

ENGLISH OVERVIEW



DAVIDSON EXPLORE

Davidson Explore (DE) courses are offered through the Davidson Institute for Talent Development and not by the Davidson Academy. They are often taught by Davidson Academy staff.

PLACEMENT IN ENGLISH

Placements are determined by assessment and are modified throughout the diagnostic period. During diagnostic, teachers look at the quality of thinking, reading, writing, and discussing. Each class has benchmarks and goals that build on the previous level, so while we keep student preferences in mind, placement decisions are based on demonstrated skills and abilities.

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Four core English Credits
Typically:

- Rhetoric and Literary Analysis,
- American Literature,
- British Literature
- one of the two upper-level English courses

WRITING AND YOUNG ADULT FICTION

(Davidson Explore only): In this course, students will utilize mentor texts, including popular young adult fiction, for both topic inspiration and examples of techniques employed by each author. In writing assignments, students will focus on a few specific traits of good writing (e.g., ideas and topics, organization, details and examples, imagery, sentence fluency, word choice, and voice). In addition, there will be grammar and word usage exercises to facilitate mastery of the conventions of Standard English.

WRITING IN THE HUMANITIES

(Davidson Explore only): This class focuses on the key building blocks of creating interesting, effective arguments, a skill that students will draw on for the rest of their humanities careers. This class is divided into thematic units and will include various forms of fiction, nonfiction, film, critical thinking skills, and extended writing or speaking assignments.

CRITICAL THINKING IN THE HUMANITIES/ CRITICAL READING AND WRITING

(Davidson Explore and Davidson Academy Online Full-time enrollment): This course is a continuation of previous courses with an emphasis on drawing logical inferences based on evidence gleaned from the text, as well as crafting and defending a valid thesis statement based on those inferences. The class is split into four thematic units, with each unit including a variety of texts to explore, including short fiction and nonfiction, film, poetry, and songs.

COMPOSITION AND ANALYSIS

This class focuses on textual analysis, creative and critical thinking, and written expression. The class is split into four thematic units. Each unit offers a variety of texts to explore, including novels, short fiction and non-fiction, film, poetry, and drama. Particular emphasis is placed on compare/contrast analysis, analyzing symbolic and archetypal patterns, and poetry analysis, with a significant amount of practice offered in both short-form writing assignments and full-length essays.

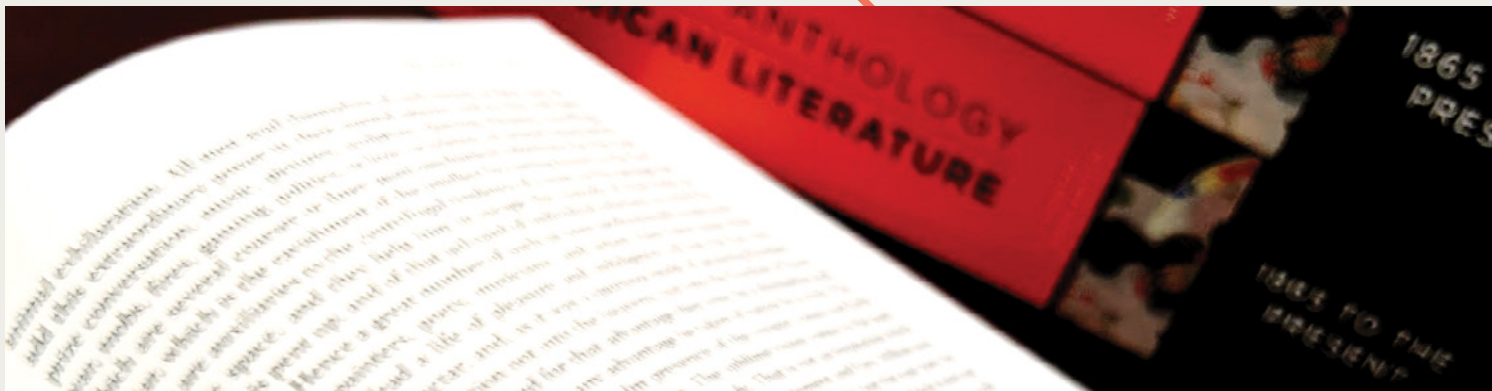
RHETORIC AND LITERARY ANALYSIS

This class uses a combination of nonfiction and literary texts as vehicles with which students can practice their newfound writing and analytical skills. In preparation for American and British Literature, the class focuses largely on formal literary criticism, the tradition of analyzing and evaluating texts and presenting thoughts in ways that draw interesting conclusions, push the thinking of readers, clarify ideas, and supports valid points of view. Students will focus on developing strong written arguments in the fall before studying techniques for writing literary analysis papers in the spring.

COURSE PROGRESSIONS

Check out the DAO Course Progression Map to see the order in which courses are taken.





INTRODUCTION TO RESEARCH & COMMUNICATION

This course is comparable to an undergraduate-level composition course in scope and structure, with students completing weekly writing assignments, engaging with complex nonfiction texts, and embarking upon sophisticated research techniques. Students will take the time to examine their writing processes and will work through common hurdles such as perfectionism, writer's block, and writing in a variety of different scenarios. Students will also experiment with different styles of presentations, from informal speeches to highly technical poster presentations.

AMERICAN LITERATURE

This class is structured as a traditional survey course, exploring the wide range of texts that make up our national literature, from first European settlement to the 20th century. The reading selection primarily consists of texts that clearly reflect the styles and ideas of America's major literary periods, allowing students to analyze the relationships between America's literature and its various religious, political, artistic, and philosophical movements. To focus students' critical inquiry, the class will focus on one classic question throughout the year: What does it mean to be American? Students will explore this question, using the various texts as evidence, through frequent discussions and a variety of writing assignment.

BRITISH LITERATURE

This survey course is designed to give students a taste of the incredibly vast and complex wealth of literature that hails from the British Isles. While it is impossible to cover all important, canonical works within the course of a year, the goal of this class is to expose students to notable examples of the major literary movements of British Literature. Students will read epic poems, historical treatises, sonnets, plays, novels, and critical articles throughout the course of the year. An emphasis will be placed on important cultural and historical moments as illustrated in the literature and how those moments influenced Western (and thus, American) thought and cultural consciousness.

ADVANCED RHETORIC

In this class, students will explore the vast world of rhetoric, which includes all of the signs and symbols that contribute to an argument or discussion. Students will study concerns of who is making an argument, to which audience, and why. Also of interest is who is allowed to make an argument or who controls the language of an argument or discussion. Students will work to create sophisticated syntheses of multiple and potentially disparate texts, experiment with innovative thinking, craft analyses of a variety of texts and narratives, effectively and smoothly employ a variety of writing genres based on the most appropriate match, and engage in thoughtful discussions of texts and ideas.

GROWTH IN READING, THINKING, AND WRITING

Students generally see 3–4 years growth in their writing skills their first year here. Our English teachers give a tremendous amount of feedback on student work and often offer redo options so students can learn from their drafts. This mimics the real world, in which all published authors go through multiple revisions in the editing process.

All DAO English courses emphasize critical thinking and close reading; creating, supporting, and defending an argument; and developing skills in academic discussions and presentations. However, the specific benchmarks and expectations for each class are different. These goals are sequential, building from one class to the next.

THE WRITING CENTER

The Writing Center, which is run on Microsoft Teams, gives students the opportunity for one-on-one writing help. Tutors known as Word Nerds assist their peers with all stages of the writing process (from developing ideas to revising and editing). Students may ONLY use the Writing Center for assignments that they are working on in their Davidson classes.

Word Nerds are upper-level DAO students who are selected by our English teachers. Word Nerds know the DAO curriculum and teacher expectations, and a DAO English teacher oversees the Writing Center.