The major components of the English program are reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Throughout the course of this year, we shall explore and refine each of these skills. There will be a strong focus on independence, with reading and writing activities. One of this year’s focuses is preparing you for future English courses and ACT strategies as well as studying American literature.

**Course Description:** This course addresses the second part of our journey into the American experience (1900-present). We will explore works from the Realism, Reform, Experience/Conflict, and Modern Eras. However, rather than studying the literature in chronological, historical order, we will study these major works, as well as additional, supplementary texts, based on their thematic connections. You might be surprised how many of the ideals we still hold value and focus on in today’s society.

**Course Objectives:**
- To strengthen note-taking, listening, and organizational skills
- To create polished written works
- To improve public speaking abilities through presentations and graded discussions
- To analyze assertions and determine validity
- To increase critical thinking skills
- To develop confidence as a reader and writer
- To enhance understanding and enjoyment of literature

**Participation Expectations**
The workload in this course is challenging. Therefore, students are expected to be **present, punctual, and prepared** for class each day. There will be minimal homework for this class, which will include reading, writing, and research. Often this work will involve long-term reading and writing assignments, so effective time management is important.
First Nine Weeks: The American Dream

Big Idea Focus: The first nine weeks will explore the concept of the American Dream, both in how literature presents this concept as well as societal and personal experiences. We will compare and contrast the literary American Dream with American Reality through numerous short stories, articles, essays, and videos. Questions to define the unit are the following:

What is the American Dream?
How do fiction representations of the American Dream compare to American Reality?
How does perspective impact perception, both in fiction and nonfiction?
How do authors use narrators and point of view to manipulate an audience?

Major Works: The Great Gatsby by F. Scott Fitzgerald and Death of a Salesman by Arthur Miller

Skill Focus: Understanding Fiction

Close reading is thoughtful, critical analysis of a text that focuses on significant details or patterns in order to develop a deep, precise understanding of the text's form, craft, meanings, etc. The selections in this unit will serve as an introduction to reading beyond the level of comprehension to help students better understand the craft of writing and how authors manipulate texts, through word choice, details, imagery, figurative language, and structure, to create meaning. Students will be able to identify the meaning and provide textual evidence to support and explain how that meaning was achieved. This skill is fundamental to success in English courses as well as the reading portion of the ACT. Furthermore, this understanding of writing as a craft will improve their ability to understand and interpret other works and enhance their own skills as writers.

Second Nine Weeks:
**Big Idea Focus:** The second nine weeks will feature a continuation on the first as we explore the obstacles to dreams. Centered around Steinbeck’s *Of Mice and Men*, we will examine those members of society who face obstacles to fulfilling their American Dreams and create a campaign to give a “Voice to the Voiceless” as they see first-hand the power of language as propaganda.

Questions to define the unit are the following:

- What is equality and inequality?
- Why are some groups and individuals treated differently?
- How can language be used to influence the way people think, feel, behave, or believe?

Major Works: *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck

**Third Nine Weeks: Identity**

Big Idea Focus: The third nine weeks will focus on the human struggle with identity and isolation. The anchor text provides ample opportunities for us to explore this topic and related themes together.

Questions to define the unit are as follows:

- What

Major Works: *Hamlet* by William Shakespeare and *Into the Wild* by Jon Krakauer

**Fourth Nine Weeks: Search for Identity/Self**

Big Idea Focus: The fourth and final nine weeks will focus on the human struggle for identity. The anchor texts, “The Night Thoreau Spent in Jail” and *The Bell Jar* provide ample opportunities for us to explore this topic and related themes. Additionally, students will choose one of four memoirs to discuss in small groups. The memoirs prove that the struggle to find freedom is, unfortunately, a struggle that transcends cultures and generations. In the small-group setting, students will take ownership of the discussion and direct their groups in the directions that they find most meaningful. Questions to define the unit are as follows:

- How does society influence our self-perception?
- What are the rewards or consequences for differing from the societal norms?
- What is the value of the individual?
- Are there ways that the individual can express his/her ideas without ridicule?

Major Works: “The Night Thoreau Spent in Jail” by Robert Edwin Lee and Jerome Lawrence; *The Bell Jar* by Sylvia Plath; selections from *The House on Mango Street* by Sandra Cisneros


(Students will choose one. Parents/Guardians, please assist your student in their choice. These, like all memoirs, deal with real life experiences that are not always pleasant.)

Poetry: “How to write the great American Indian novel” by Sherman Alexie

Nonfiction: “The Great Imagination Heist” by Reynolds Price; “All Together Now” by Barbara Jordan, excerpts from *Me Talk Pretty One Day* by David Sedaris

Artwork: Political Cartoons

Skills Focus: Research and Presentation

Students will conduct a research project that will focus on the following skills: selection of appropriate sources, incorporating sources with accurate citations, organization and development, MLA format.
Writing: All daily activities will involve some form of composition. We will also focus on various types of in-class essays: Argument, Rhetorical Analysis, Synthesis, Literary Analysis, and Poetry Analysis. The course structure allows for the texts we read to bolster these areas of composition. You will write an in-class essay approximately once a month. I will provide feedback on multiple levels and will require editing and rewriting.

Grammar and Composition: Both grammar and composition will be taught within the context of the literature and writing that we study and practice. As previously mentioned, a significant portion of this course will be devoted to writing. Online grammar practice may be used to supplement these skills.

Literature: I would like to give you the ability to do your own annotating and connecting to the text, which means that throughout the year, you may be asked to purchase novels to supplement materials that can be provided electronically. I will give ample time for students to purchase these novels and will require the presence of the books in class. Classroom discussion and debate of literature constitutes a significant portion of this course; therefore, keeping current with all assigned readings is imperative for success.

**Please note that Cliff, Monarch, Spark or any other sorts of “notes” are not allowed in class. You can use these as a supplement to your reading, but in no way can they take the place of reading the text.**

Vocabulary: We will have weekly vocabulary. These words will be made available to you in class. The lists will come from SAT/ACT prep words or terms commonly taught in AP English courses. We will also work on collaborating to create vocabulary lists from your own reading. In addition to vocabulary, you will also have a list of rhetorical terms that we will quiz on throughout the year. We will also be focusing on Greek and Latin roots, prefixes and suffixes in order to give you necessary tools for decoding.

A word about challenging texts
Literature, from classic to contemporary, is filled with what some might consider to be taboo topics or harsh language. Pre-AP 10 students are college-bound and will be taking college-level courses in AP Lang and AP Lit. The works selected for this course are designed to lay a proper foundation for those courses as well as enrich the students’ understanding of the world around them, and ultimately, of themselves. I will provide students with opportunities to explore texts and to think critically, applying their own values and judgements. I invite parents/guardians to engage in conversations about these topics with their students. I will also be happy to discuss these works with parents/guardians. If, upon review of any of the chosen texts, a parent or guardian feels that their student would not benefit from that text, please schedule a meeting with me so that we may discuss a suitable alternative.

Academic Honesty: Copied, plagiarized, or “shared” work will receive a score of Zero. A student cannot improve writing by copying the work of others.

Late work: Efforts should be made to attend all class meetings. Students should not ask to miss class for other clubs, classes, or activities unless required or are of an academic nature, such as field trips, athletic events, etc. A student who has advance knowledge of an absence from class should obtain complete any assignment prior to the next class meeting if at all possible. There are some in-class activities that significantly enhance understanding, which cannot be duplicated; therefore, it is in the best interest of the student to be present as much as possible.

It is the responsibility of each student to find out what he or she has missed due to absence from class and make arrangements for turning in any late work. All assignments are posted daily in Google Classroom. If you are absent, you should check for the missed assignment and complete promptly when possible. A word of advice: You don’t have to wait until you get back from an absence to do your missed assignments. If you miss
on a Monday/Tuesday, then wait until Wednesday/Thursday to ask about assignments, you are going to be behind and have twice the work. Try to stay caught up. The assignments are in Google Classroom. Any handouts will be on the missed work board. Late work must be turned in within 2 days following the absence unless special circumstances, with the principal's approval, apply.

**Communication Policy:** Ms. Bailey has an open-door policy for communication with parents/guardians and students. Communication is vital and should take place throughout the year, not just when a problem arises. The best way to contact me is through email @ ambailey@tcboe.org in order to set up a time to meet with me. You may also communicate through Google Classroom.