

Orange Unified School District  
**EXPOSITORY READING AND WRITING**  
**(RHETORIC: READING AND WRITING)**  
Year Course

**GRADE LEVEL:** 12

**PREREQUISITES:** Successful completion of English 11

**INTRODUCTION TO THE SUBJECT:**

Expository Reading and Writing Course will prepare college-bound seniors for the literacy demands of higher education. Through a sequence of fourteen rigorous instructional modules, students in this yearlong, rhetoric-based elective course develop advanced proficiencies in expository, analytical, and argumentative reading and writing.

The cornerstone of the course—the assignment template—presents a process for helping students read, comprehend, and respond to non-fiction and literary texts. Modules also provide instruction in research methods and documentation conventions. Students will be expected to increase their awareness of the rhetorical strategies employed by authors, and to apply those strategies in their own writing. They will read closely to examine the relationship between an author's argument or theme and his or her audience and purpose, to analyze the impact of structural and rhetorical strategies, and to examine the social, political, and philosophical assumptions that underlie the text. By the end of the course, students will be expected to use this process independently when reading unfamiliar texts and writing in response to them. Course texts include contemporary essays, newspaper and magazine articles, editorials, reports, biographies, memos, assorted public documents, and other non-fiction texts. The course materials also include modules on two full-length works (one novel and one work of non-fiction). Written assessments and holistic scoring guides conclude each unit.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

**BY THE END OF THE COURSE THE STUDENT WILL BE ABLE TO:**

Analyze the features and rhetorical devices of different types of texts and the way in which authors use those features and devices.

Analyze the way in which clarity of meaning is affected by patterns of organization, hierarchical structures, repetition of main ideas, syntax, and word choice in the text.

Analyze an author's implicit and explicit political and/or philosophical assumptions and beliefs about a subject or topic.

Identify and assess the impact of ambiguities and complexities within the text.

Demonstrate an understanding of elements of discourse (e.g., purpose, speaker, audience, form) when completing reading and writing assignments.

Make warranted and reasonable assertions about the author's arguments and themes by using elements of the text to defend and clarify interpretations.

## Expository Reading and Writing

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Critique the validity of arguments in texts; their appeal to both friendly and hostile audiences; and the extent to which the arguments anticipate and address reader concerns and counterclaims (e.g., logos, pathos and ethos).

Develop academic/analytical essays that are focused on a central idea, developed with information learned from assigned texts, well-organized in an appropriate and effective pattern that structures ideas in sustained and persuasive way, and free from grammatical and mechanical errors.

Revise what they have drafted, rethinking their focus, point of view, organization, logic, and structure; improve sentence variety and style, and enhance sophistication of meaning and tone in ways that are consistent with purpose, audience, and genre.

Edit their work for clarity; for standard written English grammar, usage, and mechanics; for diction and for an appropriate level of formality to demonstrate control of grammar, diction, and paragraph and sentence structure and an understanding of English usage.

Meet all relevant California English-language arts content standards for the twelfth grade.

### **INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND STRATEGIES:**

#### Reading Rhetorically:

- All texts will be introduced by a sequence of research-based pre-reading and vocabulary strategies.
- All texts will be analyzed using analytical strategies such as annotating, outlining/charting text structure, and questioning.
- All texts will be examined and discussed using relevant critical/analytical elements such as intended audience, possible author bias, and rhetorical effectiveness.
- Students will work individually, in pairs and small groups, and as a whole class on analytical tasks.
- Students will present aspects of their critical reading and thinking orally as well as in writing.

#### Connecting Reading to Writing:

- Students will write summaries, rhetorical précis, and responses to critical questions.
- Students will compare their summaries/rhetorical précis, outlines, and written responses in small groups in order to discuss the differences between (a) general and specific ideas; (b) main and subordinate points; subjective vs. objective summarizing techniques.
- Students will engage in note-taking activities, such as composing one-sentence summaries of paragraphs/passage, charting a text's main points, and developing outlines for essays in response to writing prompts.
- Students will complete compare/contrast and synthesis activities increasing their capacity to make inferences and draw warranted conclusions, such as creating comparison matrixes of readings, examining significant points within texts, and analyzing significant textual features within thematically related material.

#### Writing:

- Students will write 750-1500 word analytical essays based on prompts that require establishing and developing a thesis/argument in response to the prompt and providing evidence to support that thesis by synthesizing and interpreting the ideas presented in texts. Some modules will require essays of greater length.
- Students will complete timed in-class writings based on prompts related to an author's assertion(s), theme(s), purpose(s), and/or a text's rhetorical features.

Assessments:

- Oral Presentation & Discussion
- Teacher Observation
- Quick Writes
- Reciprocal reading / teaching
- Formative responses to critical thinking questions
- Annotative activities
- Publisher created graphic organizers
- Teacher created graphic organizers
- Written Assessment, e.g., Essay, Letter to the Editor, Research Report

**COURSE OVERVIEW AND APPROXIMATE UNIT TIME ALLOTMENTS:**

**First Semester**

**WEEKS**

I. Fast Food—Who's to Blame?

3-4

“Fast Food—Who’s to Blame?” is based on four newspaper articles and a set of letters to the editor written in response to one set of the articles about the issue of fast food and its role in contributing to childhood obesity. As the first assignment in the Expository Reading and Writing course curriculum it serves as an introduction to the approach to teaching expository reading and writing utilizing accessible readings and an engaging topic. The assignment culminates with a choice among three writing assignments: a timed essay topic similar to writing prompts used in the California State University’s English Placement Test (EPT), in this case a persuasive essay; an essay evaluating the arguments in the letters to the editor; or a text-based argumentative essay suitable for writing out-of-class. Students are expected to write an essay of 750-1,500 words.

Recommended Readings

- Brownlee, Shannon. “It’s Portion Distortion that Makes America Fat.” *Sacramento Bee* 5 Jan. 2003.
- Barboza, David. “If You Pitch It, They Will Eat.” *New York Times* 3 Aug. 2003.
- Ching, Roberta. Letters to the editor in response to “Don’t Blame the Eater.” 2003.
- Weintraub, Daniel. “The Battle Against Fast Food Begins in the Home.” *Sacramento Bee* 17 Dec. 2002.
- Zinczenko, David. “Don’t Blame the Eater.” *New York Times* 23 Nov. 2002.

II. Going for the Look

2-3

“Going for the Look” is based on a single newspaper article about the lawsuit accusing Abercrombie and Fitch of hiring sales associates based on appearance. The article incorporates a variety of brief arguments on both sides of the issue, making it a good assignment for introducing students to rhetorical analysis. It concludes by offering the option of having students write an EPT-type timed essay (persuasive) or an out-of-class text-based essay (argumentative). Students are expected to write an essay of 750-1,500 words. Recommended Readings

- Greenhouse, Steven. “Going for the Look, but Risking Discrimination.” *New York Times* 13 July 2003.

III. The Rhetoric of the Op-Ed Page

2-3

This assignment sequence introduces the Aristotelian concepts of ethos, logos, and pathos and applies them to a rhetorical analysis of an op-ed piece by Jeremy Rifkin. The culminating writing assignment is a letter to the editor in response to the Rifkin article. Students are expected to write an essay of 500 words.

Recommended Readings

- Edlund, John. "Three Ways to Persuade."
- Edlund, John. Letters to the editor in response to "A Change of Heart about Animals." 2003.
- Rifkin, Jeremy. "A Change of Heart about Animals." Los Angeles Times 1 Sept. 2003: B15.

IV. The Value of Life

4-5

This assignment asks students to synthesize their understanding of Hamlet's "To be or not to be" soliloquy, an excerpt from Lance Armstrong's *It's Not About the Bike*, an article by Amanda Ripley on the aftermath of 911, and a life insurance tool, "The Human Life Value Calculator." Students are asked to add their voices to the discussion by creating a well-developed response to these sources (text-based academic essay). Students are expected to write an essay of 750-1,500 words.

Recommended Readings

- Shakespeare, William. From "Hamlet" - Act III, Sc. 1, Hamlet's "To be" soliloquy.
- Armstrong, Lance, with Sally Jenkins. Excerpt from Chapter One: It's Not About the Bike: My Journey Back to Life. New York: Putnam, 2000.
- Ripley, Amanda. "What Is a Life Worth?" Time 11 Feb. 2002.
- The Life and Health Insurance Foundation for Education. LIFE. "The Human Life Value Calculator." [http://www.life-line.org/build/human\\_life\\_value\\_calculator/index.php?pt=lfhlvc&m=1](http://www.life-line.org/build/human_life_value_calculator/index.php?pt=lfhlvc&m=1)

IV. Racial Profiling

2-4

This assignment teaches students how to read and respond to an argumentative essay by Bob Herbert on racial profiling. First, students practice several reading strategies as they deepen their understanding of the Herbert essay; then, students learn how to write their own argumentative essay on a similar topic. Students are expected to write an essay of 750-1,500 words.

Recommended Readings

- Herbert, Bob. "Hounding the Innocent." New York Times 13 July 1999.

V. Juvenile Justice

3-4

"Juvenile Justice" is based on four newspaper articles about whether juveniles who commit serious crimes should be tried and sentenced as adults. The articles include an opinion piece, a summary of brain research, a report of juvenile competence to stand trial, and an article about a Supreme Court case. Students must evaluate the rhetorical stances of different authors and synthesize their arguments in a text-based academic essay (argumentative). Students are expected to write an essay of 750-1,500 words.

Recommended Readings

- Liptak, Adam. "Supreme Court to Rule on Executing Young Killers." New York Times 3 Jan. 2005.
- Lundstrom, Marjie. "Kids are Kids—Until they Commit Crimes." Sacramento Bee 1 Mar. 2001.

- Krikorian, Greg. "Many Kids Called Unfit for Adult Trial." Sacramento Bee 3 Mar. 2003.
- Thompson, Paul. "Startling Finds on Teenage Brains." Sacramento Bee 25 May 2001.

VI. Juvenile Justice

2-3

"The Last Meow" is based on a long reflective essay about the implications of recent development in veterinary medicine. It is framed by the story of "Lady," a cat in need of a kidney transplant, and her human owners. The essay requires that students infer the argument that the writer is making; they then write either a timed essay or an out-of-class essay on the topic of providing medical care for pets. A variety of writing genres is offered for the assignment: timed, persuasive essay; academic summary; letter to the editor; synthesis essay; text-based academic or argumentative essay; I-Search paper; and research essay. Students are expected to write an essay of 750-1,500 words.

Recommended Readings

- Bilger, Berkhard. "The Last Meow." New Yorker 8 Sept. 2003.

**Second Semester**

**WEEKS**

I. Into the Wild

4-5

This non-fiction, full-length work, *Into the Wild*, by Jon Krakauer, was published in 1996. Engaging students in this biography/story, based on Krakauer's investigation of Christopher McCandless, a young idealistic college graduate, allows them to think deeply about human motivation and perhaps begin to understand something of the complexity of maturity. Excerpted in the book, students experience a taste of the works of the American Transcendentalists and Russian novelists, which so influenced McCandless's life philosophy. Students conclude the assignment by writing a text-based academic essay on one of a number of themes from the work. Students are expected to write an essay of 1,500-2,500 words.

Recommended Readings

- Krakauer, Jon. *Into the Wild*. New York: Doubleday, 1996.

II. Bring a Text to Class

2-3

This assignment sequence builds on texts that students bring in to share with the class and serves to introduce the second semester. Throughout this sequence students work on externalizing their existing textual skills and knowledge and discovering ways that they can bring their current reading expertise from outside of school to bear on texts in school that they have never encountered before. Writing assignments require students to summarize readings and reflect on their own reading practices in an essay of 750-1,500 words.

Recommended Readings

- Black Eyed Peas. "Where is the Love?" Elephunk. A & M Records, 2003.
- "Hip-Hop Becoming a Worldwide Language for Youth Resistance." USA Today 1 Sept. 2000.

III. Language, Gender, and Culture

3-4

The "Language, Gender, and Culture" assignment invites students to explore how language use embodies cultural values and gender-based communication styles. This assignment draws on readings in sociolinguistics and literature. The students conclude the assignment by writing a text-based academic essay. Students are expected to write an essay of 750-1,500 words.

Recommended Readings

- Ehrlich, Gretel. "About Men." *The Solace of Open Spaces*. New York: Penguin, 1985.
- Hong Kingston, Maxine. *The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Childhood Among Ghosts*. New York: Random House, 1976.
- Tannen, Deborah. "His Politeness is Her Powerlessness." *You Just Don't Understand: Women and Men in Conversation*. New York: HarperCollins, 1990.

IV. The Politics of Food

2-3

This assignment is based on two articles on the consumption and production of food. The articles were written over ten years apart and have similar concerns: the health and well being of humans. These two authors have different ways of pointing out the same issues, ultimately asking the students to consider the worlds of science, agriculture, and politics. Students conclude the assignment by writing a text-based academic essay on one of several possible questions. Students are expected to write an essay of 750-1,500 words.

Recommended Readings

- Berry, Wendell. "The Pleasures of Eating." *What are People For?* New York: North Point/Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1990.
- Pollan, Michael. "When a Crop Becomes King." *New York Times* 19 July 2002.

V. Justice: Childhood Love Lessons

2-3

This assignment presents an argumentative essay by bell hooks about methods of childhood punishment and the relationships between discipline and expressions of love. Students are then asked to write a persuasive essay in response. Students are expected to write an essay of 750-1,500 words.

Recommended Readings

- hooks, bell. "Justice: Childhood Love Lessons." *All About Love: New Visions*. New York: William Morrow, 2000.

VI. Bullying at School: Research Project

3-5

"Bullying at School" is a research project for the whole class. Students read thirteen different kinds of writing on bullying (provided), including two primary research articles from refereed journals, and do additional primary and secondary research on their own. They then write a School Code of Conduct on bullying to present to a real audience, their School Board. Skills include how to do research, how to evaluate and document sources (both in-text and in a Works Cited page), and how to distinguish between primary and secondary research. Students learn how to incorporate sources into their own writing, how to tailor writing for a specific audience, and how to make an argument using several different kinds of sources to provide appropriate evidence. Students are expected to write an essay of 1,500-2,500 words.

Recommended Readings

- Banks, Ron. "Bullying in Schools." Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) Digest. April, 1997. Champaign, IL: ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education. Infotrac 15 August 2003. <<http://www.ericdigests.org/1997-4/bullying.htm>>
- Brown, Mark. "Life After Bullying." National PTA. 20 Feb. 2005. <<http://www.pta.org/bullying/#>>
- Coloroso, Barbara. *The Bully, the Bullied, and the Bystander*. New York: Harper/Quill, 2004.
- Kan-Rice, Pamela. "School Bullies Are Often Also Victims; Feeling Safe Reduces Youth Bullying." University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources News and Information

- Outreach. AScribe Health News Service 2 Sept, 2003. Infotrac July 08, 2004.  
<<http://news.ucanr.org/newsstorymain.cfm?story=502>>
- “Keep a Lid on Bullying with a Complaint Box.” Curriculum Review. Dec. 2003, 11. PaperClip Communications. Infotrac 15 Aug 2004.
  - <<http://0search.epnet.com.library.csuhayward.edu:80/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&an=11735009>>
  - Kowalski, Kathiann. “How to Handle a Bully.” Current Health. 2. Feb. 1999. Google 15 Aug. 2004. <<http://bgeagles.tripod.com/webquest/handle.htm>>
  - Kuther, Tara L. “Understanding Bullying.” National PTA. 20 Feb. 2005.  
<<http://www.pta.org/bullying/#>>
  - Lemonick, Michael D. “The Bully Blight.” Time 18 April, 2005, 144-145.
  - Migliore, Eleanor T. “Eliminate Bullying in your Classroom.” Intervention in School & Clinic. Jan 2003, 172-177. Online Academic Search Premier 14 Feb 2005.
  - Nansel, Tonja R., Mary Overpeck, Ramani S. Pilla, W. June Ruan, Bruce Simons-Morton, and Peter Scheidt. “Bullying Behaviors Among US Youth: Prevalence and Association With Psychosocial Adjustment.” Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) 25 April 2001, 2094-2100.
  - Newquist, Colleen. “Bully-Proof Your School.” Education World. 8 Sept. 2004. Google 21 Jan. 2005. <[http://www.education-world.com/a\\_admin/admin018.shtml](http://www.education-world.com/a_admin/admin018.shtml)>
  - Olweus, Dan. “A Profile of Bullying at School.” Educational Leadership. Mar 2003. Online Academic Search Premier 14 Feb 2005.
  - Smith, Peter K., Kirsten C. Madsen, and Janet C. Moody. “What Causes the Age Decline in Reports of Being Bullied at School? Towards a Developmental Analysis of Risks of Being Bullied.” American Educational Research Journal Winter 1999, 267-285.

Optional Readings:

- California Department of Education. Bullying At School. Sacramento: California Department of Education, 2003.
- Quiroz, Hilda C., June L. Arnette, and Ronald D. Stephens. Bullying in Schools: Fighting the Bully Battle, A Resource for Educators and Law Enforcement. Westlake Village, CA: National School Safety Center, 2006.

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Addendum:  
THE CALIFORNIA CONTENT STANDARDS, ELA 12