

## Literary Studies 11 Course Outline

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This LTST 11 online course gives students opportunities to develop advanced English Language Arts skills for high school graduation. Students will receive individual feedback and advice on their free compositions in response to open-ended themes, and on short essays in response to fiction and poetry. This is a 4-credit course, which students should expect to complete in 90 to 120 hours.

### Required Resources

The student must have regular and reliable access to a computer with an Internet connection. There is no textbook for this course; all assignment instructions, lessons, readings, course information, and other important documents and links are provided on the Blackboard Learn<sup>®</sup> course website.

### Assessment Strategies

There are three units, each with four assignments and one test. To become eligible to write the unit test, the student must complete all four assignments in the unit. Students submit their assignment responses through the online assignment links, **not through email**. Students may be permitted to write unit tests at home, **or they may be required to write unit tests in Room 3039 at New Westminster Secondary School**.

Students practice and improve their skills **by writing and rewriting their assignment responses**. For each assignment, the student submits a response and the teacher replies with advice for improvement. When the student resubmits, the teacher replies with further advice, and so on, until the student's response fully meets expectations for organization, content, and use of language.

### Final Grade

The student's final grade is based on assignment grades and unit test results. To complete the course, the student must complete at least ten of the twelve assignments and write at least two of the unit tests.

### Contact

The teacher's name and email address are on the course website, and students should email their teacher with any questions or concerns, or with suggestions for improving the course. The teacher is especially happy to receive suggestions for assignment topics!

## Grading Scale for Assignments

*Students are encouraged to rewrite assignment responses to improve their skills. The teacher will offer advice for improvement until the response meets expectations for the assignment.*

<b>A</b>	<b>The response exceeds expectations for the assignment.</b>
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The A response meets expectations for organization, and exceeds expectations for both content and use of language. The content is thorough and well developed, thoughtful and often insightful, clearly going further than is required by the assignment instructions. The writing shows consistent control over grammar, usage, and syntax, with variety in sentence structures and effective choice of words and phrases. Every part of the response contributes to an impressive effect.

<b>B</b>	<b>The response meets expectations for the assignment.</b>
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The B response fully meets expectations for organization, content, and use of language.

When the response exceeds expectations for content, but not for use of language, the student should aim to exceed expectations for use of language, which will mean rewriting the response carefully and completely, not simply correcting a few errors of grammar, usage, and syntax.

When the response exceeds expectations for use of language, but not for content, the student should aim to exceed expectations for content, which will mean focusing on the assigned task and lessons, and showing insight into readings, whether assigned, or found through research.

<b>C+</b>	<b>The response requires specific improvements in order to meet expectations.</b>
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The teacher will give specific advice for improvement that could allow the response to meet expectations for content and for use of language. This scale point is used when the response is already close to meeting expectations both for content and for use of language.

<b>C</b>	<b>The response approaches expectations.</b>
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The content of the response addresses the assigned task, without serious errors, although more could be said, and the meaning of sentences is generally clear, despite some errors and awkward phrases that could have been caught and corrected with more careful proofreading.

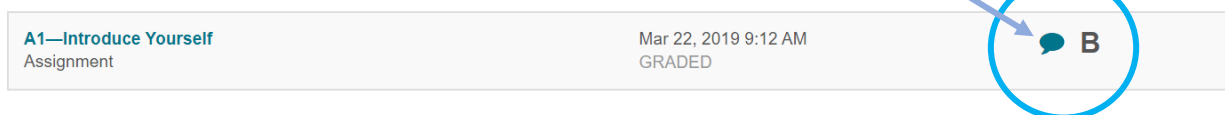
<b>C-</b>	<b>The response does not yet approach expectations.</b>
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The content of the response may address the assigned task, but with serious errors or omissions. The teacher will indicate necessary improvements in content, which could include corrections or additions of information, or even deletions of irrelevant information or comments.

The response may show lack of control over grammar, usage, syntax, punctuation, or sentence structure to the point that errors obscure the intended meaning of sentences, or force the reader to back up and re-read to be sure of the intended meaning.

## Final Grades and Interim Grades

In My Grades, all assignment grades and unit test grades are displayed as letter grades only. To read them properly, look for a drop-down box in the top right corner, labelled “Order by:”, and select “Class Order”. The purpose of using letter grades here is to focus the student’s attention on what is required to meet expectations for organization, content, and writing skills for the course. Click on the blue bubble beside the letter grade to read the teacher’s feedback on your assignment response.



### Final Grades

When the student completes the course, the teacher is required to determine a final grade that includes both a letter grade and a percentage grade, using the scale prescribed by the Ministry of Education:

C– = 50-59% ... C = 60-66% ... C+ = 67-72% ... B = 73-85% ... A = 86-100%
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To complete the course, the student submit responses to all twelve assignments and write all three unit tests. In other words, students will have twelve opportunities to show their best assignment responses, and three opportunities to show their best test responses.

To determine the final grade, the teacher will consider the student's performance on both assignments and unit tests, comparing the average assignment grade (**based on the ten highest assignment grades**) and the average test grade (**based on the two highest unit test grades**).

As long as the average assignment grade and the average test grade are not too far apart, the teacher will give equal consideration to both assignment work and test results.

### Interim Grades

Students who need an interim grade for a postsecondary application must complete at least the first unit, including all four assignments and the unit test. To determine the student’s interim grade, the teacher will give equal consideration to the student’s performance on assignments and on unit tests.

The student must email the teacher to request an interim grade document, and then allow three full school days for the school secretary to provide an interim grade document, or to forward the interim grade to the student’s intended postsecondary program.

In an urgent situation when the student suddenly learns that the postsecondary program needs an interim grade, the student must email the teacher and give the precise deadline when the interim mark document is required by the postsecondary program.

The interim grade serves only as a prediction of the student’s final grade, and will not be used in any way to determine the final grade for the course.

## Criteria and Expectations

Assignments have expectations for three criteria—organization, content and use of language.

### Organization

All assignments include instructions for form and length; some assignments require citations and references. These requirements of organization must be met before the teacher looks at content and use of language.

Paragraph-form means one or more paragraphs of complete sentences (to avoid lists of points); multiparagraph means three or more paragraphs (to encourage a clear beginning, middle and end; essay-form requires a single-paragraph introduction that ends with a thesis statement, body paragraphs of support for the thesis statement, and a single-paragraph conclusion.

### Content

There are four typical problems with content: (1) responses that are off-topic; (2) responses that show misunderstanding of instructions, lessons or readings; (3) responses that are incomplete, lacking sufficient content to meet expectations; and (4) responses that are padded out with unnecessary repetition, or tedious verbiage, or irrelevant comments.

The composition assignments do not include readings, so you must yourself invent the content that will capture and keep your reader's attention. The best way to do this is to tell a story to illustrate your personal take on the topic. For other assignments, you must find the content in the readings, select what you intend to present, and refer to it in an appropriate manner, with paraphrase or quotation.

### Language

All student work must be written in Standard English, which is the written form of the language that is shared internationally, and which should not be confused with the enormous variety of spoken forms of English. Spoken forms of English change rapidly over time, while Standard English changes much more slowly, as it is anchored in a vast literature that is readily available to all readers and writers. Standard English allows for individual styles and preferences, while following conventions for grammar, usage, syntax, punctuation, spelling and capitalization.

**Grammar** means the rules that govern *all words* in the language. For example, *all verbs* require subject-verb agreement; *all pronouns* require pronoun-antecedent agreement; there are rules that govern the proper placement of *all modifiers* of nouns and verbs. Readers expect consistent verb tense, and the appropriate use of active and passive voice, for *all verbs*.

**Usage** means the rules that govern *individual words* in the language. For example, the verbs *say*, *speak*, *talk* and *tell* have related meanings, but different usages: Standard English permits *He says he will leave*, but does not permit *He speaks he will leave*, or *He talks he will leave*.

Some sentences may conform to grammar rules, while violating standard usage. For example, *Canada is the high competition society* is consistent with grammar, but not with standard usage, which requires *Canada is a highly competitive society*.

Even perfectly clear sentences may have rudimentary errors of standard usage, which can only be remedied through constant daily reading practice. Students frequently ask what they can do to improve their writing. The answer is to read professional writers of books and newspapers and magazines. Read them slowly and carefully, with great attention to the details of every phrase and sentence, to notice every detail of expression that you can learn from.

Little children learn standard usage by imitating their mothers, who will correct their mistakes. Reading aloud can have similar benefits. Read aloud to yourself as if you were giving a speech, as if you were the author of the words you are reading, so that you can train your eye and ear and voice together to the patterns of the language as it is actually used by professional writers.

**Syntax** means rules that govern the order of words in phrases, clauses and sentences, including the use of coordinating and subordinating conjunctions to create compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences. There are three common errors of sentence structure to avoid: sentence fragments, run-on sentences, and frequent short, boring sentences that should be combined into longer, more interesting sentences. You can learn everything you need to know about sentence structure by daily reading of professional writers.

**Punctuation** guides readers through your sentences, and therefore your thoughts. The most common punctuation error is missing commas, which can make sentences unnecessarily hard to read, so you should start by mastering the use of the comma, then move on to colons and semicolons. In everything you read, pay close attention to the different ways that professional writers use punctuation to guide readers through their long sentences.

**Spelling** may be improved with the help of software spell-checkers, but you will still need dictionaries (both online and paper) to avoid writing things like, *Thee wards in this sin tense are spilled rite*. There are some differences in spelling between American and British dictionaries; you could aim for consistency, buy a Canadian dictionary, or live with the differences.

There are innumerable finicky practices governing the **capitalization** of words.

This course does not include instruction in these basic language conventions: grammar, usage, syntax, punctuation, spelling, capitalization, etc. However, your teacher is always willing to give individualized advice on what you can do to improve specific aspects of your sentence-writing skills. Just ask.

## Plagiarism Self-Reports

To plagiarize means to take the words or ideas of someone else and present them as your own. Intentional plagiarism is a form of academic dishonesty and can have serious consequences for students at postsecondary institutions.

When signs of plagiarism are detected in any assignment response, the response will receive a grade of “Plagiarism”, and the student will be asked to complete a plagiarism self-report before continuing with the course. The student may be asked to rewrite the self-report until it is complete and accurate. If and when the self-report is accepted, the assignment will receive a grade of “Not Ready”.

***The student will then be allowed to rewrite the assignment response for a higher grade.***

Here are the instructions for the self-report:

***In paragraph-form, describe what you did to produce the plagiarized assignment response, why you plagiarized, and how you could have avoided the plagiarism.***

In the self-report, include the name of the assignment, describe briefly but clearly how you plagiarized, why you plagiarized, and what you could have done to avoid plagiarism. Include internet addresses of online sources that you used.

Keep it simple. For example, something like the following may be all you need:

*For this assignment, I presented someone else’s ideas as if they were my own. I gave the source but I did not make it clear which ideas I used were really someone else’s. I did this because I did not think my own ideas were good enough and I thought the teacher was too lame to catch me. Instead, I could have just submitted my own work and then waited for feedback.*

*For this assignment, I copied stuff from [www.sparknotes.com](http://www.sparknotes.com) and presented it as my own work, after making some changes in an attempt to hide the source. I did this because I hate poetry and I didn’t understand the assignment. Instead, I could have asked the teacher for help.*

*For this assignment, I presented someone else’s research paper as if I had written it myself. I guess I was just too lazy or bored with the assignment to write my own paper. Instead, I could have tried writing my own paper and maybe I would have learned something in the process.*

If your teacher is mistaken, and you have not plagiarized anything, then you should not submit this report. Instead, you should request a personal meeting with your teacher.