

Perspectives: A Senior English Experience

Who am I in the world?

Overview:

Students taking senior English are on the verge of moving on to a major life change. They will be negotiating the next phases of their lives whether it is moving on to college or taking their place in society. In this highly personal, yet collaborative course, students will look at the narrative structure of their lives. Students will explore the kinds of stories that shape a sense of self, roles in society, and ideas about what constitutes a meaningful life with healthy relationships. The course will cultivate critical thinking, reading, writing, and speaking and listening skills required to succeed in college and in life.

Perspectives will challenge students to recognize their power in shaping the course of their own lives. Students will have the opportunity to evaluate their life experiences so far by looking backwards as well as looking forward. As students begin to consider their transition from New Fairfield High School into their next life challenge, they will look at where they came from, what has shaped them, and how they envision their next journey. Students will reflect on their own past decisions and consider alternative decision-making strategies for the future. This course is an intellectual and philosophical inquiry driven by the essential question: *Who am I in the world?*

Course Essential Questions:

- ***Who am I in the world?***
 - What brings me joy?
 - What am I good at or have a talent for? What do others think I am good at?
 - How does self-understanding and understanding of the world lead us to act on our convictions (beliefs, ideals, understandings, etc.)?

- ***How do we balance being true to ourselves as well as responsibility to other's expectations?***
 - How do I responsibly take my place in the larger community that is my nation/city/state/world?
 - How can others' experiences help us to better understand our world?
 - How does what we know about the world shape the way we view ourselves?

- ***What are the qualities of a meaningful life?***
 - What does it mean to live ethically?
 - What are the challenges of living an ethical life?
 - What is the relationship between morality, justice and ethics?
 - Once you have dealt with providing for material needs (food, shelter, etc.), what is the purpose of human existence?

- How does literature illustrate the complexity of living ethically?
- ***How do we discover and discern the truth?***
 - How do you define truth?
 - Where do we find truth?
 - Is there really such a thing as “Universal Truths” or are all truths relative?
 - What is the difference between knowledge and truth, perception and truth, reality and truth?
 - How does perception shape or alter truth?
 - How can literature, art, photography, music and other art forms be a portrayal of truth?
- ***How do individuals develop beliefs or values?***
 - What factors shape our values and beliefs?
 - How do values and beliefs evolve or change over time?
 - What happens when belief systems of societies and individuals come into conflict?
 - How do our values and beliefs shape who we are as individuals and influence our behavior?
- ***What is social justice?***
 - To what extent do power or the lack of power affect individuals?
 - How are prejudice and bias created?
 - How can literature serve as a vehicle for social change?
 - How does labeling and stereotyping influence how we look at and understand the world?
 - What are the benefits and consequences of questioning or challenging social order?

Course Objectives:

- ❖ Provide an opportunity for students to reflect on life and educational experiences.
- ❖ Analyze and respond to a variety of complex texts.
- ❖ Express and develop ideas and thoughts through writing and other means of expression.
- ❖ Write routinely over various periods of time and across varying lengths.
- ❖ Contribute to class discussions by listening actively, synthesizing the ideas of others, and responding critically.

Incorporating the Attributes of a New Fairfield High School Graduate:

By the time students reach senior year, they are expected to have met the expectations of the Attributes of a New Fairfield High School Graduate. Students will use the work in this course to push their thinking on these competencies to a deeper level. This course will also allow students the opportunity to elicit additional evidence towards attaining the graduation competencies.

1. ***Critical Thinker*** → Students will be challenged to think on a daily basis while connecting with, synthesizing and analyzing multiple forms of information. Students will engage in daily discourse where they will be asked to form arguments and opinions, look at and refute opposing perspectives, biases and opinions, and support their own thoughts with sound evidence.
2. ***Problem Solver*** → Students will research problems that they may encounter when they leave New Fairfield and enter the next phases in their lives. Students will need to create plans and carry them out while persevering through challenging issues they may confront.
3. ***Effective Communicator*** → The cornerstone of the course is being able to communicate effectively through speaking and listening, writing in a variety of formats for multiple types of audience, and being able to use alternate forms of communication to prove a point.
4. ***Productive Citizen*** → This course looks for students to reflect on who they are in the world. Students will spend time looking at ethical values and behaviors and looking at the necessary responsibilities that they have as a member of society.

A Transition to the Senior Enrichment Experience (SEE)

Perspectives: A Senior English Experience offers a logical transition into the Senior Enrichment Experience (SEE). Through SEE, Seniors are given the opportunity of participating in a hands-on work experience in the world of education and to have the opportunity to explore a career interest. The SEE opportunity gives these soon-to-be independent adults a glimpse into the adult world. Seniors are responsible for locating and establishing a mentor at their internship site and finding a teacher-mentor in school. With this experience, students will build interpersonal, business and communication skills, real life experiences, recommendations for future endeavors and the background to help decide if this field of interest is an area they would like to pursue beyond high school. This is a chance for students to demonstrate the knowledge they have gained from their four years at New Fairfield High School and become responsible citizens in a diverse and changing

world. During their Perspectives course, students will encounter, examine and analyze many situations that will help them reflect upon ideas that will guide their thinking for the SEE project. By considering what has shaped them, their beliefs and interests, and beginning to think about their future endeavors, this course leads naturally into the Senior Enrichment Experience.

Assignments:

- ❑ ***Reading/Writing Journal*** → Students will keep their journal as a means of reflection on reading, seeds of writing thoughts, and other wonderings and wanderings from course topics, questions and discussions.

- ❑ ***The Artifact Assignment***
 - ❑ Choose something that has had a deep effect on you. It can be a book, poem, picture, toy, piece of art, a song or lyrics, a video, etc. Share this item with the class. Present on why this artifact is so important to you, and how it has impacted your life and thinking.

- ❑ ***Polished Pieces of Writing***
 - ❑ Thesis-based Essay (Argumentative, literary analysis, etc.)
 - ❑ Character and Ethics Essay → This assignment asks you to write an essay on the role of ethics in your own lives and the life of one character. In this essay, students are asked to reflect on either (a) the process of developing ethical values or (b) “ethics in action,” an experience that affirms or clarifies personal moral values.
 - ❑ Exploratory Essay (Student-created question research essay)
 - ❑ Your Place and Purpose in Life → Explore and engage with the pieces read and discussed throughout the year. How have they affected you?
 - ❑ Personal Narrative
 - ❑ “Things They Carried” College Essay → After examining the short story for diction, syntax, imagery, and tone, you will use close reading techniques to mimic O’Brien’s style in your essay. Your job is to create a piece that identifies and explains what you carry, physically and emotionally, with you on a daily basis. Your piece should mimic or mirror O’Brien’s story stylistically using specific techniques discussed as a class (i.e. varying sentence length, variance in diction and syntax, figurative language).
 - ❑ How My Mind Has Changed/Is Changing? → Choose one issue/question/problem which you are aware of changing your mind over the course of your schooling career in New Fairfield. How have you come to think about it differently and come to a new understanding and judgement?

It should not be a trivial matter, but something that truly means something to you. In your paper, identify your prior perspective or understanding and how it developed, and identify influential things (people, places, books, experiences, etc.) that you see as influential in changing your view.

- ❑ A Letter to My Future Self
 - ❑ Back From the Future → What do I not want to forget? What do I want to remind myself of? What do I value now about myself, my hopes, dreams, beliefs and ideals? Write a letter to yourself about things you don't want to forget about yourself.
- ❑ Narrative of Thought
 - ❑ Social Justice → Trace your level of thinking as you work through a specific social problem with articles, choice readings, etc.

❑ **Formal Classroom Discussions** → Students will engage in classroom discussions surrounding the essential questions, pieces of literature, and other relevant topics. Students will organize and express their thoughts in a purposeful manner to address different audiences.

Technology:

- Students will use computers throughout the writing and drafting process
- Turnitin will be utilized to continue to work with students on formatting their work appropriately and citing sources
- Students will be given opportunities to demonstrate their learning through alternate forms of representation (i.e. video, presentation, etc.).
- Students will use researching skills to find appropriate resources

Grade: 12

Course: Perspectives: Senior English Experience

Unit Title & Essential Question

Reading Focus

Writing Focus

Grammar/Usage/
Mechanics Focus

Summative Assessments

<p>Exposition: Our Origins</p> <p>Who am I in the world?</p>	<p>Launch independent reading</p> <p>Close reading complex texts</p>	<p>Developing ideas</p> <p>Expanding writing thoughts</p> <p>Exploring voice</p>	<p>Review of major 11th grade concepts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Form and use verbs in the active and passive voice Commas to indicate a pause or break. Comma Splices 	<p>The Artifact Assignment - Presentation & Quickwrite</p> <p>Baseline Essay</p> <p>SEE Journal</p> <p>Formal Classroom Discussions</p>
<p>Inciting Incident: Becoming Ourselves</p> <p>How do individuals develop beliefs or values?</p>	<p>Analyze literature while focusing on characterization, theme, and symbolism.</p>	<p>Personal narrative</p> <p>Writing to a specific audience and with a specific purpose</p> <p>Develop clear and consistent voice in their narrative writing</p> <p>Develop unity and coherence in their narrative writing</p>	<p>Demonstrate sophistication of style by appropriately varying sentence structure in writing (subordination and coordination, use of sentence fragment, etc.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review clauses, punctuation of compound & complex sentences, and front-branching sentencings 	<p>“Things They Carried” Essay → Personal Narrative</p> <p>Back from the Future → A Letter to My Future Self</p> <p>Formal Classroom Discussions</p>
<p>Rising Action: Our Search For Meaning</p> <p>What are the qualities of a meaningful life?</p>	<p>Analyze rhetorical strategies and syntax</p> <p>Identify the ways in which a text speaks to the reader.</p>	<p>Argumentative essay</p> <p>Developing a strong claim</p>	<p>Review of composition and grammar concepts and expectations as dictated by conferring.</p>	<p>Character and Ethics Essay → Thesis-based argumentative</p> <p>Formal Classroom Discussions</p>

<p><i>Climax:</i> Our Place in the World</p> <p>How do we balance being true to ourselves as well as responsibility to other's expectations?</p>	<p>Annotating texts during close reading to deepen interpretation of texts and gather evidence to support ideas in writing.</p>	<p>Developing research questions</p> <p>Exploratory Essay</p> <p>Developing sophisticated thesis statements that demonstrate an understanding of the concepts offered by a text or multiple texts.</p>	<p>Review of composition and grammar concepts and expectations as dictated by conferring.</p>	<p>Your Place and Purpose in Life → Exploratory Essay</p> <p>Formal Classroom Discussions</p>
<p><i>Falling Action:</i> The Truth Will Set You Free</p> <p>How do we discover and discern the truth?</p>	<p>Analyze a text for specific literary devices.</p> <p>Examine ways that the structure of a text reflects the overarching theme or message of that text.</p>	<p>Personal narrative</p> <p>Writing to a specific audience and with a specific purpose</p> <p>Develop clear and consistent voice in their narrative writing</p> <p>Develop unity and coherence in their narrative writing</p>	<p>Review of composition and grammar concepts and expectations as dictated by conferring.</p>	<p>How My Mind Has Changed/Is Changing? → Personal Narrative</p>
<p><i>Resolution:</i> The Moral Arc of the Universe</p> <p>What is social justice?</p>	<p>Use your entire reader's toolbox to analyze and evaluate text.</p>	<p>Apply a logical structure and format to display your thinking</p>	<p>Review of composition and grammar concepts and expectations as dictated by conferring.</p>	<p>Narrative of Thought → Social Justice Essay</p> <p>Formal Classroom Discussions</p>

