



## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

**American Voices is a college prep survey course that helps students understand and interpret the American experience in all its diversity. Students read and analyze classic and contemporary American works in all genres: fiction, non-fiction, poetry, and drama. Students respond to works by writing in a wide variety of ways, including literary analysis, research, argumentative, and narrative essays. Students also work to develop and improve their vocabulary, grammar mastery, and oral communication skills.**

### **Context for Course:**

- The course is inspired and directed by DJUSD goals, objectives, and strategies.
- The course is aligned with UC Academic Standards (Area B English)

### **History of Course Development:**

This course replaces the American Literature course now offered to 11<sup>th</sup> graders. Teachers collaborated over a two-year period to more closely align course content with new California standards, to deepen connections with U.S. history courses, to increase the diversity of voices and genres taught, and to pilot new works.

## COURSE GOALS AND/OR MAJOR STUDENT OUTCOMES

Students will demonstrate college-ready skills in reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Students will demonstrate an understanding and appreciation of diverse American voices in a wide variety of genres. Students will respond to the American voices studied with their own voice: writing essays and narratives; researching related topics, and delivering speeches and presentations.

## COURSE OBJECTIVES

**Students will meet the English-Language Arts Content Standards for California Public Schools in:**

- Word analysis, fluency, and systematic vocabulary development
- Reading comprehension (with a focus on informational materials)
- Literary response and analysis

- Writing strategies
- Writing applications (including narratives, responses to literature, reflective compositions, and historical investigation reports)
- Written and oral English language conventions
- Listening and speaking strategies
- Speaking applications (including delivering reflective presentations, oral reports on historical investigations, oral responses to literature, multimedia presentations, and recitations of studied works)

## COURSE OUTLINE

### Unit One: AMERICAN INDIVIDUALISM

*Major work:*

**Jon Krakauer: *Into the Wild***

*Supplemental texts:*

**Arthur Miller: *The Crucible***

**Ralph Waldo Emerson: “Self Reliance” (363)**

*Standards focus:*

1.0 Writing Strategies: Students write coherent and focused texts that convey a well-defined perspective and tightly reasoned argument. The writing demonstrates students’ awareness of the audience and purpose and progression through the stages of the writing process.

*Summative assessment:* argumentative essay

### Unit Two: AMERICAN VALUES

*Major works:*

**Mark Twain: *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn***

**Julius Lester: *To Be a Slave***

*Supplemental texts:*

**Henry David Thoreau: “On Civil Disobedience”**

**Thomas Jefferson, The Declaration of Independence (270)**

**Martin Luther King: “I Have a Dream” speech**

*Standards focus:*

- 2.1 Analyze both the features and the rhetorical devices of different types of public documents (e.g., policy statements, speeches, debates, platforms) and the way in which authors use those features and devices.
- 2.2 Analyze the way in which clarity of meaning is affected by the patterns of organization, hierarchical structures, repetition of the main ideas, syntax, and word choice in the text.
- 2.4 Make warranted and reasonable assertions about the author's arguments by using elements of the text to defend and clarify interpretations. 2.5 Analyze an author's implicit and explicit philosophical assumptions and beliefs about a subject.
- 3.2 Analyze the way in which the theme or meaning of a selection represents a view or comment on life, using textual evidence to support the claim. 3.3 Analyze the ways in which irony, tone, mood, the author's style, and the "sound" of language achieve specific rhetorical or aesthetic purposes or both.

*Summative assessment:* Literary analysis essay

Unit Three: RHETORIC OF PROTEST

*Speeches:*

**Elizabeth Cody Stanton, "Declaration of Sentiments"**  
**Red Jacket, "Defense of Native American Religion"**  
**Michelle Alexander, "The Future of Race in America" (TED Talk)**  
**Patrick Henry, "Speech in the Virginia Convention" (262)**

*Standards focus:*

- 1.4 Use rhetorical questions, parallel structure, concrete images, figurative language, characterization, irony, and dialogue to achieve clarity, force, and aesthetic effect.
- 1.5 Distinguish between and use various forms of classical and contemporary logical arguments, including:  
a. Inductive and deductive reasoning  
b. Syllogisms and analogies
- 1.6 Use logical, ethical, and emotional appeals that enhance a specific tone and purpose.
- 1.7 Use appropriate rehearsal strategies to pay attention to performance details, achieve command of the text, and create skillful artistic staging.
- 1.8 Use effective and interesting language, including:  
a. Informal expressions for effect  
b. Standard American English for clarity  
c. Technical language for specificity

*Summative assessment:* Persuasive speech

Unit Four: A SINGULAR VOICE

*Major works:*

**Richard Wright: *Black Boy***

*Supplemental texts:*

**"We Wear the Mask," Paul Lawrence Dunbar (835)**  
**"I, Too," Langston Hughes (924)**  
**"How It Feels to Be Colored Me," Zora Neale Hurston (950)**

*Standards focus:*

2.1 Write fictional, autobiographical, or biographical narratives: a. Narrate a sequence of events and communicate their significance to the audience. b. Locate scenes and incidents in specific places. c. Describe with concrete sensory details the sights, sounds, and smells of a scene and the specific actions, movements, gestures, and feelings of the characters; use interior monologue to depict the characters' feelings. d. Pace the presentation of actions to accommodate temporal, spatial, and dramatic mood changes. e. Make effective use of descriptions of appearance, images, shifting perspectives, and sensory details.

*Summative assessment:* Personal narrative.

Unit Five: CHANGING VOICES

*Poems:*

**Anne Bradstreet (138)**  
**Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (**  
**Emily Dickinson (751-759)**  
**Walt Whitman (396)**  
**Edgar Allan Poe (466)**  
**Robert Frost (1001-1007)**  
**Carl Sandburg (**  
**Edwin Arlington Robinson (**  
**Sylvia Plath (1058)**  
**William Carlos Williams (**

*Standards focus:*

3.4 Analyze ways in which poets use imagery, personification, figures of speech, and sounds to evoke readers' emotions.

3.5 Analyze recognized works of American literature representing a variety of genres and traditions: a. Trace the development of American literature from the colonial period forward. b. Contrast the major periods, themes, styles, and trends and describe how works by members of different cultures relate to one another in each period.

*Summative assessment:* Group presentation and poetry analysis

Unit Six: AMERICAN DREAMS

*Major work:*

**F. Scott Fitzgerald: *The Great Gatsby***

*Supplemental texts:*

*Standards focus:*

3.2 Analyze the way in which the theme or meaning of a selection represents a view or comment on life, using textual evidence to support the claim.

3.3 Analyze the ways in which irony, tone, mood, the author's style, and the "sound" of language achieve specific rhetorical or aesthetic purposes or both.

2.2 Write responses to literature: a. Demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the significant ideas in works or passages. b. Analyze the use of imagery, language, universal themes, and unique aspects of the text. c. Support important ideas and viewpoints through accurate and detailed references to the text and to other works. d.

Demonstrate an understanding of the author's use of stylistic devices and an appreciation of the effects created. e. Identify and assess the impact of perceived ambiguities, nuances, and complexities within the text.

*Summative assessment:* Literary analysis essay

Unit Seven: LISTENING TO THE VOICELESS

*Major works:*

**Helena Maria Viramontes: *Under the Feet of Jesus***

*Supplemental texts:*

**John Steinbeck: *The Grapes of Wrath***

**John Steinbeck: "Harvest Gypsies"**

**Standards focus:**  
 1.3 Structure ideas and arguments in a sustained, persuasive, and sophisticated way and support them with precise and relevant examples. 1.4 Enhance meaning by employing rhetorical devices, including the extended use of parallelism, repetition, and analogy; the incorporation of visual aids (e.g., graphs, tables, pictures); and the issuance of a call for action. 1.5 Use language in natural, fresh, and vivid ways to establish a specific tone.

**Summative assessment:** Argumentative essay.

**Unit Eight: MODERN VOICES**  
**Major works:**  
 Students will read at least TWO of the following works:

- **Alice Walker: *The Color Purple***
- **Ernest Hemingway: *The Old Man and the Sea***
- **Thornton Wilder: *Our Town***
- **Kurt Vonnegut: *Slaughterhouse-Five***
- **Amy Tan: *The Joy Luck Club***

**Standards focus:**  
 2.4 Write historical investigation reports: a. Use exposition, narration, description, argumentation, or some combination of rhetorical strategies to support the main proposition. b. Analyze several historical records of a single event, examining critical relationships between elements of the research topic. c. Explain the perceived reason or reasons for the similarities and differences in historical records with information derived from primary and secondary sources to support or enhance the presentation. d. Include information from all relevant perspectives and take into consideration the validity and reliability of sources. e. Include a formal bibliography.

**Summative assessment:** Explanatory research paper on topic related to major work (for example, immigrant issues for *The Joy Luck Club*). In-class essay exam.

| TEXTS AND SUPPLEMENTAL INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS                                                                                      |            |               |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|---------------|
| <b>Title, Author, Publisher, Edition: The Language of Literature: American Literature, 2002</b>                                     |            |               |
| Previously Adopted? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No (If no, provide information directly below) |            |               |
| Cost per book                                                                                                                       | Total Cost | Budget Source |

|                                                                                                                                     |  |  |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|--|
| <b>Title, Author, Publisher, Edition: Into the Wild by Jon Krakauer</b>                                                             |  |  |
| Previously Adopted? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No (If no, provide information directly below) |  |  |

|                                                                                                                                     |            |               |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|---------------|
| <b>Title, Author, Publisher, Edition: To Be a Slave by Julius Lester</b>                                                            |            |               |
| Previously Adopted? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No (If no, provide information directly below) |            |               |
| Cost per book                                                                                                                       | Total Cost | Budget Source |

**Title, Author, Publisher, Edition: Black Boy by Richard Wright**

Previously Adopted?  Yes  No (If no, provide information directly below)  
(Additional copies needed to support this as a required text for all students.)

**Title, Author, Publisher, Edition: The Great Gatsby by F. Scott Fitzgerald**

Previously Adopted?  Yes  No (If no, provide information directly below)  
(Additional copies needed to support this as a required text for all students.)

**Title, Author, Publisher, Edition: Under the Feet of Jesus by Helena Maria Viramontes**

Previously Adopted?  Yes  No (If no, provide information directly below)

**Supplemental texts:**

In addition to the above required texts, teachers can choose from the following list of approved works:

- The Color Purple* by Alice Walker
- The Old Man and the Sea* by Ernest Hemingway
- The Crucible* by Arthur Miller
- Our Town* by Thornton Wilder
- Slaughterhouse-Five* by Kurt Vonnegut
- The Joy Luck Club* by Amy Tan
- The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck

Teachers will also continually update the course by selecting current articles, research, and multimedia works that explore issues raised by required works.

**DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND/OR STRATEGIES**

**Students will learn through a variety of instructional methods and strategies, including:**

- Lecture, worksheets, and handouts
- Power-points and technology driven presentation of information.
- Student driven research and inquiry (Individual, triads, and teams).
- Socratic seminars
- Read-alouds, close reading, and supported reading of texts

**ASSESSMENT METHODS AND/OR TOOLS**

Davis Joint Unified School District

Assessment of student performance will be based on:

1. Tests and quizzes
2. Oral presentations and discussions
3. Cooperative learning activities
4. Individual and group projects/presentations
5. Formative writing responses
6. Summative process writing (argumentative, explanatory, and narrative essays)

**ASSESSMENT CRITERIA**

Student writing and oral communication are evaluated through teacher-developed rubrics aligned with California state ELA standards.

**HONORS COURSES ONLY**

*Sequence Participation*

*Post-Secondary Articulation*



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**List Notes**

Great Gatsby  
 Black Boy  
 To be a slave

**Special Messages**

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|      |        |                                                              |                      |                   |                 |       |      |     |      |       |          |
|------|--------|--------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|-----------------|-------|------|-----|------|-------|----------|
| 115  | 31601  | Black Boy (American Hunger): A Record of Childhood and Youth | Wright, Richard      | HarperCollins     | Perma-Bound     | 921   | 1945 | 7.4 | 9+   | 20.30 | 2,334.50 |
| (5)  | 380385 | Black Boy Teacher's Guide                                    | Perma-Bound          | Perma-Bound Books | Teacher's Guide | 921   | 1998 |     | Pro. | Free  | Free     |
| 190  | 123701 | The Great Gatsby                                             | Fitzgerald, F. Scott | Scribner          | Perma-Bound     | Fic   | 1925 | 7.3 | 9+   | 18.32 | 3,480.80 |
| (9)  | 380621 | Great Gatsby Teacher's Guide                                 | Perma-Bound          | Perma-Bound Books | Teacher's Guide | Fic   | 2007 |     | Pro. | Free  | Free     |
| 300  | 302588 | To Be a Slave                                                | Lester, Julius       | Penguin           | Perma-Bound     | 306.3 | 1968 | 6.9 | 7-12 | 12.10 | 3,630.00 |
| (15) | 381147 | To Be a Slave Teacher's Guide                                | Perma-Bound          | Perma-Bound Books | Teacher's Guide | 306   | 1990 |     | Pro. | Free  | Free     |

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