice tests, and discussing and using collegiate language used on the AP exam.

Possible Major Texts:

- *How to Read Literature Like a Professor* by Thomas C. Foster
- *Mythology* by Edith Hamilton
- *1984* by George Orwell
- *Slaughterhouse Five* by Kurt Vonnegut
- *Twelfth Night* by William Shakespeare
- *A Streetcar Named Desire* by Tennessee Williams
- *Sula* by Toni Morrison
- *Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close* by Johnathan Safran Foer
- *The Stranger* by Albert Camus
- *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Bronte
- *The Importance of Being Earnest* by Oscar Wilde

Rules and Procedures

Reading:

Reading in this class will always be a process, and it will always be active. One of the essential things students will be working on is close reading, annotating, and journaling / freewriting. What is important to remember with regard to the reading for this class is that we will never simply be reading. We will be engaging our texts in conversation, and these solitary conversations we will be holding as individuals will naturally serve as a springboard for our class room conversations / discussions.

Readings must be completed on time and with care. The major works (listed above) will be actively read and annotated outside of class. If students do not annotate, then they are not reading closely and, therefore, are unprepared for class. In addition, students will be assigned supplemental, shorter pieces to enhance the understanding of the concepts in the unit. Lastly, during the week a novel/play is due, be prepared to take quizzes and to not only discuss but present analysis.

One of the skills essential for college success and lifelong learning in general is to be a self-motivated learner. Hence, the generation of words and definitions unfamiliar to students will not only be expected but will also be a requirement. Actively using a dictionary and learning the meanings of unfamiliar words is an absolutely necessary part of this process. Furthermore, application of these “newly-learned” words will be an essential aspect of the revision process while writing essays.

Writing / Revision:

To leave this course with a strong understanding of their writing style and the ability to write in a sophisticated, collegiate manner, students will write several essays, an equal mix of both in-class timed writings as well as formal papers for which they will work thoroughly through each step of the writing process. These writing assignments will serve as the culmination of close reading, annotating, analysis, and discussion of assigned texts. Students should be prepared to meet with their teacher (during class or after school, as time and scheduling permits) to discuss their writing, their understanding of their own writing, and their writing processes.

As an essential part of each unit, students will be expected to plan, draft, revise, and edit a series of well-thought-out, detailed analytical essays

Student Participation:

Since students will engage in discussion on an almost daily basis (regarding topics of literary analysis such as style, diction, tone, and figurative language) they must be prepared to discuss the readings in order to enhance their understanding through corresponding written assignments. Without strong student participation and responsibility, the course cannot develop. Students are looked upon as leaders of class discussion as a means to prepare them to read, discuss, and write critically