



## ***Middle School American Literature***

**Yearlong 2022/23**

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### **ELIGIBLE STUDENTS:**

**Rising 6th–8th graders.** Students are expected to have proficient reading and emerging writing skills as well as the interest and willingness to grow in discussion skills about literature and history. Students suited for this course will also be cultivating the following scholarship skills:

- Actively engage in note-taking
- Learn annotation of text
- Practice outlining
- Apply teacher critiques
- Adhere to deadlines
- Be responsible for class and project preparedness
- Take initiative to ask questions for understanding and comprehension
- Participate in Socratic discussion

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

*Scholé Academy's Middle School American Literature courses are designed to offer a flexible yet integrated introduction to the study of American Literature and develop the skills necessary for independent scholarship in a restful and supportive learning environment. These middle-school courses will invite students to take a closer look at a various works to provide context and understanding of the broad strokes of American History and Literature.*

*Our study of American Literature will teach students to cultivate historical thinking through the engaging study of real people and events that have helped shape the nation they call home. Beginning with Viewpoints exercises (From Socratic Circles by Matt Crider), progressing to annotation of small sections of text, and moving on to asking one another questions from their annotations, students will learn the basics of Socratic discussions, which will guide our interaction as they begin to see the shades of gray and the nuances of people and events. Posing and answering questions will take them deeper into historical events and advance their thinking. Learning how to summarize, complete outlines, and write papers will help them connect information, seeing causes and effects.*

*Students are asked to consider and engage carefully crafted questions as their window into “the Great Conversation.” Occasionally, the teacher will present historical context through brief lectures, but all other classes are seminar-style discussions on the American texts. Students are assessed for their curiosity, participation, and diligence during discussions, as well as by means of short response papers, essays, projects, and occasional quizzes.*

- **Integrated**—Both classes are taught by the same teacher and meet in back-to-back sessions
- **Flexible**—students may take one or both modules (either simultaneously or successively)
- **Introductory**—no background knowledge is assumed or required
- **Survey**—students will gain a broad perspective on civilization
- **Restful**—a modest selection of texts read slowly and carefully; *multum non multa*

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## REQUIRED COURSE TEXTS:

American Literature: (Unless noted by ISBN number, any version will work, assignments are posted by chapter)

- *Island of the Blue Dolphins* by Scott O’Dell
- *Witch of Blackbird Pond* By Elizabeth George Speare
- *Johnny Tremain* by Esther Forbes
- *Bound for Oregon* by Jean Van Leeuwen OR *By the Great Horn Spoon* by Sid Fleischman (Parent and child may choose. We will interact with topics and themes from both stories)
- *Across Five Aprils* by Irene Hunt OR *Freedom Train: The Story of Harriet Tubman* by Dorothy Sterling (Parent and child may choose. We will interact with topics and themes from both stories)
- Short Story unit with Mark Twain, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Jack London, Louisa May Alcott, and O’Henry (pdf’s to be provided by teacher)
- *Lyddie* by Katherine Paterson
- *Blue Willow* by Doris Gates OR *Hero Over Here* by Kathleen Kudlinski (Parent and child may choose. We will interact with topics and themes from both stories)
- *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* by Mildred Taylor
- *The Devil’s Arithmetic* by Jane Yolen
- *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* by Washington Irving (pdf to be provided by teacher)
- *A Treasury of Poetry for Young People* ISBN-10: 9780806919560
- Various fables, tall tales, and other pdfs provided by teacher

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## SCHEDULE FOR AMERICAN LITERATURE:

### CLASS SESSIONS DATES:

**Class Times:** Monday & Wednesday

Literature: Section 1- M/W 3:30-4:45 pm EST, 75 mins\*

*\*The classes will be provided by me or occasionally by a substitute teacher. In the unforeseen event that I cannot find a substitute teacher and must cancel a class (e.g. due to illness or family emergency), then I will record and post a make-up session, offer the class at an alternate time, or assign appropriate work for the class-time.*

**OFFICE HOURS:** *By appointment.* (Please include time zone in your appointment request. Many thanks!)

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### AMERICAN LITERATURE COURSE MAP:

Literature	
Quarter 1	Pre-America (Before 1600) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Island of the Blue Dolphins</li> </ul> Colonial Period (1630-1735) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Witch of Blackbird Pond</li> </ul> Revolutionary America (1735-1791) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Johnny Tremain</li> </ul>
Quarter 2	Continue Revolutionary America (1735-1791) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Johnny Tremain</li> </ul> Young Republic & Expansion (1783-1850) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bound for Oregon OR By the Great Horn Spoon</li> </ul> Civil War & Reconstruction (1820-1866) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Across Five Aprils</li> <li>OR</li> <li>Freedom Train: The Story of Harriet Tubman</li> </ul> American Short Stories <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mark Twain, Hawthorne</li> </ul>
Quarter 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>London, Alcott, O'Henry</li> </ul> Industrial Revolution (1871-1920) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lyddie</li> </ul> WWI/Depression/Dust Bowl (1914-1933) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Blue Willow</li> </ul> New Deal & WWII (1933-1945) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Devil's Arithmetic</li> </ul>
Quarter 4	Continue New Deal & WWII (1933-1945) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Devil's Arithmetic</li> </ul> Civil Rights (1930-1960) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Roll of Thunder Hear My Cry</li> </ul>

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## STUDENT MASTERY PORTRAIT

Students of Middle School Literature practice a variety of complex skills which normally take many years to fully develop. Here are the skills which successful students of the course will develop at an age-appropriate level:

### **General scholarship skills**

Socratic Discussion: Formulate questions, define terms, offer examples, compare, contrast, and discover relationships between ideas

Inspectional Reading: Skim, preview books, study the table of contents, search for information

Analytical Reading: Identify key passages, terms, and definitions; outline a passage or short chapter; determine an author's message; evaluate key arguments

Mark a text: Underline key terms; add marginal notes; annotate

Composition: Keep a reading journal, compose a short narrative, respond in paragraph form to a prompt

### **Literature Skills**

Reading comprehension: Practice reading and narrating passages from intermediate and moderately difficult texts from or inspired by classical antiquity

Annotation: Learn to actively read and annotate literature using these steps:

1. circle any vocabulary words that you are unfamiliar with or that you'd have trouble explaining to others
2. underline key phrases
3. keep track of the story or idea as it unfolds through a timeline or summary
4. note word patterns and repetitions or anything that strikes you as confusing or important
5. write down questions in the margins or in your notebook

Literary Analysis: Interpret texts using tools of literary analysis: character, theme, setting, plot development

Moral Philosophy: Weigh the decisions of literary characters according to standards of classical and Christian virtues and vices

Stylistic Development: Study and imitate the poetic and literary styles of classical authors

## Student Assessment Categories

Name	Description	Frequency	Standard
<b>A. Reading (50%)</b>			
Reading log/Annotation	Submit brief log of key terms, notes, quotes, outline, or short answer questions	1 per week	Completion
Reading journal	Write sentences or paragraphs in response to a reflection question	1 per week	Quality
Oral exam	Teacher or parent administered verbal Q & A or Memorized work	1 per semester	Quality
<b>B. Participation (25%)</b>			
Participation	Teacher completed evaluation rubric regarding in-class observations (attendance, attention, contribution)	2 per quarter	Quality
Student review	Teacher completed evaluation rubric regarding general student performance (communication, work ethic, responsibility)	1 per semester	Quality
<b>C. Composition (25%)</b>			
Composition	Formal letter, essay, or narration; at least one draft and edit	3 per semester	Quality