

ENGLISH OVERVIEW



WYA

WRITING AND YOUNG ADULT FICTION

(Davidson Explore only): this middle school class is split into four novel-based units: *The Mysterious Benedict Society* by Trenton Lee Stewart, *Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children* by Ransom Riggs, *Wonderstruck* by Brian Selznick, and *The Evolution of Calpurnia Tate* by Jacqueline Kelly. Each unit includes various forms of critical thinking skills and extended writing or speaking assignments.

WH

WRITING IN THE HUMANITIES (Davidson Explore only):

this introductory course focuses on the key building blocks of creating smart, interesting arguments. This class is split into thematic units: Technology and Communication; Survival and Sacrifice; Truth and Deception; and Us & Them.

CR

CRITICAL THINKING IN THE HUMANITIES/

CRITICAL READING AND WRITING (Davidson Explore and Davidson Academy Online Full-time enrollment): this pair of middle school classes builds up to a level on par with English 101 courses, focusing on logical reasoning, developing ideas, and applying feedback. While Critical Thinking in the Humanities and Critical Reading and Writing share objectives, they utilize different texts, meaning students could take both minimal overlap. Students in both classes study literature, poetry, and nonfiction from around the world in four distinct units across the year.

DAVIDSON EXPLORE

Davidson Explore (DE) courses are offered through the Davidson Institute for Talent Development and not by the Davidson Academy. They are often taught by Davidson Academy staff.

PLACEMENT IN ENGLISH

Placements are determined by assessment and are modified throughout the diagnostic period. During diagnostic, teachers look at the quality of thinking, reading, writing, and discussing. Each class has benchmarks and goals that build on the previous level, so while we keep student preferences in mind, placement decisions are based on demonstrated skills and abilities.

CA

COMPOSITION AND ANALYSIS: this middle school course builds on Critical Reading and Writing, strengthening the logical reasoning and writing skills taught in that class, and adding new skills. Particular emphasis is placed on compare/contrast analysis, analyzing symbolic and archetypal patterns, and poetry analysis, with a significant amount of practice offered through many short-form writing assignments and four full-length essays. The units in this class are: Fairy Tales and Archetypes, Activism and Leadership, Individuality and Conformity, and Heroes and Villains. *(If taken as a ninth grader by age, this course counts as a high school English credit.)*

RLA

RHETORIC AND LITERARY ANALYSIS: our first high school course starts with a persuasive research paper and then applies those same skills to analyzing literature using a variety of formalist and new historical approaches we refer to as lenses. This course is direct preparation for all upcoming literature classes

AL

AMERICAN LITERATURE: this class is structured as a traditional survey course, exploring the wide range of texts that make up our national literature, from first European settlement to the 20th century. In order to gain a clear understanding of America's literary history, the reading selection primarily consists of texts that clearly reflect the styles and ideas of America's major literary periods, allowing students to analyze the relationships between America's literature and its various religious, political, artistic, and philosophical movements. To focus students' critical inquiry, the class will focus on one classic question throughout the year: What does it mean to be American? Students will explore this question, using the various texts as evidence, through frequent synchronous and asynchronous online discussions, reading journals with directed analytical prompts, creative projects, and extended essay assignments that include several workshoping and revision stages.

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Four core English Credits
(Typically: Rhetoric and Literary Analysis, American Literature, British Literature, and one of the two upper-level English courses)



GROWTH IN READING, THINKING, AND WRITING

Students generally see 3-4 years growth in their writing skills their first year here. Our English teachers give a tremendous amount of feedback on student work and often offer redo options so students can learn from their drafts. This mimics the real world, in which all published authors go through multiple revisions in the editing process.

All DAO English courses emphasize critical thinking and close reading; creating, supporting, and defending an argument; and developing skills in academic discussions and presentations. However, the specific benchmarks and expectations for each class are different. These goals are sequential, building from one class to the next.

BL

BRITISH LITERATURE: students analyze British literature in its historical and cultural contexts through a significant reading load, discussion, and literary-critical exercises, and they learn to write essays that incorporate well-known critical and theoretical approaches.

AR

ADVANCED RHETORIC: an examination of argument and language from classical Greece up through modern politics and media. This course includes independent research and speeches based on students' interests.

VT

VALUE THEORY (Starting 2021-2022): this is a course on moral, political, and aesthetic value. Students will survey positions in meta-ethics, examine actual moral systems, study political philosophy, and apply knowledge of the previous three units to questions of aesthetics.

— The — WRITING — Center —

The Writing Center, which is run on Microsoft Teams, gives students the opportunity for one-on-one writing help. Tutors known as Word Nerds assist their peers with all stages of the writing process (from developing ideas to revising and editing). Students may **ONLY** use the Writing Center for assignments that they are working on in their Davidson classes

Word Nerds are upper-level DAO students who are selected by our English teachers. Word Nerds know the DAO curriculum and teacher expectations, and a DAO English teacher oversees the Writing Center.