

Accelerated English: Balanced Enrichment

Mission:

It is the goal of the John F. Ross English Department to offer students the opportunity to participate in accelerated English classes, which will assist students to prepare to write optional (for fee) AP English examinations for both AP Literature and AP Language studies.

Programming Overview:

- The Accelerated program is designed to prepare students for optional AP exams in Grade 12 and/or provide enrichment for students passionate about the study of English.
- Academic and Accelerated English courses have the same curriculum documents, but the approach, pace, and focus of the courses are somewhat different.
- The Accelerated English program begins in Grade 9 and continues through Grade 12.
- Students may change in and out of the stream from year-to-year. Students are not “locked in.”

Candidates

The list below describes good qualities for prospective accelerated English students:

Aptitudes	Attitudes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Developed skills in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Speaking in classroom discussions, formal speeches, and presentations. ○ Writing both in academic and narrative tasks. ○ Reading fiction and non-fiction. ○ Collaboration as a member of a class and small group contributor. ○ Independent Work taking risks and developing unique products. ○ Analytical Skills in spoken word, written work, when reflecting on texts, and examining issues and ideas. ○ Supporting Opinions and Ideas in spoken word and written work. ○ Hypothesizing in spoken word and written work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Intellectual curiosity about knowing why and how ideas, concepts, etc. function. ● Interest and enthusiasm towards reading. ● Open-mindedness towards types of reading (fiction, non-fiction, genre, etc.). ● Adventurousness in trying new approaches and processes for learning. ● Motivation, self-reflection, and time management. ● Drive to improve, revisit work, edit, and refine thinking.

The Accelerated Program: An Introduction

Please note: a summary of the grade 9 curriculum is available on the final page.

The Program

Grades 9-12 Accelerated Courses follow the curriculum for the grade level as described in the Ministry of Education documents. The main distinguishing feature between, for example, Accelerated Ninth Grade English (ENG 1DB) and Ninth Grade English (ENG 1D) is that the accelerated course will require much more literature to be read with an emphasis on breadth and depth, and writing to be produced with more complexity and sophistication. Students will be expected to perform at a more demanding level because of the accelerated nature of the course.

Thoughtful discussion and critical analysis should accompany the reading and writing. Students should develop a sharpened sensitivity to vocabulary, syntax, and prose style, all of which complement their knowledge of literature and the power of expression.

The courses are designed to engage students in the careful reading and critical analysis of imaginative literature. As well, accelerated courses are designed to help students become skilled readers of prose written in a variety of periods, disciplines, and rhetorical contexts and to become skilled writers who can compose for a variety of purposes. The accelerated program places a greater emphasis on understanding the literary tradition and its various movements.

Through their writing and reading in this course, students should become aware of the interactions among a writer's purposes, audience expectations, and subjects, as well as the way generic conventions and the resources of language contribute to effective writing. Through the close reading of selected texts, students can deepen their understanding of the ways writers use language to provide both meaning and pleasure for their readers. As they read, students should consider a work's structure, style, and themes, as well as such smaller-scale elements such as the use of figurative language, imagery, symbolism, and tone.

Program Expectations

Reading: These courses include intensive study of representative works from various genres and periods, concentrating on works of recognized literary merit. The works chosen should invite and gratify rereading. Reading in an accelerated course should be both wide and deep. This reading necessarily builds upon the reading done in previous English courses. The accelerated courses should include the in-depth reading of texts drawn from multiple genres, periods, and cultures. In their courses, students should also read works from several genres and periods from the ancient Greeks to the twenty-first century -- but, more importantly, they should get to know a few works well. They should read deliberately and thoroughly, making time to understand a work's complexity, to absorb its richness of meaning, and to analyze how that meaning is embodied in literary form. In addition to considering a work's literary artistry, students should consider the social and historical values it reflects and embodies. Careful attention to both textual detail and historical context should provide a foundation for interpretation, whatever critical perspectives are brought to bear on the literary works studied.

Writing: Such close reading involves the experience of literature, the interpretation of literature, and the evaluation of literature. All these aspects of reading are important for both the AP examination in English Literature and Composition the AP examination for English Language, and each aspect of reading corresponds to an approach to writing about literary works. Writing to understand a literary work may involve writing response and reaction papers along with annotation, freewriting, and keeping some form of a reading journal. Writing to explain a literary work involves analysis and interpretation, and may include writing brief focused analyses on aspects of language and structure. Writing to evaluate a literary work involves making and explaining judgments about its artistry and exploring its underlying social and cultural values through analysis, interpretation, and argument. Writing is an integral part of the accelerated stream as the AP English Literature and Composition Examination is weighted toward student writing about literature. Writing assignments should focus on the critical analysis of literature and should include expository, analytical, and argumentative essays.

Although critical analysis should make up the bulk of student writing for the course, well-constructed creative writing assignments may help students see from the inside how literature is written. The goal of both types of writing assignments is to increase students' ability to explain clearly, cogently, even elegantly, what they understand about literary works and why they interpret them as they do. Most compositions in these courses emphasize the expository, analytical, and argumentative writing that forms the basis of academic and professional communication, as well as the personal and reflective writing that fosters the ability to write in any context.

Compositions are also expected to demonstrate mastery of the skills needed for the AP Language examination where rhetorical devices and strategies are the focus. Writing instruction should include: attention to developing and organizing ideas in clear, coherent, and persuasive language; a study of the elements of style; and attention to precision and correctness as necessary. Throughout the course, emphasis should be placed on helping students develop stylistic maturity, which, for accelerated English, is characterized by the following: Wide-ranging vocabulary used with denotative accuracy and connotative resourcefulness. A variety of sentence structures, including appropriate use of subordinate and coordinate constructions. A logical organization, enhanced by specific techniques of coherence such as repetition, transitions, and emphasis. A balance of generalization with specific illustrative detail. An effective use of rhetoric, including controlling tone, maintaining a consistent voice, and achieving emphasis through parallelism and antithesis. These skills are judged in a grade appropriate manner.

It is important to distinguish among the different kinds of writing produced in an accelerated English course. Any accelerated course in which serious literature is read and studied should include numerous opportunities for students to write. Some of this writing should be informal and exploratory, allowing students to discover what they think in the process of writing about their reading. Some of the course writing should involve research, perhaps negotiating differing critical perspectives. Much writing should involve extended discourse in which students can develop an argument or present an analysis at length. In addition, some writing assignments should encourage students to write effectively under the time constraints they encounter on essay examinations in university courses in many disciplines, including English. Other in-class writing might include drafts, with revision aided by teacher and peers. Although these extended, revised essays cannot be part of the AP examinations offered to senior students as additional enrichment, the writing experience may help make students more self-aware and flexible writers and thus may help their performances on the optional for-fee examinations themselves.

Speaking: It is essential that the spoken word be recognized as a key component of the writing and the thinking process. It is through speech that many of the rhetorical devices are best practiced and the effects best analyzed. Thoughtful presentations with formal speaking times are a part of accelerated classes, but informal discussion, small group and full class talks are a part of the learning process. Understanding different levels of language, diction choice, and the power of rhetorical constructions can be demonstrated in oral language work and in classroom discussions. All students are expected to make a verbal contribution to discussions and presentations.

Daily Attendance: Active and engaged participation is expected daily, and this aspect is supported by excellent attendance and excellent demonstrations of the learning skills recorded on the report card as responsibility, organization, independent work, collaboration, initiative, and self regulation. Because the learning that occurs in the accelerated English class is enhanced and

developed by student needs and interests, it is essential that students and families commit to strong attendance practices.

AP Examinations are examinations administered by the College Board which many universities across Canada and the United States accept as equivalent credits for completing first year courses. What constitutes success on the examination varies university to university and how credits are awarded varies too. It is always the responsibility of the student to clarify what is the impact that the AP Examinations may have on the future studies. John F. Ross C.V.I. only sees these examinations as enrichment opportunities. Success on the examination is the responsibility of the individual student.

General Outline for Grade 9 Curriculum

Like mainstream classes we study *The Hate U Give*, or a comparable novel. Unlike mainstream classes we read a book prior to the course beginning: *Roll of Thunder Hear My Cry* or a comparable novel. Our novels largely focus on racialized experiences and different ideas for what it means to come of age. Traditionally, we study *Twelfth Night* or a comparable Shakespearean comedy. We want to see how Shakespeare uses language, discuss elements of comedy, and larger ideas like love and identity. Students will read an independent novel and a speculative fiction novel. The course also involves the study of short stories and poetry.

The course introduces students to strategies for reading and the practice of close reading. The course explores essay writing conventions, the elements of academic writing, the integration of quotations, and establishing the relationships between ideas by making appropriate transitions.

The course involves the composition of essays, short stories or personal narratives, and a range of poetic forms with the aim of creating an anthology. The class will engage in close reading of poetic works and share their findings with the class. Students will additionally engage in discussion and reading circles to engage in the study of Bildungsroman books that they have selected. A similar process is completed for a speculative fiction novel, where students will engage in self-directed conversations and symbolic thinking to demonstrate an understanding of the text.

Students will read a book independently and engage in a self-directed project. They will decide how to best demonstrate their understanding of that text. The independent novel is worth 10%.

There is a final exam for the course worth 20% of the grade.