

Skillsets to Prepare for AP Literature and AP Language

What are the basic English and Composition skillsets a high school student should possess before taking an AP English course? They should have at least some experience in....

- **Responsible schedule management.** My AP courses feature one weekly due date for all assignments (this is similar to the scheduling in many college courses). A responsible student is able to consider their weekly schedule and plan their homework time accordingly. One weekly due date allows for maximum flexibility for busy homeschoolers!
- **Basic English composition.** Students should possess basic grammar skills. Students should have experience writing four or five-paragraph essays which include an introduction, conclusion, and multiple body paragraphs. These may be in any essay category (and may include work in history and social studies courses as well as English). Having experience in analysis, expository, or argumentative essays is especially valuable before beginning AP English.
- **Basic literary or rhetorical device analysis.** Students should be able to move beyond merely memorizing the definition of a literary term (such as metaphor or simile) to being able to discuss the effect the use of a term might have on the text. What does it emphasize? What message or big idea does it help to express?
- **Recognizing positive vs. negative connotations and analyzing tone.** Students should be able to recognize the difference between denotation (dictionary definition) and connotation (implication) of a word and be capable of recognizing words with positive (smile) vs. negative (smirk) connotations. In addition, it is helpful for students to have at least some experience discussing or analyzing the tone (author's attitude) within a text.
- **Basic reading and discussion experience.** Students should have experience reading and discussing the basic plot, characters, conflicts, and themes or messages of multiple works of fiction of literary merit. In addition, it is often helpful if students are able to read a nonfiction work with which they may disagree and coherently discuss why they disagree, incorporating specific examples. However, they will also have the opportunity to build these skills in AP English courses.

Check out the next page for courses which help to prepare students with these skillsets!

Make it Happen: How to Plan for AP English!

Diligent students are typically ready for an AP English course by Grade 11. To plan to take AP English Language or AP English Literature by Grade 11 or Grade 12, consider the following goals:

GRADE 7 AND 8: AP PREP GOALS: BUILDING GRAMMAR, READING, AND WRITING

Aim Classes which build these skills:

[English Grammar 1](#), [English Grammar 2](#) and [English Grammar 3](#)
[Intro to Literature and Academic Writing](#)
[American History Through Literature](#)
[Junior High Creative Writing \(summer session\)](#)

GRADE 9 AND 10: AP PREP GOALS: BUILDING WRITING AND ANALYSIS SKILLS

Aim Classes which build these skills:

[Introduction to Advanced Placement English Writing \(summer session\)](#)
[Writing Research Right](#)
[American Literature](#)
[Creative Writing](#)
[Senior High Creative Writing \(summer session\)](#)

GRADE 11 AND 12: AP COURSES

Aim AP English Classes:

[AP English Language](#). This College Board-certified course focuses on both nonfiction and fiction texts, with a special focus on rhetorical analysis, argument, and synthesis writing.
[AP English Literature](#). This College Board-certified course focuses on high-level fiction, with a special focus on prose, drama, and poetry analysis writing.

NOTE: AP English courses may be taken in any order preferred.