



# Grade 10 Literature: Instructor's Syllabus

A VRC Curriculum Syllabus



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# Grade 10 Literature: Literature w/ Composition and Rhetoric

## A Verification and Renewal Curriculum (VRC) Syllabus

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### Course Description

Students will engage in a practical, imitation-oriented study of the structures and richness of the English language (i.e., grammar, composition, and rhetoric) while drawing from a diverse selection of thought-provoking examples of the English language at its finest, unlikely spiritual biographies and poetry, a timeless Shakespearian play about political treachery, and a sampling of Malcolm X's greatest speeches.

An advanced proficiency in identifying and demonstrating the grammatical structures of Standard English in diverse settings will be developed through practicing sentence diagramming—a highly-effective visual and kinesthetic method for analyzing and imitating English composition popularized in the 19th Century.

Likewise, a working familiarity of the richness of the English language as well as the universal principles of eloquent persuasion will be developed through an application-oriented introduction to the art of rhetoric.

The traditional method of *progymnasmata* (Greek for guided “imitation”)—today, simply described as scaffolding—has inspired much of this course. As such, students will, in part, develop their skills in composition and rhetoric through an engagement with great genres of the English language, namely biography, poetry, drama, and speech writing.

Composition, in the grammatical sense, will be studied during the first semester, whereas the principles of classical rhetoric will be studied during the second semester. More details can be found below within the “Suggested Instruction Methods” section of this syllabus.

### Objectives

- Provide students with structured opportunities to acquire a deeper understanding of, sensitivity for, and competence to produce quality expression through the English language
- Benefit young scholars in their study of Classical Arabic structures whenever their Arabic instructors consider it appropriate to explain Classical Arabic structures and rhetorical concepts through English reference points.

### A Note for Muslim Educators

Michael Sugich's collection of spiritual biographies on repentance (*tauba*), *Hearts Turn*, was selected on account of both its richness in language and the unique, refreshing perspective and style employed by its author. Part of this refreshing quality is the candor through which he relates the stories of the repentant whom he had the pleasure to meet while living throughout

the Muslim world. While it is our opinion that such candor will benefit American Muslim high schoolers who have likely already heard about, seen, or experienced quite a bit, we still recommend that instructors exercise their own discretion and tact in assigning readings from Sugich's work.

## **Course Duration & Lesson Frequency**

This is a year-long course comprising two 15-week semesters.

It is recommended that students meet 3 times weekly for lessons lasting approximately 60 mins each.

## **Required Texts**

- Corbett, Edward P J, and Robert J Connors. *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student*. 3rd ed., New York; Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1990.
- Davenport, Phyllis. *Rex Barks: Diagramming Sentences Made Easy*. Kerhonkson, Ny, Paper Tiger, 2004.
- Hopkins, Gerard Manley. *Poems and Prose*. Penguin UK, 28 Feb. 2008.
- Shakespeare, William. "Julius Caesar - Entire Play | Folger Shakespeare Library." *www.folger.edu*, 1599, [www.folger.edu/explore/shakespeares-works/julius-caesar/read/](http://www.folger.edu/explore/shakespeares-works/julius-caesar/read/).
- Sugich, Michael. *Hearts Turn: Sinners, Seekers, Saints and the Road to Redemption*. 978-0-9893640-0-3, 29 Jan. 2019.
- X, Malcolm, and George Breitman. *Malcolm X Speaks: Selected Speeches and Statements*. New York, Grove Weidenfeld, 1990.

## **Prerequisites**

Satisfactory completion of a 9th grade literature and composition course, middle school-level world history and/or world cultures, a U.S. history course

## **Grading Structure**

- Annotative homework due by the beginning of each lesson (10%)
- Class participation and attendance (10%)
- Written examinations (40%; 5 per semester; 10 total)
- Midterm presentations (20%; one per semester 2 total)
- Final reflective paper (20%)

## **Academic Honesty**

We live in a time in which new forms of academic dishonesty are all too readily available, including the use of "artificial intelligence" to write our homework assignments, papers, etc. This cannot be tolerated and will not be for the following key reason: your honest participation

in this course will result in the development of your *actual intelligence*—rationally, morally, and imaginatively. And, of course, other forms of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated as well.

## Suggested Instruction Method

### Semester 1

- Students should compose and diagram their own sentences which mirror the shape of those diagrammed in their sentence diagramming exercises. This will help them better master the composition of sentences and phrases.
- The instructor should occasionally pull sentences from the spiritual biographies, poetry, speeches, and the play read in the course and have students diagram and/or compose an original sentence which mirrors the shape/structure of the one raised for examination.
- Instructors are recommended to adopt and adapt the timeless *Great Questions* to help guide conversations in this course. Please explore the general descriptions of these through the following resource posted by Great Question Foundation:  
<https://www.tgqf.org/the-great-questions/>.

### Semester 2

- Instructors should take a similar approach as was described for Semester 1, but with grammatical composition being replaced by the principles and core figures of classical rhetoric wherever possible.

## Weekly Calendar

### Semester 1

Week	Sentence Diagramming	Literature
Week 1	Davenport, p. 1-11	Sugich, “Introduction”; 22-24
Week 2	Davenport, Ch 1-Ch 2	Sugich, 25-34
Week 3	Davenport, Ch 3	Sugich, 35-40
Week 4	Davenport, Ch 3	Sugich, 41-44; 245
Week 5	Davenport, Ch 4	Sugich, 66-76
Week 6	Davenport, Ch 5	Sugich, 1-10
Week 7	Davenport, Ch 5	Sugich, 11-21

Week 8	Midterm Presentations	Midterm Presentations
Week 9	In-class essay about Malcolm X mini documentary	<a href="#">“Who was Malcolm X?”</a> (TRT Documentary); Breitman, “The Ballot or the Bullet” by Malcolm X (1st half)
Week 10	Davenport, Ch 6	Breitman, “The Ballot or the Bullet” by Malcolm X (2nd half)
Week 11	Davenport, Ch 7	Breitman, “Address to African Heads of State” (1st half)
Week 12	Davenport, Ch 8	Breitman, “Address to African Heads of State” (2nd half)
Week 13	In-class essay/book report on <i>Rex Barks</i> using newly learned structures	
Week 14		In-class essay about Malcolm X speech topic of student’s choice
Week 15		Focus on diagramming and imitating sentences from Malcolm X speeches

## Semester 2

Week	Principles of Classical Rhetoric	Literature
Week 1	Corbett, p. 3-5; 20-28	Shakespeare’s <i>Julius Caesar</i> , Act 1; diagram and imitate key sentences
Week 2	Corbett, p. 32-36	Shakespeare’s <i>Julius Caesar</i> , Act 2; diagram and imitate key sentences

Week 3	Corbett, p. 94-97	Shakespeare's <i>Julius Caesar</i> , Act 3; diagram and imitate key sentences
Week 4	Corbett, p. 133-139	Shakespeare's <i>Julius Caesar</i> , Act 4; diagram and imitate key sentences
Week 5	Corbett, p. 151-156	Shakespeare's <i>Julius Caesar</i> , Act 5; diagram and imitate key sentences
Week 6	Corbett, p. 278-307	Look back on <i>Julius Caesar</i> and have students do a basic rhetorical summary in class of two scenes of instructor's choosing.
Week 7	Corbett, p. 278-307	April 20, 1964 "Haji Letter" by Malcolm X (Breitman); lyrics for "Before They Called You White" by Brother Ali  Diagram key sentences and verses  Conduct basic rhetorical summary
Week 8	Midterm presentations	
Week 9	p. 404-414	Hopkins, "Pied Beauty" (p. 50); "Habit of Perfection" (34)  Rhetorical summary of poems w/ sentence diagrams
Week 10	p. 428-431	Hopkins, "Heaven-Haven" (p. 33); "God's Grandeur" (p. 48)

		Rhetorical summary of poems w/ sentence diagrams
Week 11	p. 433-434; 436-439	<p><a href="#">“You Will be Someone’s Ancestor. Act Accordingly.”</a> by Amir Sulaiman</p> <p><a href="#">“Beauty and Breaking”</a> by Amir Sulaiman; Diagram Sulaiman’s verses</p> <p>Rhetorical summary of poems w/ sentence diagrams</p>
Week 12	p. 439; 444-446	<p><a href="#">“The Lover, The Love, and The Beloved”</a> by Amir Sulaiman</p> <p>Rhetorical summary of poem with sentence diagrams</p>
Week 13	p. 450; 452-455	Instructor’s discretion
Week 14	p. 456-460	Imitation exercises for all figures learned over the semester
Week 15	Final paper as rhetorical analysis of lit. sample of choosing from course	