

Folsom Cordova Unified School District

Beginning Composition

DATE: February 2007

SUBJECT AREA: English

PROPOSED GRADE LEVEL(s): 9

COURSE LENGTH: 1 Year / Semester

GRADING: A-F

NUMBER OF CREDITS: 5 per Semester

PREREQUISITES: none

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

The Beginning Composition course is a 9th grade course designed to help students become skilled writers by engaging them in thoughtful writing that will extend across the content areas. Because the course is designed to integrate thinking, reading, and writing, students will become aware of writing as a process and deepen their understanding of the ways writers use language to convey specific ideas. Students will learn skills necessary to write on demand with an awareness of structure, tone, and word choice. Students will learn to choose strategies for specific writing prompts and become aware of the importance of audience.

The course will include intensive study of essay structure and format, how to support a thesis statement, and how to integrate evidence into thoughtful commentary for various writing prompts.

GENERAL GOALS/PURPOSES:

Standards and goals for writing at the ninth grade level focus on extensions of the knowledge and skills previously targeted in the early grades. There will be special emphasis placed on making choices as a writer to fit the writing task at hand. Students will focus on specific writing genres listed under the State Content Standards in the Reading/Language Arts Framework for California Public Schools. There will also be smaller units to support writing across the content areas, specifically in science and social science. Creative writing will also be completed in a smaller unit.

The majority of writing will be done in class in a “writing workshop” environment. Limited homework will be assigned; most work will be completed in class.

STUDENT READING COMPONENT:

The course will have complete integration of thinking, reading and writing, including intensive study and discussion of representative works that demonstrate a specific writing strategy. Students will respond to literature in writing, use readings to stimulate thought, and incorporate other writings as evidence as needed in their own analytical writing. Literature, non-fiction, and speeches will be used for students to analyze style, and use as models in their own writing.

STUDENT WRITING COMPONENT:

Narrative, persuasive, expository, and response to literature essays will be assigned. Writing instruction will include attention to developing and organizing ideas in a clear and coherent manner. Throughout the course, emphasis will be placed on helping students develop a wide-ranging vocabulary used with denotative accuracy and connotative resourcefulness. Students will become aware of organization, purpose, tone, and generalizations vs. specific details.

Formatting—business letters, lab reports, research papers—will also be taught in conjunction with essay format. Some of this writing will be informal and exploratory, allowing students to discover what they think in the process of writing. Some of the course writing will involve research, perhaps developing an argument or offering an historical perspective. In addition, some writing assignments will encourage students to write effectively under the time constraints they encounter on essay examinations.

Students will study writing as a process, including editing and revising techniques, and final formatting of papers in MLA format.

STUDENT ORAL COMPONENT:

In the writing workshop format of the class, all readings will be discussed in class to stimulate thought for writing. Because class discussion allows for more thoughtful, organized responses in writing, students will be expected to engage at a formal and informal level in the sharing of ideas, writing strategies, and exemplars of their own writing.

Students will be expected to:

- Actively participate in class discussions of a given work;
- Read aloud from readings and their own work;
- Present information gained in research;
- Use technology to enhance final products.

DETAILED UNITS OF INSTRUCTION:

Text: SCOE’s Writing for the CAHSEE, Holt Literature and Language Arts, 3rd Edition (Writing Sections)

Weeks 1-2	Why We Write, Writing as a Process, Formatting, Prompts, Thesis Statements, Audience, Purpose, Tone, MLA Formatting, Revision Techniques
Weeks 3-4	Narrative Essay, Word Choice, Concrete Details
Weeks 5-6	Response to Literature Essay, Essay Formatting, Evidence, Support
Weeks 7-8	Persuasive Essay, Audience, Evidence, Support
Weeks 9-10	Expository Essay, Strong Commentary
Weeks 11-12	Review, Revision
Week 13	Business Letter
Weeks 14-15	Research Paper, MLA Formatting (Social Science Connection)
Week 16	Lab Reports (Science Connection)
Weeks 17-18	Creative Writing

THIS COURSE WILL PREPARE STUDENTS FOR THE CAHSEE AND/OR THE FCUSD EXIT EXAMS IN:

Writing, Reading, and Language Arts

LAB FEE, IF REQUIRED:

None

SUBJECT AREA CONTENT STANDARDS TO BE ADDRESSED:

State Content-Standards for English 9 will be addressed, with special emphasis placed on the following writing standards:

Writing Standards	
1.0 Writing Strategies	
	1.1 Establish a controlling impression or coherent thesis that conveys a clear and distinctive perspective on the subject and maintain a consistent tone and focus throughout the piece of writing.
	1.2 Use precise language, action verbs, sensory details, appropriate modifiers, and the active rather than the passive voice.
1.3	Use clear research questions and suitable research methods (e.g. library, electronic media, personal interview) to elicit and present evidence from primary and secondary sources.
1.4	Develop the main ideas within the body of the composition through supporting evidence (e.g. scenarios, commonly held beliefs, hypotheses, and definitions).
1.5	Synthesize information from multiple sources and identify complexities and discrepancies in the information and the different perspectives found in each medium (e.g. almanacs, microfiche, news sources, in-depth field studies, speeches, journals, technical documents).
1.6	Integrate quotations and citations into a written text while maintaining the flow of ideas.
1.7	Use appropriate conventions for documentation in the text, notes, and bibliographies by adhering to those in style manuals (e.g. Modern Language Association Handbook—MLA).
1.8	Design and publish documents by using advanced publishing software and graphics programs.
1.9	Revise writing to improve the logic and coherence of the organization and controlling perspective, the precision of word choice, and the tone by taking into consideration the audience, purpose, and formality of the context..
2.0 Writing Applications (Genres and Their Characteristics)	
	2.1 Write biographical or autobiographical narratives or short stories: a. Relate a sequence of events and communicate the significance of the events to the audience. b. Locate scenes and incidents in specific places. c. Describe with concrete sensory details the sights, sounds, and smells of a scene and the specific actions, movements, gestures, and feelings of the characters; use interior monologue to depict the characters' feelings. d. Pace the presentation of actions to accommodate changes in time and mood. e. Make effective use of descriptions of appearance, images, shifting perspectives, and sensory details.
	2.2 Write responses to literature: a. Demonstrate a comprehensive grasp of the significant ideas of literary works. b. Support important ideas and viewpoints through accurate and detailed references to the text and to other works. c. Demonstrate awareness of the author's use of stylistic devices and an appreciation of the effects created. d. Identify and assess the impact of perceived ambiguities, nuances, and complexities within the text.
	2.3 Write expository compositions, including analytical essays and research reports: a. Marshal evidence in support of a thesis and related claims, including information on all relevant perspectives. b. Convey information and ideas from primary and secondary sources accurately and coherently. c. Make distinctions between the relative value and significance of specific data, facts and ideas. d. Include visual aids by employing appropriate technology to organize and record information on charts, maps and graphs. e. Anticipate and address readers' potential misunderstandings, biases and expectations. f. Use technical terms and notations accurately.
	2.4 Write persuasive compositions: a. Structure ideas and arguments in a sustained and logical fashion. b. Use specific rhetorical devices to support assertions (e.g. appeal to logic through reasoning; appeal to emotion or ethical belief; relate a personal anecdote, case study or analogy). c. Clarify and defend positions with precise and relevant evidence, including facts, expert opinions, quotations and expressions of commonly accepted beliefs and logical reasoning. d. Address readers' concerns, counterclaims, biases, and expectations.
	2.5 Write business letters: a. Provide clear and purposeful information and address the intended audience appropriately. b. Use appropriate vocabulary, tone, and style to take into account the nature of the relationship with, and the knowledge and interest of, the recipients. c. Highlight central ideas or images. d. Follow a conventional style with page formats, fonts, and spacing that contribute to the documents' readability and impact.

DISTRICT ESLR'S TO BE ADDRESSED:

Students will be:

- **Self-Directed Learners** who write independently, gaining confidence in their abilities to think on their own and synthesize information from a variety of sources, realizing that independent learning is a lifelong tool for success in the classroom and beyond.

- **Effective Communicators** who are able to relate polished formal and extemporaneous presentations with appropriate public speaking techniques and strategies.
- **Quality Producers/Performers** who take pride in all assignments and realize the value of creating an error-free product that is original in substance.
- **Constructive Thinkers** who reflect on their reading and writing to enhance the outcomes of their work. Students engage in higher level thinking activities, evaluation and peer editing of essays, and synthesis of a number of resources into a final written product.
- **Collaborative Workers** who are capable of working in both large and small groups in order to produce well-organized, thoughtful products. Group work will be a reflection of the effort contributed by each member of the group.
- **Responsible Citizens** who are prepared to contribute to our democracy in positive ways. From their reading and writing, students gain an understanding of the responsibility, honor, and integrity that is essential to become a functioning member of our society.