English II Course Syllabus

2025-2026 School Year

# Teacher Ms. Sydney Benefiel

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# Introduction & Course Overview

Hello and welcome to English II On-Level! I am excited to be a part of your sophomore year at Travis High School; I expect that we will have a productive year of teaching and learning from each other. In this course, students will be expected to use critical thinking skills to analyze, discuss, and connect literary texts across a variety of different genres. Students will be expected to engage with texts with both written and verbal responses. Students will also practice grammatical and mechanical writing skills. We will engage in classroom discussions to express our ideas, thoughts, and opinions about our learning. By challenging ourselves this year, we will become stronger intellectuals ready to face whatever the future holds!

**Course updates will be sent via Schoology messages.**

## Class Schedule & Tutorial Times

**Class Schedule:**

1st Period: English II 5th Period: English II AAC

 2nd Period: English II 6th Period: English II AAC

 3rd Period: English II 7th Period: English II AAC

 4th Period: Conference

**Tutorial Times**

Students are welcome to visit any of the following teachers during their tutorial sessions.

 **Benefiel:** Tuesdays and Thursdays, 2:50 p.m. – 3:30 p.m., Room L234

 **Metcalf:** Tuesdays and Thursdays, 6:45 a.m. – 7:20 a.m., Room L235

 **Morris:** Mondays and Fridays, 6:40 a.m. - 7:20 a.m., Room L209

 **Grimaldo:**  Tuesdays and Thursday, 6:40 a.m. - 7:20 a.m., Room L214

\*Please adhere to posted schedule only - teacher presence does not imply availability. Do not enter the teacher's room for help outside the schedule without prior consent or invitation. Special circumstances must apply. Extra-curricular activities are not special circumstances. Last minute attendance risks that students will not get help. Everyone wants last-minute help. Attend teacher tutorials regularly and well in advance of deadlines.

## Classroom Expectations

* RESPECT yourself, others, and our environment.
* PARTICIPATE actively and KEEP AN OPEN MIND!
* We will create and maintain a SAFE, POSITIVE, and WELCOMING learning environment.
* Come to class PREPARED and READY to learn.
* YOU will take responsibility for YOUR decisions and actions.

## Required Materials

Please acquire these supplies by Friday, August 15th**. (\*\* = Priority item)**

* **1 college-ruled spiral or composition notebook\*\***
* #2 or mechanical pencil(s)
* 2 black or blue pens and 2 red pens
* Yellow, blue, purple, pink, and green highlighters (typically available as a multi-pack)
* **District assigned laptop\*\*** (personal devices will not be permitted for use; see technology policy below)
* OPTIONAL: hand sanitizer, tissues

## Exposure to a Variety of Texts & Independent Reading

**Variety of Texts**

We will read, watch, and discuss a variety of texts in our class this year to encourage students to consider differing viewpoints as well as a variety of cultures and beliefs. These skills are mandatory skills assigned by the State of Texas through its Texas Essential Knowledge & Skills (TEKS). As a class, we want students to form their own thoughts and opinions to be shared regarding these texts. Some of the topics we discuss could be considered controversial. In some cases, students may be exposed to ideas that are contrary their own beliefs. The goal of this exposure is to teach students how to communicate in a constructive dialogue using concrete details, various argumentative strategies, and facts, not to change anyone’s personal beliefs; This is all a part of our efforts to help create constructive discourse. We will teach students how to analyze and create individual arguments while exposing them to a variety of ideas from various perspectives that will help them learn and understand different viewpoints.

**It is the student’s responsibility to inform their teacher of any issues, ideas, or language that makes them uncomfortable to help us create a safe and trusting classroom environment.**

**Independent Reading**

## Throughout this course, students will participate in self-selected independent reading. The selected text should be at the appropriate reading level and book-length. Students have freedom to choose any text; As educators, we will only assign novels from FBISD approved list. Parents/guardians are responsible for monitoring their student’s independent reading choices.

**Technology Use & Artificial Intelligence – IMPORTANT**

**Artificial Intelligence**

Even as technology advances, success in the English II course is contingent upon building critical thinking and reasoning skills. The use of generative artificial intelligence assistance for completion of these tasks is detrimental to developing the very skills we will practice. Students will learn to develop and communicate their own unique perspectives, participate in writing conferences with peers and their teacher, and will learn to evaluate their own writing. The process of writing formal compositions will be documented throughout progressive drafts in order to foster further development of course skills. The independent thinking and human insights gleaned through this process precludes the use of generative AI; therefore, generative AI may not be used in this course.

**Communication Device Policy & Technology Use**

As per Texas State Law (House Bill 1481), students are not permitted to use communication devices such as cell phones, tablets, smartwatches, headphones, etc. throughout the school day. These personal devices must be stored in the student’s backpack for the duration of the school day. This law will be enforced by all teachers on the Travis High School campus.



The use of technology will be prevalent throughout this course. Students will be expected to complete a variety of activities on digital platforms such as Schoology, Microsoft Word, Microsoft PowerPoint, Kahoot, Canva, etc. To complete online coursework, students must use their district assigned laptop. **Technology use is restricted to class activities ONLY** to prevent additional distractions in the classroom.

Students are expected to bring their district assigned laptop and charger to class every day. **Repeated failure to bring their district laptop to class will result in a discipline referral.**

**Travis HS English Department Academic Integrity Policy**

* Students are taught the proper methods for appropriately crediting sources used for academic writing.
* Students must always cite their sources when presenting ideas and/or language that they have not developed themselves, including material from class lectures and discussions.
* Students are prohibited from using all Artificial Intelligence tools or essay writing services to brainstorm, compose, draft, or edit any aspect of any assignment in this course. When in doubt, ask your teacher.
* All forms of cheating, including sharing, copying, using electronic or Artificial Intelligence assistance, using, and/or distributing work or ideas of another without permission and explicit acknowledgment of such within the assignment will result in a grade reduction for all students involved, parent contact, and administrative referral. This includes in-class and homework assignments, quizzes, tests, projects, and all writing assignments.
* Violation of this policy includes collaborating on assignments where collaboration is not allowed and/or utilizing notes, texts, electronic or digital assistance, etc. on any assignment where use of such materials is not allowed.
* Teachers and administrators may validate student work with plagiarism detection tools and/or other modes of determining non-student-generated work.

All students are expected to understand and adhere to the FBISD and Travis English Department Academic Integrity Policy.

**Grades & Late Work Policy**

**Grades**

Grades will be determined by various assessments, journals, quizzes, essays, homework, and class participation. Assignments will be graded and entered in the gradebook in a timely manner according to their weight. Please allow the following time frames for the following grades:

* Daily Grades = 5 business days
* Written Assignments = 10 business days

Grades will be weighted **50% Daily / 50% Major.**

Many of this course’s assignments will be submitted digitally through Schoology and other educational platforms. It is each student’s responsibility to check that they are submitting the correct assignment or file to each submission. If a student submits a blank document or **a different/incorrect document, a zero will be entered in place of their grade until the correct document is uploaded. Late points will be deducted for each day the correct submission is missing.**

**Late Work Policy**

Due dates for assignments will be provided at the time they are assigned. Students are expected to complete work in a timely manner and communicate with the teacher if they are unable to meet the given deadline. Points will be deducted from the assignment grade for each day it is late. Late work deductions are as follows:

**1 day late = -10 points**

**2 days late = -20 points**

**3 days late = -30 points**

**4 days late = -40 points**

**5 days late = -50 points**

**6 days late = 0 in the gradebook**

**THIS IS A SCHOOL-WIDE POLICY!**

If you know you will be absent, it is your job to communicate this with the teacher to ensure that no false points are deducted. If you are absent on the day of a test, you will need to take a make-up test when you are next present.

**Retests, Essay Revisions, and Assignment Repair**

**Retests**

If a student makes **below a 75** on a major grade test, they have the option of taking a retest. The student will be given **one week to attend a tutorial session and take the retest.** The student must come to the tutorial session prepared with questions. If a student fails to attend the tutorial, they will not be able to take the retest. **The highest grade possible for a retest is a 75.**

**Essay Revisions**

If a student receives **below a 75** on an essay, they may come to a tutorial session to ask about teacher notes and revise their work. **Required tutorial attendance and proper revisions** will give the student the opportunity to receive **up to a 75** on their work.

**Assignment Repair**

To proactively assist students in repairing their grades and to help avoid a loss of class credit, Assignment Repair will be offered nearing the end of every nine weeks. If a student has a 74 or lower term grade, Assignment Repair will automatically be offered to help recover the grade to a 75 or higher. The student must pass the Assignment Repair to recover their credit and boost their grade. **A grade of 75 or higher is not guaranteed after the completion of Assignment Repair.**

**Email Communication Expectations (Parents/Guardians AND Students)**

* Teacher response will occur during office hours (7am-3pm) in 1-2 school days, depending on volume. Ex. Friday night email will be answered by Tuesday afternoon. Do not expect last minute help or question answering via email.
* Students cannot assume a solution to their problem is created by simply sending an email. Standards for performance always apply and direct communication is absolutely necessary.
* Do not submit work via email. Teachers do not grade from email, so time stamps of draft work are irrelevant. Submission to appropriate area in Schoology is required for full/late credit. Very few exceptions are made with AAC team approval.
* Do not request feedback via email, especially the day of a deadline. Feedback and tutoring are provided in-person during tutorials.

**QR Code Signature**

Once you and your parents/guardians have thoroughly read the syllabus, please scan the QR code below and complete the Microsoft Form acknowledging that you understand the expectations and policies of our classroom.

