Ninth Grade Literature and Composition with Romeo and Juliet Honors is an overview of exemplar selections of literature in fiction and nonfiction genres. Students read short stories, poems, a full-length novel, a full-length Shakespeare play, and two book-length outside readings of their choice. For all readings, students analyze the use of elements of literature in developing character, plot, and theme. For example, in selected stories, students compare the effect of setting on tone and character development. In the poetry unit, students analyze how artists and writers draw from and interpret source material.

Each unit includes informational texts inviting students to consider the historical, social, and literary context of the main texts they study. For example, in the first semester, a Nikolai Gogol story that is offered as an exemplar of magical realism is accompanied by instruction on that genre. Together, the lesson content and reading prompt students to demonstrate their understanding of magical realism by analyzing its qualities in a literary text.

Throughout the course, students respond to others' claims and support their own claims in essays, discussions, and presentations, consistently using thorough textual evidence. Opportunities for self-directed study, including outside readings, open-ended journal entries, and free-form projects, challenge Honors students to use their creativity and critical thinking skills to gain independent mastery of reading and writing. Finally, the range of texts includes canonical authors such as William Shakespeare, Franz Kafka, and Elie Wiesel, as well as writers from diverse backgrounds, such as Alice Walker, Li-Young Lee, and Robert Lake-Thom (Medicine Grizzly Bear).

Length: Two Semesters

Unit 1: The Short Story, Part 1

- The Shape of a Story
- Setting, Character, and Dialogue
- Point of View, Tone, and Theme
- Wrap-Up: The Short Story, Part 1

Unit 2: The Short Story, Part 2

- Character and Symbol
- Magical Realism
- Gothic Literature
- Wrap-Up: The Short Story, Part 2

Unit 3: Poetry

- Reading Poetry
- The Shape of Poetry
- Poetry and Art

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- Wrap-Up: Poetry

Unit 4: The Novella: Franz Kafka's The Metamorphosis

- Translation
- Context and Theme
- Kafka's Hero
- Wrap-Up: The Novella: Franz Kafka's The Metamorphosis

Unit 5: Semester Wrap-Up

Unit 6: Drama: Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet

- Romeo and Juliet: The Star-Crossed Lovers
- Romeo and Juliet: Language and Themes
- Romeo and Juliet: Impulsivity and Interpretations
- Wrap-Up: Drama: Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet

Unit 7: The Rhetoric of Argument

- Understand Argument Fallacies
- Responding to Challenging Perspectives
- Different Forms of Argument
- Wrap-Up: The Rhetoric of Argument

Unit 8: The Rhetoric of Speeches

- Speech: Women's Rights
- Speech: Civil Rights
- Speech: Human Rights
- Wrap-Up: The Rhetoric of Speeches

Unit 9: Reinterpreting Fiction

- The War of the Worlds: The Book
- The War of the Worlds: The Radio Broadcast
- The War of the Worlds: Afterward
- Wrap-Up: Reinterpreting Fiction

Unit 10: Semester Wrap-Up

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