

STEVENSON

English Course Eligibility Criteria Returning Students 2024

All grade 9 students take English 1 at Stevenson, and the majority of students continue with our regular courses, which focus on building students' ability to read and write with care, courage, and creativity. Students who are determined to be eligible for honors courses are equipped with comparatively advanced skills in literary analysis and a clear commitment to their English coursework, such that they can manage heftier assignments at a swifter pace. Honors classes aim to assign four hours of work (for the average honors student) per cycle.

The English Department recommends a student for an honors or AP course for the next year only if a student has demonstrated the skills and behavior outlined in the Criteria section below.

Process:

Grade 9: In February, teachers distribute this handout, and all students are assigned a placement reflection to ascertain whether they hope to be eligible for English 2 or English 2 Honors for their sophomore year.

A student who enrolls in English 2 Honors should feel confident they have the time, after considering their academic and co-curricular obligations, to double their homework load in English class; honors classes aim to assign 240 minutes of homework (for the average honors student).

Additionally, it is important to recognize that the grading standards of an honors class are different from that of a regular class. A student, for example, who regularly earns high grades on essays in English 1 should expect that it will be more difficult, at least initially, to earn equivalent grades in English 2 Honors.

Any student who wishes to make a shift from regular to honors must additionally do the following:

- a) Submit a multi-paragraph analytical essay (with grade and feedback) along with their reflection. Ideally, this essay is in response to *The Tempest*.
- b) The teacher reads the placement reflection and reviews the essay; the student and teacher discuss course eligibility during a follow-up conversation.
- c) All students sit for a timed writing assignment (placement exercise) in February. This exercise is one to two paragraphs in response to a short text:

the response should reveal original assertions about the text and support claims with proper quotation integration and analysis of the text.

- 2) Grade 10: In February, teachers distribute this handout, and all students are assigned a placement reflection. Any student who wishes to make a shift from a regular to an honors/AP class must additionally do the following:
 - a) Submit a multi-paragraph analytical essay (with grade and feedback) along with their reflection to their current teacher.
 - b) The teacher reads the reflection and reviews the essay, the student and teacher discuss course eligibility during a follow-up conversation.
 - c) All eligible students send their multi-paragraph essay to the current teacher of the honors/AP course in which the student wishes to enroll; the current teacher of honors meets with the student.
 - d) Eligible students sit for a timed writing assignment (placement exercise) in February. This exercise is one to two paragraphs in response to a short text: the response should reveal original assertions about the text and support claims with proper quotation integration and analysis of the text.

- 3) Grade 11: In February, teachers distribute this handout, and all students are assigned a placement reflection. Any student who wishes to make a shift from a regular to an AP class must additionally do the following:
 - a) Submit a multi-paragraph analytical essay (with grade and feedback) along with their reflection to their current teacher.
 - b) The teacher reads the reflection and reviews the essay, the student and teacher discuss course eligibility during a follow-up conversation.
 - c) All eligible students send their multi-paragraph essay to the current teacher of the AP course in which the student wishes to enroll; the current AP teacher meets with the student.

Criteria for honors/AP:

- 1) *Concise, clear, and organized writing in both prepared essays and in-class writing, especially in the analytical mode.* While a student's ability to craft essays will surely improve over the course of their studies, even the rising English 2 Honors student must be able to produce original assertions about the text and support claims with proper quotation integration and analysis of the text.
- 2) *Daily, active and purposeful engagement in class.* This student is eager to engage in class discussion, via dialogue with the student's classmates and teacher, active listening, note-taking, and/or notable participation in online discussion. The student habitually refers to the text for support and mostly avoids tangential remarks.
- 3) *Consistent preparation for class.* This student rarely, if ever, comes to class without having thoroughly completed the writing or reading assignment with annotations, and arrives ready to share her or his thoughts. The student is diligent in discovering what was missed in case of an absence.
- 4) *Comparatively strong reading ability.* This student is able to keep up with consistent and lengthy reading assignments, genially and with strong comprehension.
- 5) *A genuine enthusiasm for language and literature.* This enthusiasm could be expressed by reading during breaks and vacations, demonstrating a commitment to personal writing (through activities such as participation in *Vailima*), or engaging

with course texts and topics beyond the assignments. This enthusiasm will also be expressed in class via steady interest in classroom texts.

- 6) *Consistently high grades in English, specifically on original drafts of analytical assignments (i.e., not rewrites) and in-class essays.* These essay marks generally fall in the A-/ A range for both non-honors and honors classes. *For example if a student is earning an A overall, but is averaging a B/B+ in their analytical writing, they will likely struggle in an honors/AP class and might not be eligible for the course.*

The decision to recommend a student to the honors or AP English program is based upon the evaluation of a student in accordance with these criteria, weighing more heavily their writing skills and interest in engaging with their peers and teacher in small and full-class discussions.