

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

Major Unit	Statement of Inquiry	Topics / Content
Creative writing	What does a story look like? What makes a story, a story?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adventure story genre e.g. <i>Holes</i> • 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?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Context - who was William Shakespeare? • Genre study: tragedy, comedy, and historical plays • <i>Macbeth</i> as focus play: the antagonist, characters in conflict • Shakespeare's language
Poetry and female voices	How are female voices represented in poetry through time?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tennyson study • Context of Victorian Literature • <i>Marianna</i> and <i>The Lady of Shalott</i> • What is a poem? Conventions of the genre • Comparisons with modern literature (<i>Not My Best Side</i> by U.A.Fanthorpe) • Concept of narrative voice • Analysis of characters

Grade 7

Major Unit	Statement of Inquiry	Topics / Content
Documentaries (film/media studies)	What is a documentary? And what is their purpose?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documentary conventions • Focused study of <i>Blackfish</i> • Film techniques • Review writing • Research skills • Create your own documentary
Novel study	Is this for real?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Realistic fiction study • <i>Wonder</i> 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?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is a tempest? What is colonisation? • <i>The Tempest</i> 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?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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

Major Unit	Statement of Inquiry	Topics / Content
Literature and identity	Literature is a window and a mirror.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>American Born Chinese</i> by Gene Luen Yang
Authorial intent	There is power in words.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian</i> by Sherman Alexie • <i>The Woman in Black</i> by Susan Hill
Archetypes and pathos	Archetypes offer guidance when we are lost.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Sixteen Candles</i> by John Hughes • <i>10 Things I Hate About You</i> by Gil Junger • <i>Legally Blonde</i> by Robert Luketic
Literary criticism	What we see is a perspective, not the truth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shakespearean sonnets • <i>The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet</i> by William Shakespeare
Literature and human nature	Chaos is the work of nature, and order is the dream of man.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Lord of the Flies</i> by William Golding

Grade 9

Major Unit	Statement of Inquiry	Topics / Content
Gothic Literature	Can we ever escape the past?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gothic conventions • Extract and short story analysis e.g. Edgar Allan Poe's <i>The Tell Tale Heart</i> and <i>The Black Cat</i> • Pathetic fallacy in gothic literature • Narrator's voice - disturbed minds • The supernatural - <i>Frankenstein</i> by

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entrapment and imprisonment - <i>The Yellow Wallpaper</i> by Charlotte Perkins Gilman • Novel study - independent work
Non-fiction	Is it true that you are what you read?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	How do texts relate to a time and place?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modernist literature conventions • Key contextual ideas of novel, e.g., <i>Of Mice and Men</i>, <i>Animal Farm</i>, <i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i>, <i>Lord of the Flies</i> • Key themes, characterisation • Examination of literary devices e.g. figurative techniques, structure, language and form
Poetry from other cultures	What is culture? And how do poets explore their identity through culture?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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

Major Unit	Statement of Inquiry	Topics / Content
Literature as social critique	Literature is a vehicle for social critique.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Great Gatsby</i> by F. Scott Fitzgerald
Rhetoric and public speaking	Good public speaking is based on good private thinking.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unit explores Pecha Kucha, online story-telling platform
Drama and the human condition	Justice is an ideal, and law is a tool.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>A View from the Bridge</i> by Arthur Miller
Inquiry into horror	We make up horrors to help us cope with the real ones.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Ring</i> by Gore Verbinski • <i>Dirty Pretty Things</i> by Stephen Frears • <i>Invisible Children</i> by Jason Russell and Laren Poole
Non-fiction and mass communication	Non-fiction can be as artful as fiction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Revisionist History</i> 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

Major Unit	HL/SL	Topics / Content
<i>1984</i> , George Orwell	SL, HL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dystopian fiction • Context of totalitarian politics • The role of technology • Characterisation, themes, ideas, concepts

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Postmodern literature • Close analysis of extracts from the novel in preparation for IB Diploma internal assessment
<i>The World's Wife</i> by Carol Ann Duffy	SL, HL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feminist texts • The role of women • Poetic techniques • Postmodern literature • Close analysis of poems in preparation for IA
<i>A Doll's House</i> by Henrik Ibsen	SL, HL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feminist texts • The role of women • Victorian literature • Close analysis of extracts from the play in preparation for IA

Grade 12

Major Unit	HL/SL	Topics / Content
Literature - critical study	SL, HL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Awakening</i> by Kate Chopin • <i>The World's Wife</i> by Carol Ann Duffy • Selected works by Langston Hughes
Language in cultural context	SL, HL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language and identity • Language and community
Literature - texts and contexts	SL, HL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Chronicle of a Death Foretold</i> by Gabriel García Márquez • <i>Hedda Gabler</i> by Henrik Ibsen • <i>A Streetcar Named Desire</i> by Tennessee Williams
Language and mass communication	SL, HL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language in advertisements • Propaganda
Literature - critical study	SL, HL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Awakening</i> by Kate Chopin • <i>The World's Wife</i> 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. Also teachers are encouraged to incorporate current events into the curriculum and adapt their statement of inquiry based on classroom discussions.