

# *Tree of Life School*

*"Wisdom is a tree of life to those to those who embrace her."  
Proverbs 3:18*

## *North American Literature Course Outline*

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## Course Outline

### Introduction

This course seeks to highlight important themes that have been present in American and Canadian literature through history. Politics, religion, immigration, humour, prejudice, nature, society, identity and freedom will all be touched on in the study of influential documents, poems, stories, and novels. As you read, think, and write about these topics, you should become aware of the universality of human experience and how literature influences your own life.

In the first half of the course you will study American literature beginning with the rhetoric of the American Revolution and ending with the emergence of modern poetry in the twentieth century. *My Ántonia* and *To Kill a Mockingbird* have been chosen as novels set in different regions of the country, but which explore issues important to all North Americans. The literature of the United States is replete with famous authors and works, so the units will provide you with only a glimpse of this array. Although many novels had to be passed over, stories by well-known writers such as Nathaniel Hawthorne and Mark Twain will introduce you to their writings and perhaps whet your appetite for further reading.

In contrast, there are few Canadian authors who rank among the "greats" of literature, but there are many who use a variety of literary devices and styles to explore what it is to be Canadian. Important historical events, the influence of the Canadian landscape, and relationships between French and English and Natives and Europeans will be considered through the lens of literature. *Never Cry Wolf* and *Forbidden City* are two novels with vastly different styles which provide Canadian perspectives on the natural world and other nations.

As Christians who happen to be Canadian, we must seek to understand what these Americans and Canadians are trying to say. Through this we strive to better understand the influences that have shaped our societies and the way many of our neighbours think. The study of literature is simply another means to a better understanding of our countries and how Christians can seek to live godly lives within them.

Required Materials:

*My Ántonia*

*To Kill a Mockingbird*

*Never Cry Wolf*

*Forbidden City*

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## How to Work Through The Course

This course comprises twelve units: eight units based on themes in American and Canadian literature and four based on novels. Each literature unit is comprised of an introduction that explains themes and provides contextual information, a list of readings, and essay topics. The readings are included in this course outline in the order they are listed in the units. You will read all the selections and answer the questions in your own notebook. Then print the confirmation page and have a parent sign it and mail it in with the unit essay. Alternatively, have a parent send an e-mail confirming that the questions have been answered. Suggested answers are included in this course outline to help you understand the readings better. For each novel you will not have to answer any short questions, but simply choose one essay topic.

This course has been divided into a **140 day schedule**. This will allow the student to follow a **four-day school week** and still complete the course in a normal academic year. The **fifth day** of each week can be used to **catch up on assignments**, do **extra reading**, or simply **take the day off** from the course. If, however, a five-day school week is more desirable, the student is encouraged to pursue this course and will be rewarded by early completion of the material. Care has been taken to provide specific instructions for each day's work. Therefore, **all work is to be completed in the order presented in the daily schedule**.

If you find that you need more time to write the essays than to do the readings, feel free to start working on them earlier than the schedule requires.

## Calculating Your Final Grade

Your final mark in the course will be based on the following percentages:

<b>Readings (Confirmation Pages)</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>Twelve Essays</b>	<b>80%</b>

## Assignment Expectations

All the assignments in this course are essays. An essay differs from a report in that it will offer much more analysis of the topic from the student's perspective and opinion. This analysis will certainly be based on the information that s/he has gathered and presented. However, the very nature of the question asked for the assignment will require the student to do more than simply present the facts. Throughout the essay the student will be offering opinions and commentary that shows s/he has looked at both sides of the issue and has something to contribute to the discussion.

In an academic essay, the student should always avoid personal references to

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themselves and the reader, clichés and idiomatic language, or anything that might be construed as slangy/informal. This is often the hardest kind of writing for many students and it takes practice. However, this is where the give and take between student and evaluator is essential and has become one of the hallmarks of a *Tree of Life* education.

According to *Wordsmith Craftsman*, there are four main essay types:

**Descriptive:** Real estate ads and “wanted” posters describe, but what distinguishes a descriptive essay is the writer’s desire to communicate a particular emotion or point about the object of the description.

**Narrative:** A narrative is a sequence of events. It may be a personal experience of your own, or of someone you know, or a historical or fictional event. The incidents happen in a well-defined order and usually lead to some sort of resolution.

**Expository:** Expository writing communicates information about any topic. Since the main purpose is to inform the reader, the style should be straightforward and factual. Textbooks, encyclopedias and much of what is called “non-fiction” are expository. The impressions and opinions of the writer may pop up here and there, but the main purpose is to inform the reader.

**Persuasive:** These essays are written to provoke a response from the reader about a particular issue – if not agreement, at least further thought. They require reaching for a reader’s head *and* heart, while presenting logical arguments in a style that’s clear, interesting, winsome and reasonable. You will need to define a position, think it through, and present logical arguments in support of it. Some techniques to promote your position are: find “common ground” with your reader and proceed from there; appeal to legitimate authority; use empirical evidence in the form of studies, statistics, and facts; and refer to personal experience.

Refer to the specific assignment to understand what type of essay is required. Then make sure your essay addresses the issues posed by the assignment. Even if you follow the instructions provided here, marks will be deducted if your essay does not focus on the topic and fully address the assignment requirements.

As always, your essay must begin with an introduction that includes a thorough thesis statement. End with a conclusion that restates your thesis and gives some final personal insight or broader application of your topic. **Each essay in this course should be a minimum of five paragraphs.**

Each essay should make specific reference to the readings. This can include paraphrases, short quotations, and block quotations (long quotations that are indented from the paragraph). You may also want to use outside sources to help support your

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points. Even if you use only the assigned selection or novel, cite your source using footnotes and a bibliography.

As you write your essays, it is always a good idea to keep the acronym TOWER in mind:

**T**hink  
**O**rganize  
**W**rite  
**E**valuate  
**R**ewrite

## **Evaluative Comments and Grades**

At the high school level, students are given numerical grades for each of their tests and assignments. We try to be as objective as we can be, but much of what we do is subjective by nature and with several people evaluating work, some will give higher grades than others. We make every effort to be on the same page (so to speak) so that there is not a wide disparity in grades from subject to subject (especially in those areas where much written work is submitted). We also make every effort to communicate to the student what was positive about the assignment and what needs work. If there is a question about a grade or comment on an assignment, we encourage you to communicate this to us. The best way is to send an e-mail or return the assignment with a note attached the next time you send work by mail. This way we can make sure that the evaluator who can best answer your question is notified and can have the opportunity to review the question and assignment and get back to you with what will hopefully be a satisfactory explanation.

Generally speaking, we employ the following percentages when marking work. We do not usually break down the mark to reflect this but hopefully the comments will reflect areas where the assignment may be improved.

Introduction 20%  
Body 40%  
Conclusion 20%  
Style 10%  
Mechanics 10%

## **Submitting Assignments for Evaluation**

### **Email:**

This is our highly preferred mode of submission, due to low cost and faster return rate of graded assignments.

1. Save each individual assignment as a Microsoft Word document (Word Perfect is also acceptable). Do not save a batch of assignments in one file; this will be returned

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ungraded to you. Study Guides for Great Ideas courses should also be sent as individual files.

2. Name the file with your name, the course, and the assignment number. For example, "John Doe\_WH I\_Essay 4" or "Sally Brown\_GI I\_ Confessions Study Guide".
3. Attach each assignment in a **separate email to [evaluation@treeoflifeathome.com](mailto:evaluation@treeoflifeathome.com)**. **The subject line of your e-mail should be the same as the file name of your assignment.** This helps us organise the work and be sure it gets to the proper evaluator.

## Regular mail:

Be sure *all* work is clearly labelled with your full name, course name, and assignment. Also, be aware this mode of submission will have the longest turnaround time.

Address: Tree of Life  
443 Weston Road  
Weston, NB  
E7K 1B1

## Requirements:

1. Assignments that do not satisfactorily adhere to these guidelines may be returned ungraded!
2. Length of assignments will vary based on the nature of the topic. The student ought to always answer in complete sentences, full paragraphs (generally 5 to 9 sentences), or well-structured essays. Almost all assignments require the essay format to complete the requirements.
3. Essay requirements
  - a. Use only Times New Roman or Arial black font, size 12. Avoid colours. Text should be double-spaced.
  - b. The essay format includes a well-written introductory paragraph that will set the context for the essay and end in a clear thesis statement. It will also have a *minimum* of three paragraphs (but usually more) that will develop the thesis fully within the context of the assignment. It will end with a concluding paragraph that will satisfactorily bring the essay to a close.
  - c. Title page. Include essay title, student name, course name, assignment number, and date.
  - d. Footnotes and bibliographies. Personal essays may be an exception, but the bulk of every academic essay is based on research that the student has learned from another source. Presenting this information in either quoted or paraphrased version without providing the proper citation is known as plagiarism. The student may think that s/he is sounding brilliant but this will get you kicked out of university (at worst) and significantly lower your mark (at best). The source for direct quotes or paraphrases should be cited at the bottom of the page in a footnote. The bibliography includes any and all resources used (regardless of

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whether they appear in your footnotes) and is placed on a separate page at the end of the essay.

## Specific Guidelines:

### The Title Page

Each assignment should have a title page with the essay title, student name, course name, assignment number, and date clearly displayed.

Title of Essay
Name of Student Course/Subject Assignment Date

## Footnotes

There are far too many situations that need to be footnoted to show here, but below you will find some of the common examples that will show up in most research reports. Please note that you are required to cite any readings from the course outline that you use in your essay. Use the "Insert Reference" or "Insert Footnote" feature of your word processor to automatically insert the footnote number as well as place the citation correctly at the bottom of the page.

Book	<sup>1</sup> Tom Smith, <u>Skating to the Music</u> (Hogtown: Ice Palace Publishers, 2010) 45.
Magazine	<sup>2</sup> Sally Smith, "Skating Is My Life," <u>Skating Magazine</u> 12 May 2009: 20-24.
Newspaper TV or Radio	Same basic format as that of magazine. <sup>4</sup> "An Interview with Zeke," Skaters' Forum, CBC, Toronto, 12 March 2010.
Personal Interview	<sup>5</sup> Bill Jones, personal interview, 23 August 2011.
Internet	<sup>6</sup> Tom Camelspin, "Jumping for Glory," www.skate.com, 10 January, 2010.
Course Outline	<sup>6</sup> Israel Zangwill, "To Die in Jerusalem," World Literature Course Outline: 138-148.

## Bibliography

If you have used the ideas of others to help you form your thoughts for your essay, you need to cite them at the end of your essay in the bibliography. The format for the bibliography is different than for footnotes; merely copying and pasting your information will not be adequate.



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Following you will find some common examples to help you.

Book	Smith, Tom. <u>Skating to the Music</u> Hogtown: Ice Palace Publishers, 2010.
Work from Anthology	Clark, Jim. "Working the Judges." <u>Anthology of Skating Poems</u> . Editor John Doe. Boston: Ice Palace Publishers, 2001. 354.
Article from Reference Book	"Figure Skating," <u>Big City Encyclopedia</u> . 1988 ed. Reference on CD-ROM Macrotuff Multimedia Encyclopedia. Computer Software. Hogtown, ON: Macrotuff Software, 2001. CD-ROM.
Magazine	Smith, Sally, "Skating Is My Life," <u>Skating Magazine</u> 12 May 2009: 20-24.
Newspaper TV or Radio	Same basic format as that of magazine. "An Interview with Zeke," Skaters' Forum, CBC, Toronto, 12 March 2010.
Personal Interview Internet	Bill Jones, personal interview, 23 August 2011. Camelspin, Tom , "Jumping for Glory", www.skate.com, 10 January, 2010.
Oral Presentation	Champ, Ima. Speech. NB Figure Skating Convention, Fredericton, 21 May, 2002.
Course Outline	Zangwill, Israel. "To Die in Jerusalem," World Literature Course Outline: 138-148.

## Daily Schedule

### Unit 1: Independence

DAY 1 – Read the introduction that follows:

The American Dream is the social ideal or national ethos of the United States, the idea that everyone is entitled to “Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness.” It was summed up by American historian James Truslow Adams in the words, “life should be better and richer and fuller for everyone, with opportunity for each according to ability or achievement.” The American Dream is rooted in the Declaration of Independence and manifested in ideals as diverse as religious freedom, ownership of land, rugged individualism, and rampant consumerism.

From the seventeenth century onwards immigrants were attracted to the colonies in their search for religious freedom and land rich with resources. According to J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur, the motto of immigrants is *ubi panis ibi patria* (“where there is bread, there is my homeland”). Although it was published after the American Revolution, his book *Letters from an American Farmer* describes life in colonial America, highlighting the importance of owning land and living in a free society.

The American Revolution was the upheaval in which the thirteen colonies banded together to reject British authority and form the United States of America. The Revolutionary War or the War for Independence began with a skirmish known as the Battles of Lexington and Concord, which took place near Boston, Massachusetts on April 19, 1775. The American Revolution left a legacy of important documents and inspired many pieces of literature, not to mention its inestimable effect on politics and society around the world.

The readings for Unit 1 begin on page 33.

DAY 2 – The readings for Unit 1 begin on page 31. Read the excerpt from *Letters from an American Farmer* by J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur and answer the study question.

DAY 3 – Read “Paul Revere’s Ride” by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1861) and answer the study question.

DAY 4 & 5 – Read the excerpt from *Common Sense* by Thomas Paine (1776) and answer the study question.

DAY 6 Read *United States Declaration of Independence* by Thomas Jefferson (1776) and answer the study question.

DAY 7 – Read “Concord Hymn” by Ralph Waldo Emerson (1836) and answer the study questions.

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DAY 8 – **Assignment 1:** Choose one of the essay topics below and begin planning your essay.

- Write a persuasive essay arguing that the colonies should take up arms to separate from Great Britain. First, make a list of each of Paine's main points in *Common Sense*, then choose three to five that seem particularly reasonable and organize them in a logical order. Finally, support each point using Paine's or your own reasoning, to write a complete essay.
- Write a narrative essay, telling the story of **either** Paul Revere's ride **or** the Battles of Lexington and Concord. Remember that your narrative should be a sequence of events that leads to a resolution. Describe the scene and narrate the action in detail. If you like, before you begin do some outside research to help you understand the events.

DAY 9 TO 12 – Write your essay and send it in for evaluation, along with the Unit 1 Confirmation Page (p. 60) signed by a parent.

<i>Tree of Life School</i> <i>North American Literature</i>			
Confirmation	Essay	Description	Mark
1	1	Unit 1 Readings Assignment 1	
2	2	Unit 2 Readings Assignment 2	
	3	Assignment 3	
3	4	Unit 4 Readings Assignment 4	
4	5	Unit 5 Readings Assignment 5	
	6	Assignment 6	
5	7	Unit 7 Readings Assignment 7	
6	8	Unit 8 Readings Assignment 8	
	9	Assignment 9	
7	10	Unit 10 Readings Assignment 10	
8	11	Unit 11 Readings Assignment 11	
	12	Assignment 12	
		<b>Confirmation Pages 20%</b>	
		<b>Essays 80%</b>	
		<b>Final Mark</b>	