



**IMMACULATE CONCEPTION HIGH SCHOOL  
DEPARTMENT ENGLISH  
GRADE 8  
ENGLISH LITERATURE**

**COURSE OUTLINE  
September 2024 - June 2025**

**Description of the Course:**

This course encompasses the reading, enjoyment and analysis of texts within the three literary genres - **poetry**, **drama** and **prose** as part of students' preparation to sit the Caribbean Secondary Examination Council (CSEC) English B Papers One and Two as well as to undertake any further studies in the subject. Through reading, discussion, and analysis of texts based on the six literary elements - plot, characterisation, setting, themes, point of view and style, students will develop a deeper understanding and appreciation of literature, improve critical thinking, comprehension, and writing skills. The course encourages creativity and interpretation, as students are invited to express their ideas through projects, presentations and well-constructed essays.

**Course Prerequisites:**

Grade 7 English Language and English Literature

**Course Objectives:**

*In addition to those stated for Grade Seven:*

1. To train students to recognise and comment on the elements of literature in its different genres – prose, poetry, drama
2. To introduce students to the components of dramatic texts.
3. To continue to facilitate students' enjoyment of the different literary genres by connecting ideas and experiences in texts to their own lives.
4. To continue preparation for CXC English B examination.

**Topical Outline of the Course Content:**

**TERM 1**

**GENRE: PROSE ANALYSIS**

**TEXT: ROLL OF THUNDER, HEAR MY CRY**

**Student Learning Outcomes: At the end of studying the text, students should be able to:**

**1. Examine the Historical Context of the novel**

Understand the historical background of the novel, particularly the setting in the 1930s during the Great Depression and the Jim Crow era, and its impact on the characters' lives.

- i. Jim Crow Laws
- ii. Sharecropping
- iii. Lynching
- iv. Great Depression
- v. Reconstruction
- vi. Civil War
- vii. Yankee
- viii. Ku Klux Klan
- ix. Confederate States
- x. Mason/ Dixon Line

**2. Summarize the Plot:**

Provide a comprehensive summary of the novel's plot, including key events, characters, and their motivations.

**3. Analyze Characters:**

- i. Analyze the main and supporting characters, identifying their traits, motivations, and how they contribute to the story's development.
- ii. Trace the growth and development of key characters throughout the story, considering how their experiences shape their perspectives.

**4. Explore Themes:**

Identify and discuss the central themes of the novel, such as racial prejudice (social injustices based on race), family relationships, the power of community, attitudes to power and authority, women in society, loyalty, healthy/ unhealthy practices (NSC theme), poverty, and the importance of land.

**5. Analyze Point of View:**

Discuss the narrative perspective and how it influences the reader's understanding of events and characters.

**6. Explore Literary Techniques:**

Identify and analyze literary techniques employed by the author - foreshadowing, imagery, dialogue, symbolism such as the land and the thunderstorm, allusion ("nightmen" = Ku Klux Klan), idiomatic expressions

**7. Connect to Personal Experiences and Current Social Issues:**

- i. Relate the themes and issues in the novel to the students' own lives and experiences, encouraging critical thinking and empathy.

- ii. Engage in conversations about the social issues presented in the novel, such as racism, segregation, economic struggles, and the importance of education.
- 8. Participate in Discussions:**  
Engage in thoughtful class discussions about the various elements of the novel, sharing insights and listening to diverse perspectives.
- 9. Create Visual Representations:**  
Create visual representations of key scenes, characters, or themes from the novel, fostering creativity and visual literacy.
- 9. Write Critical Essays:**  
Construct well-structured, analytical essays that support their interpretations of the text using evidence from the novel.
- 11. Write the literary essay**

- i. **Introductory paragraph**
  - a. Introductory statements – background information, applicable quote, rhetorical question etc; thesis statement  
*NB Title of text must be given, as well as, specific character/s/ theme to be dealt with must be stated somewhere in the introduction.*
- i. **Body Paragraphs x 3**
  - a. Topic Sentence – Supporting Point
  - b. Explanation
  - c. Textual Evidence
- iii. **Conclusion -**
  - a. Summarise main points
  - b. Restate Thesis
  - c. Closing statement

**Guidelines/Suggestions for Teaching Methods and Student Learning Activities:**

**Chapter 1:**

1. **Character Web Creation:** Have students create a character web for the Logan family, identifying traits, relationships, and roles within the family. This will help them understand the family dynamics introduced in the chapter.
2. **Setting Analysis:** Students can draw or map out the setting described in the chapter. Ask them to focus on the descriptions of the land, the Logan family's farm, and the community, then discuss how the setting influences the story's tone and mood.

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## Chapter 2:

1. **Discussion on Racism and Segregation:** After reading the chapter, hold a class discussion on the themes of racism and segregation as portrayed through the characters' experiences, such as the children's walk to school. Ask students to share how they think these issues will shape the story.
2. **Letter Writing Activity:** Have students write a letter from the perspective of one of the Logan children to a distant relative, describing their experiences with the Jefferson Davis school bus and the inequality they face.

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## Chapter 3:

1. **Cause and Effect Chain:** Students can create a cause-and-effect chain focusing on the incident with the bus and how the Logan children respond to the constant mistreatment. This activity helps them track key events and consequences.
2. **Point of View Analysis:** Ask students to rewrite the bus incident from the perspective of the white bus driver or one of the white children on the bus. This helps students explore different viewpoints and deepen their understanding of the conflict.

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## Chapter 4:

1. **Character Reflection:** After reading about Stacey's decision to fight T.J., have students reflect on Stacey's internal conflict and choices. They can write a diary entry from Stacey's point of view explaining why he made the decisions he did.
2. **Theme Exploration - Friendship and Loyalty:** Students can work in pairs to identify key moments in the chapter that highlight themes of friendship and loyalty, specifically examining the relationship between Stacey and T.J. Ask them to present their findings to the class.

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## Chapter 5:

1. **Role-Playing:** In groups, students can role-play the marketplace scene where Cassie confronts Mr. Barnett. Have them act out Cassie's reaction and discuss the power dynamics at play. Afterward, reflect on how Cassie's innocence clashes with the harsh reality of racism.

2. **Empathy Mapping:** Have students create empathy maps for Cassie to better understand her emotions during her confrontation with Lillian Jean. This activity helps students analyze character motivations and emotional responses.
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### Chapter 6:

1. **Symbolism Analysis:** Discuss the significance of Big Ma's land and how it represents freedom and independence for the Logan family. Have students write a short essay on why the land is so important and how it connects to the larger themes of the story.
  2. **Class Debate:** Organize a debate around Uncle Hammer's actions and whether his reaction to the racism faced by the family is justified. Students can argue whether his approach helps or harms the family's situation.
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### Chapter 7:

1. **Compare and Contrast:** Ask students to compare and contrast the approaches of Uncle Hammer and Papa toward handling racism. They can use a Venn diagram and discuss which approach seems more effective and why.
  2. **Figurative Language Hunt:** Have students go through the chapter and identify instances of figurative language (similes, metaphors, etc.) used by the author. Discuss how these literary devices enhance the emotional depth of the story.
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### Chapter 8:

1. **Character Growth Timeline:** Create a timeline that traces the development of Cassie's understanding of racism and injustice. Students can plot key moments from the chapter where she learns hard lessons about the world around her.
  2. **Role Reversal Writing:** Have students write a role-reversal short story where T.J. is in Cassie's position during the incidents in this chapter. This helps them explore empathy and understand how different characters handle similar situations.
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### Chapter 9:

1. **Foreshadowing Exploration:** Students can look for examples of foreshadowing in the chapter, particularly surrounding the Logan family's growing tension with the white

community. Have them predict what they think will happen next based on the clues they've found.

2. **Conflict Mapping:** Create a visual map showing the different types of conflict in the story (man vs. man, man vs. society, etc.). Students can identify examples of each conflict and discuss how they are interwoven.
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### Chapter 10:

1. **Mood and Tone Analysis:** Have students analyze the mood and tone of the chapter, especially around Papa's injury and the family's reaction. Discuss how Mildred Taylor uses description and dialogue to create an atmosphere of fear and tension.
  2. **Newspaper Article:** Students can write a newspaper article reporting on Papa's injury as if they were a journalist in the community. This allows them to explore the impact of the event on the larger community.
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### Chapter 11:

1. **Storyboard the Climax:** Students can create a storyboard depicting the events leading up to the climax. This visual representation helps them break down the rising tension and key moments that lead to the story's turning point.
  2. **Dramatic Reading:** Select a key scene from the chapter and have students perform a dramatic reading in small groups. This allows them to engage with the emotions of the characters and the intensity of the chapter's events.
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### Chapter 12:

1. **Theme Reflection Essay:** Assign a reflective essay where students discuss the theme of family unity and survival in the face of adversity. They can use specific examples from the chapter to show how the Logan family stays strong despite external pressures.
2. **End-of-Book Discussion:** Hold a class discussion where students share their thoughts on the ending. What did they think of the resolution? How do they feel about T.J.'s fate? This helps them process their emotions and thoughts after finishing the novel.

## TERM 2

**GENRE: DRAMA ANALYSIS**

**TEXT: MERCHANT OF VENICE**

**Student Learning Outcomes: At the end of studying the text, students should be able to:**

**1. Discuss plays as a “unique branch of literature”, in that, they are meant to be performed (seen and heard) and not just read.**

**2. Define Dramatic Terms and Conventions**

- a. *Playwright*
- b. *Script*
- c. *Act*
- d. *Scene*
- e. *Props (Stage Properties)*
- f. *Acting Areas (revision as they did this in Drama – Grade 7) –*
- g. *Stage Directions*
- h. *Speech Devices – soliloquy, monologue, aside*
- i. *Irony – verbal, situational and dramatic*

**3. Determine the effect of these technical elements of drama – scenery, costumes, props and other stimuli mentioned above in making meaning.**

**4. Answer the questions below:**

- Who is the playwright?
- What are the categories of plays written – tragedy, comedy, tragicomedy, romance, history
- What is the definition and features of Shakespearean Tragicomedy

**5. Analyse the play based on the dramatic elements/ conventions**

- Plot - Main Plot & Sub-Plot; Identification and Resolution of all conflicts
- Setting
  - Time period
  - Socio-historical background of the time period – Anti-Semitism
  - Two main locations Belmont and Venice
- Themes – Mercy, Prejudice, Friendship/ Loyalty, Love, Family Relationships, Deception, Appearance vs Reality; Women in Society

**6. Apply the terms stated under 1“ii” above in analysing the text**

**Guidelines/Suggestions for Teaching Methods and Student Learning Activities:**

1. Create a character relationship web.
2. Debate on the portrayal of Shylock.
3. Reenactment of Courtroom scene
4. Essay writing practice
5. Group discussion and presentation on themes

6. Create a collage representing key themes

## TERM 3

**GENRE: POETRY ANALYSIS**

**TEXT: SELECTIONS FROM THE WORLD OF POETRY**

**Student Learning Outcomes: at the end of studying the text, students should be able to:**

- 1. identify features specific to the genre**
  - Verses/ stanzas
  - Lines vs sentences
  - Use/ Non-use of punctuation marks at the end of lines
  - Word order
  - Economy of words
- 2. enjoy the reading and studying of poems**
- 3. discuss the levels of interpretation of a poem**
  - literal and figurative; denotative and connotative
- 4. identify and explain the effective use of literary devices in poems**
  - Simile
  - Metaphor
  - Personification
  - Onomatopoeia
  - Alliteration
  - Pun
  - Hyperbole
  - Irony
- 5. discuss the effectiveness of the use of Standard English or other language varieties, for example, the Jamaican Creole in highlighting the meaning of the poem.**
- 6. write meaningful original poems based on given criteria**

**Guidelines/Suggestions for Teaching Methods and Student Learning Activities:**

- 1. Poetry Performance (Dramatic Reading)**
- 2. Found Poetry Creation** - Ask students to create a “found poem” by selecting words, phrases, or sentences from magazines, newspapers, or books. They can then arrange these to create their own poem; students can use a specific theme or emotion from a poem you're studying as the basis for their found poems.



3. **Poetry Art Connection** - Have students create visual art that represents a poem's imagery or themes. This can be a drawing, painting, or digital artwork that captures the essence of the poem. Students can explain their artwork to the class, discussing how it relates to the poem.
4. **Poetry Circle** - Organize a poetry circle where each student chooses a poem they love or have written themselves. Students then share their poems in small groups, discussing what they enjoyed or found meaningful.
5. **Comprehension** questions on studied poems
6. **Poetry Puzzle** - Take lines or stanzas from a poem and mix them up. Have students work individually or in groups to reassemble the poem in its correct order. Students can create their own puzzles using poems they enjoy and challenge their classmates to solve them.

### **Guidelines/Suggestions for Methods of Student Evaluation:**

Each term will have:

1. Six Week and Teacher Tests - 60%
2. Coursework - 40%

The format of these will be confirmed at the Grade level meeting at the start of the year.

### **Suggested Readings, Texts, Objects of Study**

#### **Texts:**

1. Roll of Thunder Hear My Cry, Mildred Taylor
2. Merchant of Venice, William Shakespeare
3. World of Poetry, 3rd Edition, edited by Mark McWatt and Hazel Simmons-McDonald

#### **Supplementary Material:**

1. Prestwick House Activity Pack, Roll of Thunder Hear My Cry
2. Roll of Thunder Hear My Cry Teacher Resource
3. English for All Book 2, Roy Narinesingh
4. Online Sources for Merchant of Venice:

#### **Online resources**

1. Merchant of Venice PDF with Modern Translation  
[http://wheelerenglish.weebly.com/uploads/1/3/3/5/13350073/merchant\\_of\\_venice.pdf](http://wheelerenglish.weebly.com/uploads/1/3/3/5/13350073/merchant_of_venice.pdf)
2. No Fear Shakespeare Website - Merchant of Venice  
<https://www.sparknotes.com/nofear/shakespeare/merchant/act-1-scene-1/>

3. GradeSaver Notes  
<https://www.gradesaver.com/merchant-of-venice/study-guide/summary-act-1>
4. YouTube Video Summary  
[The Merchant Of Venice | Let's Discover English Course Book Grade 7 | Periwinkle](#)
5. Merchant of Venice Movie (Full Length)  
[The Merchant of Venice: Bob Peck as Shylock](#)
6. Anti-Semitism  
<https://kids.britannica.com/students/article/anti-Semitism/316414>