English Language & Literature at Alto
Middle Years Program / IB Diploma Program

Introduction

In English language and literature, students study a wide range of literary and non-literary texts in a variety of media. By examining communicative acts across literary form and textual type, students investigate the nature of language itself and how it shapes and is influenced by identity and culture. Through the study of texts written originally in English and others presented in translation, students gain an understanding of the ways in which different languages and literatures represent the world and how these can reflect diverse identities. This contributes to the development of international-mindedness in students, as they are encouraged to appreciate the ideas, values, and traditions of others in an inquiring way.

The four **key concepts** (communication, connections, creativity, perspective) stand for our holistic approach at Alto that we also implement in our **inquiry-based** learning approach within language and literature. Students demonstrate their learning in a wide range of **assessments** including essay writing, presentations, creative writing, and will be assessed in the **criteria** analyzing, organizing, producing text, and using language.

English literature can be likened to the study of what makes us human, through texts. It aims to think critically about big questions, like ‘what makes us fall in love?’, while also evaluating and critiquing the use of literary techniques and devices in a range of text types.

Middle Years Program

**Grade 6**

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<tr>
<th>Major Unit</th>
<th>Statement of Inquiry</th>
<th>Topics / Content</th>
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</table>
| Creative writing         | What does a story look like? What makes a story, a story?      | ● The classical narrative structure  
● Conventions of the genre  
● Spelling, punctuation, and grammar  
● Descriptive writing techniques |
| The novel                | How do authors use figurative language to engage their readers? | ● Adventure story genre e.g. *Holes*  
● Protagonists vs antagonists  
● Exploration of themes and ideas  
● Use of the Point, Evidence, Explanation method (PEE) for writing essays |
| Shakespeare              | Is all the world a stage?                                      | ● Context - who was Willaim Shakespeare?  
● Genre study: tragedy, comedy, and historical plays  
● *Macbeth* as focus play: the antagonist, characters in conflict  
● Shakespeare's language |
| Poetry and female voices | How are female voices represented in poetry through time?      | ● Tennyson study  
● Context of Victorian Literature  
● *Marianna* and *The Lady of Shalott*  
● What is a poem? Conventions of the genre  
● Comparisons with modern literature (*Not My Best Side* by U.A.Fanthorpe)  
● Concept of narrative voice  
● Analysis of characters |
### Grade 7

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| Documentaries (film/media studies) | What is a documentary? And what is their purpose? | • Documentary conventions  
• Focused study of Blackfish  
• Film techniques  
• Review writing  
• Research skills  
• Create your own documentary |
| Novel study                     | Is this for real?                           | • Realistic fiction study  
• Wonder by R.J. Palacio  
• Develop an understanding of the real life concerns and issues in the novel  
• Character study - relationships, problems, challenges, language and behaviour |
| Shakespeare                     | Should we forgive and forget?              | • What is a tempest? What is colonisation?  
• The Tempest by William Shakespeare  
• The representation of the other in literature  
• Beliefs on magic  
• Genre study - the comedies  
• Context - the age of discovery |
| Advertising                     | Do adverts run the world?                  | • PAF - purpose, audience and form  
• Advertising techniques and terminology - presentational devices  
• Comparison of advertisements  
• Connotations and symbols  
• Does advertising influence the way we think? |

### Grade 8

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Literature and identity</td>
<td>Literature is a window and a mirror.</td>
<td>• American Born Chinese by Gene Luen Yang</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| Authorial intent               | There is power in words.                                 | • The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian by Sherman Alexie  
• The Woman in Black by Susan Hill                                               |
| Archetypes and pathos          | Archetypes offer guidance when we are lost.             | • Sixteen Candles by John Hughes  
• 10 Things I Hate About You by Gil Junger  
• Legally Blonde by Robert Luketic                                                  |
| Literary criticism             | What we see is a perspective, not the truth.             | • Shakespearean sonnets  
• The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet by William Shakespeare                           |
| Literature and human nature    | Chaos is the work of nature, and order is the dream of man. | • Lord of the Flies by William Golding                                               |

### Grade 9

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| Gothic Literature       | Can we ever escape the past?                | • Gothic conventions  
• Extract and short story analysis e.g. Edgar Allan Poe's The Tell Tale Heart and The Black Cat  
• Pathetic fallacy in gothic literature  
• Narrator's voice - disturbed minds  
• The supernatural - Frankenstein by |
Entrapment and imprisonment - *The Yellow Wallpaper* by Charlotte Perkins Gilman
• Novel study - independent work

Non-fiction
<table>
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<th>Is it true that you are what you read?</th>
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</table>
| Newspapers - devices
| Articles - different text types e.g. editorials, etc
| Examining the who, what, why, where, when
| Examining language, structure and form |

The novel: 20th century text
<table>
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<th>How do texts relate to a time and place?</th>
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| Modernist literature conventions
| Key contextual ideas of novel, e.g., *Of Mice and Men*, *Animal Farm*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *Lord of the Flies*
| Key themes, characterisation
| Examination of literary devices e.g. figurative techniques, structure, language and form |

Poetry from other cultures
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<th>What is culture? And how do poets explore their identity through culture?</th>
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| Study of a number of focused poems and poets e.g. *John Agard*
| Study of the concept of culture
| Close analysis of poetic techniques |

**Grade 10**

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Literature as social critique</td>
<td>Literature is a vehicle for social critique.</td>
<td><em>The Great Gatsby</em> by F. Scott Fitzgerald</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rhetoric and public speaking</td>
<td>Good public speaking is based on good private thinking.</td>
<td>Unit explores Pecha Kucha, online story-telling platform</td>
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<tr>
<td>Drama and the human condition</td>
<td>Justice is an ideal, and law is a tool.</td>
<td><em>A View from the Bridge</em> by Arthur Miller</td>
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</table>
| Inquiry into horror | We make up horrors to help us cope with the real ones. | *The Ring* by Gore Verbinski
| Non-fiction and cass communication | Non-fiction can be as artful as fiction. | *Dirty Pretty Things* by Stephen Frears
| | | *Invisible Children* by Jason Russell and Laren Poole |
| | | *Revisionist History* by Malcolm Gladwell
| | | Written works by Malcolm Gladwell |

**IB Diploma Program**

Students select either higher level (HL) or standard level (SL) English language and literature at Alto. Higher level study requires a minimum of 240 class hours, while standard level study requires a minimum of 150 class hours.

The course is organized into three areas of exploration and seven central concepts and focuses on the study of both literary or non-literary texts. Together, the three areas of exploration of the course allow the student to explore English language and literature through its cultural development and use, its media forms and functions, and its literature. Students develop skills of literary and textual analysis and also the ability to present their ideas effectively. A key aim is the development of critical literacy

**Grade 11**

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<th>HL/SL</th>
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</table>
| 1984, George Orwell | SL, HL | Dystopian fiction
| | | Context of totalitarian politics
| | | The role of technology
| | | Characterisation, themes, ideas, concepts |
**Postmodern literature**  
Close analysis of extracts from the novel in preparation for IB Diploma internal assessment

**The World’s Wife** by Carol Ann Duffy  
SL, HL  
Feminist texts  
The role of women  
Poetic techniques  
Postmodern literature  
Close analysis of poems in preparation for IA

**A Doll’s House** by Henrik Ibsen  
SL, HL  
Feminist texts  
The role of women  
Victorian literature  
Close analysis of extracts from the play in preparation for IA

### Grade 12

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| Literature - critical study        | SL, HL| *The Awakening* by Kate Chopin  
*The World’s Wife* by Carol Ann Duffy  
Selected works by Langston Hughes   |
| Language in cultural context       | SL, HL| Language and identity  
Language and community               |
| Literature - texts and contexts    | SL, HL| *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* by Gabriel García Márquez  
*Hedda Gabler* by Henrik Ibsen  
*A Streetcar Named Desire* by Tennessee Williams |
| Language and mass communication    | SL, HL| Language in advertisements  
Propaganda                            |
| Literature - critical study        | SL, HL| *The Awakening* by Kate Chopin  
*The World’s Wife* by Carol Ann Duffy  
Selected works by Langston Hughes   |

More information:  
[IB English Language & Literature Standard Level Subject Brief](#)  
[IB English Language & Literature High Level Subject Brief](#)

Detailed scope and sequences for each grade might vary. Alto teachers are encouraged to incorporate current events into the curriculum and adapt their statement of inquiry based on classroom discussions.