

# Literary Response & Analysis

September 8, 2019-June 9, 2020  
Tuesdays and Thursdays; 10:40 AM-12:15 PM  
ELA Room of Chance Academy  
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## Course Description

**Literary Response & Analysis** uses a variety of readings, coursework, exercises, and activities to strengthen students as skilled readers, scrupulous analysts, thoughtful respondents, and proficient writers of the English language. Texts in this class will largely include fiction, non-fiction, and drama, although other genres may be interwoven as deemed appropriate. Importantly, students will learn how to deconstruct and dissect complex readings into their most finite parts. Emphasis will be placed on four core areas during this course: **1) Literary Genres**, **2) Critical Reading**, **3) Critical Analysis**, and **4) Vocabulary Development**.

The mission of Chance Academy is to be an educational community that serves as a center for learning, wellness, peace-building, and cultural literacy for children and adults.

**Literary Genres.** Literary Genres help students to recognize the specific form, content, and style that are inherent to fiction, non-fiction, and dramatic writings. Specifically, students will be introduced to several American classics, to varied translations of William Shakespeare, and to the hugely popular sci-fi series of author Lois Lowry.

**Critical Reading.** Critical Reading helps students to examine text more implicitly—more so for author's purpose, tone, and bias and less for its actual content. Thus, critical readers are less concerned about *what* was written in the text (i.e., main ideas and themes), and they are more interested in *how* it was written (i.e., style, tone, text structure, usage of literary devices, etc.). Additionally, critical readers will excavate *why* a work was written (i.e., to argue, to contrast, to clarify, to make an appeal, to give examples, etc.).

**Critical Analysis.** Critical Analysis helps students to identify an author's purpose and thesis in a literary work. More specifically, it requires students to forgo their own opinions and summaries of the writing and to instead focus on the author's attitudes and framing of the subject matter. Through circle discussions, critical analysis essays, and other integrated activities, students will learn how to restate the key points of a text, identify the author's purpose, and then interpret what the author wants readers to overall grasp about the topic.

**Vocabulary Development.** Greek and Latin Roots help students to decode unfamiliar words. Recognizing high-frequency sight words and their spellings improves reading fluency and writing proficiency. Together, these skills are paramount on many standardized tests like the SAT, ACT, and other college-entrance exams.

## Unit Descriptions

This course is divided into three thematic units described below. Each unit is designed to make your learner think, question, scrutinize, and interpret text more critically.

**1. "American Classics".** Classics in literature are judged by strict tenets. One. They are not just appreciated for their wonderful wordsmithery. Yes, "wordsmithery" is a real word. ☺ But they are also viewed as exquisite works of art and beauty, doing with words on paper what da Vinci did with oil on canvas. Two. Classics are timeless, spanning centuries of both criticism and praise. Three. Their themes and characterizations are universal, evoking the most basic of human emotions from all of us. Fourth. Classic literature connects generations, communities, and cultures, helping us to see more of the sameness in our human condition and less of what divides. And fifth. Classic works inspire us as much today as on the day that they were first published.

**2. “Shakespeare Translations”.** Experience “The Bard” like you never have before! The *No Fear Shakespeare* Series demystifies the language, the history, and the social context of this 16<sup>th</sup>-century playwright’s most celebrated works. Yet, its translations also preserve the grandiloquence of the original Old English, which appear side-by-side on each page. In this way, William Shakespeare suddenly becomes accessible to millennials in a way that is less dense and off-putting and more enjoyable and relatable. In the sagacious words of “The Bard” himself, “Brevity is the soul of wit.”

**3. “Lois Lowry Series”.** Never shying from the difficult or the uncomfortable, Lowry explores issues like terminal illness, murder, racism, the Holocaust, and questioning of authority in her mostly dystopian novel series. Still, she remains an uncontested favorite for teens and adolescents across the world. Often pulling from tragedies and heartache in her own life, Lowry has won the prestigious Newberry Medal twice—once in 1990 and again in 1994. Her most notable work, *The Giver*, was later adapted into a feature film in 2014.

### **Student Outcomes**

At the completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Agree Subjects and Verbs • Identify Explicit Meanings in Text
- Compare and Contrast • Identify Main Ideas
- Deconstruct Challenging Text • Identify Theme Within Text
- Define Common Affixes • Identify Tone and Bias
- Define Common SAT Vocabulary • Make Personal Connections
- Define Common Greek and Latin Roots • Question Text Critically
- Discern Parts of Speech • Pinpoint Supporting Evidence
- Excavate Implicit Meanings in Text • Summarize
- Identify Author’s Purpose • Synthesize Research or Textual Support
- Identify Clauses • Tap Into Prior Knowledge
- Identify Elements of the Plot • Use Correctly Capitalization, Punctuation & Spelling
- Use Effectively Standard Conventions & Mechanics

### **Course Materials**

There is no assigned textbook for this course; however, there will be nine (9) assigned novels with accompanying essential questions. The class price covers the cost of these novels. Also, a reading schedule will be published and distributed to students on the first day of class. It is imperative that students adhere to this schedule strictly throughout the school year. Failure to stay current with readings will result in falling behind, poor class participation, and poor performance on written work. Lastly, the teacher reserves the right to assign supplementary readings and videos to students as deemed applicable and/or necessary.

### **Grading Information**

Students will not be evaluated using a conventional numeric scale or letter-grading system, as used in most public, private, or charter school settings. Rather, the teacher will indicate mastery or non-mastery of each skill set, at the end of each trimester. During Student Parent Tutor Conferences (SPTCs), these evaluations will be available in addition to work samples and reflections selected, prepared, and presented by the students. SPTCs will be on Nov 26, Feb 28, and Jun 4. Importantly, students will be provided with specific, meaningful, constructive, and routine feedback that is either written or verbal. As such, they themselves can deduce whether their work exceeds expectations, meets expectations, or needs improvement. I should also note that my foremost goal as your teacher is college and/or career readiness. In as much as I want to grow you into a maximally competent, compassionate, informed, independent, and forward- thinking citizen, I also want for you to have options in this global, economic market.

**Homework, Classwork, and Assessments**

In this class, you will receive classwork, homework, and assessments. You are expected to complete and/or prepare for all of this. As importantly, you are expected to submit all written tasks on time and done to the best of your ability. Please confer with me immediately should these expectations be problematic. My email, which can be accessed 24 hours a day, is [motherteacherwriter@gmail.com](mailto:motherteacherwriter@gmail.com). Lastly, I'm looking forward to a most exciting, rewarding, and winning learning experience with you on this school year!