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WHY STUDY THE HUMANITIES?

Through their study of the Humanities, students acquire the cognitive, spiritual, and relational abilities that they will need for upper-level disciplinary courses, for college, for careers, and for lifelong learning.

In particular, the Humanities give students the tools to:

- **Prepare for active and intelligent citizenship.** Students acquire the historical content knowledge necessary for addressing civic challenges and making policy decisions that will affect the future of our country and of our world. Students develop the perspective recognition essential for negotiating decisions with others, so as to participate in a civil society in which individuals and groups with conflicting visions can work out how best to live a good life. Students strengthen their understanding of and facility with evidence and reasoned argument. Students explore and solidify their own personal values and beliefs within the context of a wider variety of human perspectives. Students analyze complex cultural conflicts and consider their own responsibilities in the creation of a just society.

- **Develop as a self-reflective person of integrity.** Students wrestle with fundamental existential questions. Students deepen their appreciation for human creativity and beauty as uniquely expressed through the arts. Students gain insight into the roots of human motivations and actions, considering the ways in which cultural, historical, and social factors impact individual choices and identity. Students expand their understanding of how their personal traditions and stories fit into the wider world. Students connect their own moral development to the complex human dilemmas expressed through literature.

- **Strengthen essential communication skills.** Students learn how to communicate purposeful, creative, and precise ideas in their writing and speaking. Students acquire the practice of using writing as a method of exploring, determining, and clarifying their thoughts. Students rigorously apply written and oral techniques in service of evaluation, persuasion, and reflection.
WHAT IS HUMANITIES 9?

Humanities 9 is a foundational course that supports students in developing the core skills and dispositions that are essential for high school, college, professional, and personal success as thinkers and communicators. Our ninth graders come to Gann from a variety of educational settings. We have developed our Humanities 9 course with the twin goals of establishing rigorous expectations for learning, and of ensuring that every ninth grader finishes the year with a solid and consistent foundation in literacy and inquiry. We have determined that offering one intensive course that focuses both on academic skill-building and on contemplating understandings about the human condition is the most effective way of reaching these goals.

Humanities 9 celebrates story as the core vehicle of human expression, combining the study of ancient and early modern history with an exploration of the power of language. The course is designed as an investigation of some of the most significant literary genres, cultural shifts, and transformational ideologies that have shaped the human experience. We’ll examine conceptions of religion and the state in ancient Greece; the birth of Christianity; the rise and spread of early modern Islam; and the Protestant Reformation. Finally, we will deepen our practice of literary empathy by delving into a novel that explores our year-long essential question: What is true authority? Where does it come from? Where have, do, and should humans look for “rules” to guide our thoughts and behavior? Where should I personally look for guidance as I make my choices? How can I relate the struggles of literary and historical actors to my own human journey into adulthood, as I develop my sense of moral agency and hone my personal identity?

Through Humanities 9, students will:

- Develop a sense of personal responsibility for their learning, and continually reflect on how they can grow and improve in their approach to their studies
- Acquire the foundational dispositions and skills of literary interpretation and historical thinking, particularly close reading, evidence-based claims, and empathy
- Master core writing genres: the analytical paragraph and the persuasive essay
- Internalize essential strategies for effective writing: solidifying mastery of writing mechanics and developing a personal process for revision
- Analyze the development of historical cultures, and use that analysis to better understand complex contemporary societies
- Refine their sense of identity and moral agency, and consider how they can use content knowledge and enduring understandings to improve our world
The word “mythos,” from the Greek, has come to imply “a false story.” However, its original meaning, “word” or speech,” better captures the power of stories to unlock cultural mysteries. In this first unit, you will embark on a year-long exploration of how myths, poetry, fiction, personal reflections, music, art, and historical texts – our stories – convey and illuminate the human experience. We will immerse ourselves in stories from the cultures that we will be studying throughout the year: ancient Greece, early Christianity, the early modern Islamic “Middle World,” and twentieth-century America. We’ll discuss how societies use storytelling as a “charter for social action”; to communicate an identity made up of “assumptions, values, and core meanings”; to ensure social continuity; and to teach people how to live. We’ll learn how we can be empowered to both better understand other cultures and to reflect on our own society through close reading of stories.

We’ll begin by asking our year-long essential question: What is true authority? Where does it come from? Where have, do, and should humans look for “rules” to guide our thoughts and behavior? And where should I personally look for guidance as I make my choices? As we examine our texts for clues about how different societies have answered these questions, we will begin our practice of some of the Humanities 9 skills: core close reading techniques, constructive collaboration, historical and literary empathy, and persuasive, evidence-based analytical writing.

This first unit is intended to elicit curiosity and authentic inquiry; your teachers will not be providing you with extensive historical context or comprehensive literary training in order to interpret our chosen stories. Rather, we will encourage you to ask this question, recognizing that selected narratives tell only one part of a culture’s story: “What would I want to know more about in order to better understand this story and this culture?” The idea is to prime you for the more content-intensive units to come, by engaging you and empowering you to formulate some of the questions that we will be exploring later in the course.
UNIT TWO: SOPHOCLES’ ANTIGONE

More than two thousand years ago, the Greek playwright Sophocles wrote Antigone, a dramatic rumination on the nature of authority and morality. Ancient Athens, Sophocles’ home, was a democracy, whose citizens actively explored questions about the nature of citizenship, tyranny, law, faith, and order. The play has been read, performed, and adapted countless times across the world, as its enduring themes have reverberated through the centuries. In Unit Two, we will conduct an in-depth study of the play and of the culture that produced it. Through our exploration of Antigone, we’ll come to appreciate the ways in which humans use drama to convey, perpetuate, interrogate, and challenge values and practices, as well as to address cultural tensions and conflicts. We’ll use the disciplinary techniques of literary interpretation and historical thinking to help us come to broad understandings about human societies and behavior, and that analysis will strengthen our conclusions as we reflect on and refine our own beliefs.

Antigone resonates with adolescents because of its eternal theme: from where does true, legitimate authority come? Who and what is “the boss” of us – our social superiors? Our laws? Our community? Our faith? Or ourselves? As we develop into adults, what will serve as our moral compass? Sophocles wrote his play in a context of cultural turmoil, and we’ll examine the ancient Greek political practices and social ideologies that emerged in answer to these timeless questions. We’ll also explore these concepts as reflected through the story of the play, accompanying the characters as they apply their ideals to the messy realm of human interaction.

The play’s complex text and our accompanying historical sources offer us an opportunity to employ the close reading skills that we introduced in the previous unit. We’ll continue practicing the technique of annotation as a way of decoding and interpreting a text, and we will endeavor to empathize both with literary characters and with historical actors. We’ll conduct our analysis through a sequential framework: inquire, observe, gather evidence, analyze, and reflect. This framework reflects our philosophical approach to knowledge: that we should seek first to investigate and understand, and only then to consider and conclude.

Our culminating project will be an evidence-based persuasive essay. Each of you will construct an argument about the viewpoint of one of Sophocles’ characters on the nature of authority, taking into consideration the historical context that shaped this cultural perspective. We’ll pay particular attention to the importance of personal responsibility for writing mechanics and revision, and we’ll continue to refine our processes for producing effective writing. Finally, you will reflect on how your exploration of this ancient literary work has helped you to develop your own thinking about your personal role in building a good society.
UNIT THREE: EARLY CHRISTIANITY

In one of the most well-known parables of Christianity, the parable of the Mustard Seed, Jesus of Nazareth compares the Kingdom of Heaven to one of the smallest seeds known in Galilee. In many ways, this parable applies to Christianity itself, for like the mustard seed, the origins of the faith were small and humble. From a small and somewhat rag-tag band of close followers numbering in the dozens, Jesus’ message and memory of him spread rapidly, first in the Levant and Egypt and then outward, west across the Mediterranean and east across the Asia. Within a few hundred years, it had become the dominant and then official religion of the Roman Empire and most of Europe and the Middle World. Within two thousand years, it had become the world’s largest religion, and, according to the Pew Research Center, by 2015, its adherents totaled more than 2.3 billion people, roughly one-third of the world’s population.

How and why did this religious movement evolve out of its original Jewish context? How did it spread so quickly and over such distance? How did the very structures of the Roman world influence and shape the development of early Christianity while facilitating the spread of its message of salvation and community? How did an eschatological community of faith that saw itself as the chosen elect who were to be saved in the coming apocalypse transform into a solidified and institutional Church with a clear set of practices, beliefs, and doctrines? How did Christianity, which began as a persecuted and marginalized faith, evolve into the official religion of the Roman Empire, and how did this evolution transform the religion itself? Who were the winners of this metamorphosis, and what happened to those who lost? In this unit, we will investigate how communities of faith initially form, how they grow and develop in subsequent generations, and how they handle dissent and challenge to their authority.

In addition to this investigation of the origins, spread, and ultimate ascendence of Christianity, we also will be investigating its often tense and always complicated relationship with Judaism. Christianity arose out of Temple Judaism and as a direct critique and reform of it. In the process, and after the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE, Christianity engaged in a consistent dialogue and competition with Rabbinic Judaism, resulting in significant tension between the two communities. How did the initial and real historical conflict between first century Jews and Jewish Christians as well as the evolving conflict between Jews and Christians during the second and third centuries change into a theological war? How did “the Jews” cease to be actual flesh and blood people and instead become a theological construct, the ultimate expression of otherness, and the rejection of Christian truth, the symbol of demonic forces at work within the world? In this unit, we will trace the origins of anti-Judaism, how it impacted historical Jewish communities, and how it shaped the evolution of Judeophobia.
UNIT FOUR: EARLY MODERN ISLAM

In the seventh century CE, a new empire with a new faith burst out of Arabia and spread across vast parts of Eurasia, Africa, and Asia. In this unit, we will delve into this fascinating story, and we will explore the question of how Islam – a religious, political, and social system with close ties to Judaism – became a new source of authority and a meaningful way of life for so many people. As Reuven Firestone has written, it is vital that global citizens develop insight into Islam, now the faith of almost two billion, because “responsible decision-making is impossible without understanding. For the sake of the future of the Jewish people and the future of the world as a whole, it is important to develop a firm, sober, realistic understanding of Islam and how Islam affects the outlooks and behaviors of Muslims as they act in the world.” The first step towards this nuanced understanding is an investigation into the early centuries of Islamic civilization, an exploration of why and how so many early modern people found power and purpose in Islam.

What does it mean to “understand” individuals and groups from the past? Firestone cites Hillel’s famous principle: “Do not judge your fellow until you have been in his place.” In pursuit of putting yourselves “in the place” of historical actors, you will continue to develop the skill of historical thinking: empathizing with the universal elements of the human experience across time and space, discerning the historically unique characteristics of past cultures, and analyzing the ways in which particular environmental, social, and economic structures influenced human behavior. We will examine in particular the historical evolution of inclusion and exclusion in the Islamic polity, and consider the place of the Jewish people within this dominant authority system. We will also begin our study of poetry, a form of literary expression that allows us to better appreciate others’ stories through close reading of language. Throughout this unit, we will follow our sequential framework of knowledge: beginning with authentic, open inquiry, then learning through observation, evidence-gathering, and analysis, and only then engaging in reflection and drawing conclusions.

In this unit, you will continue to develop core reading, writing, and critical thinking skills. Recognizing that secondary sources are stories we tell about the past, not neutral repositories of truth, you will dissect and compare secondary source claims and evidence. You will continue to practice our system for taking notes and “processing” secondary sources, as well as our approach to interpreting primary sources. You will make judgements about historical significance, and you will synthesize secondary and primary source claims into your own historical argument. You will continue to practice the annotation of literary texts, and you will learn how to identify and interpret an expanded array of literary elements. At the end of this unit, you will have the opportunity to reflect on what you have learned, and to consider what further aspects of the history and literature of the Islamic world you would like to explore as Jews and as global citizens.
UNIT FIVE: THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION

How do people react when faced with corruption, ethical dilemmas, and abuse of authority in their society? How do structural and personal forces shape their reactions? What are the consequences of challenging these injustices, both intended and unintended? In this unit, you will grapple with these challenging questions through a deep dive into the Protestant Reformation. Using this fascinating historical moment as our anchor, we will explore the blurry line between reform and rebellion, the consequences of drastic ideological shifts, the impact of new technologies on the spread of information, and the shift in authority from institutions to individuals.

In the early 1500s, a new belief system emerged in Europe that destabilized the millennium-old hierarchy and authority of the Catholic Church. In 1517, in the small German town of Wittenberg, Martin Luther released his "95 Theses," publishing his criticisms of the Catholic Church and calling for significant religious reform. The publication of this document sparked a movement which drastically shifted the locus of religious, social, economic, political, and intellectual power in Europe and kindled new ways of thinking about individual agency and personal identity. In this unit, we will explore the multiple causal factors of the Protestant Reformation, trace the emergence of Protestantism as an alternative to the hegemonic authority of the Catholic Church, investigate the Catholic Church’s response to this threat to their authority, and critically analyze the intended and unintended consequences of reform-minded ideas in the sixteenth century.

During this unit, we will engage with various compelling primary and secondary source materials, continuing to hone our close reading and interpretive skills. We will also practice the core dispositions and skills of historical thinking, using our five-part sequential framework to explore the behaviors, beliefs, and challenges of historical actors during the Protestant Reformation and paying particular attention to the impact of structural forces, historical contingency, and human agency on their actions and reactions. We will learn to analyze two new types of primary and secondary sources -- art and podcasts. We will practice ‘close reading’ works of art while concurrently exploring the ways that art was harnessed by individuals and institutions during the sixteenth century to gain and sustain authority. We will also listen to compelling podcasts and develop personal systems for taking notes on oral sources. Finally, our concluding project will ask you to put yourself in the shoes of a sixteenth-century layperson, using the historical empathy you generated through your authentic, open inquiry to embody a historical character. Your character will be asked to grapple with challenging decisions, and ultimately decide whether to join the Protestant Reformation or remain with the Catholic Church. Through this project, you will investigate the interplay between human actions and broader societal forces and explore the idea that reckoning with – and sometimes struggling with – systems of authority is an essential part of the human condition.
UNIT SIX: THE HUMAN STORY REVISITED

We began this ninth grade year with the analysis of human stories from different times and places. Throughout the course, we have learned and practiced strategies for literary and historical analysis. We are now ready to use those tools to engage with a longer exploration of the human condition: the novel.

In this unit, we will continue to hone our close reading and interpretive skills. Building on what you have learned about annotation practice, you will begin to develop your own personal systems for annotation that enhance and enrich your understanding of the text. You will engage in challenging and riveting classroom discussions to practice grounding your claims in evidence from the text and thoughtfully responding to your peers. You will identify and trace themes throughout the novel and annotate and reference specific passages related to those themes. Through our study of various literary devices, you will investigate the relationship between the form and structure of a text and the broader meaning that the text conveys. We will interrogate these powerful, proven techniques that make written and oral communication more effective, and you will employ these tools intentionally as you construct an evidence-based persuasive essay that builds on and expands upon the skills you have developed throughout Humanities 9.

This novel study will also support you in developing literary empathy, as you employ our five-part sequential framework to interrogate the beliefs and behaviors of the novel’s characters. You will continue to question how cultural systems and human psychology help explain these beliefs and behaviors, and you will practice approaching literary characters intelligently and sensitively. Through this exploration, you will work toward developing a sense of personal identity and moral agency. Using your understanding of cultural variation, evolution, and change, you will refine your own beliefs, values, decisions, and actions, and make moral judgements thoughtfully and empathetically. Our novel study will ultimately explore how works of literature can convey the beauty and struggle of the human experience while also serving as a mirror for us to reflect on our own ideas and values.
HUMANITIES 9
YEAR-LONG LEARNING GOALS
1. **Students will understand that the disciplines of History and Literature use different perspectives and techniques to explore the human experience.**

   **Corresponding Essential Questions:**
   - How can I learn about the power of language, the human condition, and myself from exploration within a text?
   - How can we reconstruct what happened in the past, and can we ever do so accurately?
   - To what extent is history a story we tell about ourselves?
   - Why do humans often express themselves through story instead of directly stating facts and claims?

2. **Students will understand that there are powerful, proven techniques that make written and oral communication more effective. Students will recognize and analyze those techniques when they encounter them in the work of others, and students will use these powerful tools intentionally to convey their ideas to others.**

   **Corresponding Essential Questions:**
   - How can I best communicate my ideas, beliefs, and identity to others, and how can I better understand what others are communicating to me?

3. **Students will understand how myths, poetry, fiction, personal reflections, music, art, and historical texts – our stories – convey and illuminate the human experience. Students will analyze the stories and histories of ancient Greece, Christianity, Islam, and contemporary America, exploring the ways in which the stories we tell ourselves and about ourselves reflect our ideas and values.**

   **Corresponding Essential Questions:**
   - What kinds of stories do all humans tell to make sense of the world?
   - How can we better understand a culture by examining its stories?
   - How can exploring our Jewish “story” - our rituals and texts – help us to find greater meaning within Judaism?
4. Students will understand that humans create systems of authority as a way of organizing communal life, and that reckoning with – and sometimes struggling with – those systems of authority is an essential part of the human condition. Students will understand how and why three hugely influential political and spiritual authority systems – ancient Greece, Christianity, and Islam – emerged as world powers, shaping human societies across the ancient and early modern world. Students will examine the relationship between family, state, and spiritual authorities, and investigate the interplay between individual human actions and broader societal forces.

Corresponding Essential Questions:

- How and why have humans organized themselves in groups, and what factors have tended to shape that organization?
- Why do societies have rules?
- Why do humans accept the rules?
- Why do humans sometimes reject the rules, and what happens when they do?
- Is it possible to truly change the rules?
- What’s the relationship between identity and authority?

5. Students will understand that Judaism has constituted its own distinct authority system for thousands of years, and that as a result, ancient and early modern empires had a complex relationship with Judaism.

- I understand that spiritual and political authority were inextricably intertwined in the pre-modern world
- I understand that since the Christian and Islamic empires themselves emerged in part as alternative interpretations of Judaism, Judaism represented an existential theological threat to Islam and Christianity for much of human history
- I understand that at times, Islamic and Christian imperial societies tolerated the existence of minority faiths; at other times these societies engaged in violence and oppression against Jews and Judaism as a threat to the legitimacy of their authority systems
- I understand that these deeply rooted attitudes towards Jews became the foundation for the modern spread of Judeophobia across the globe

Corresponding Essential Questions:

- Why are humans afraid of people who question the dominant authority system?
- Does understanding the cultural roots of Judeophobia make its existence and expression any less traumatic?
- Why do so many people still hold Judeophobic worldviews today?
- In which ways should we hold ourselves as Jews accountable for condemning xenophobia and bigotry?
- How do we reject repugnant ideas while recognizing the fundamental humanity of all?
- What is the best way to fight Judeophobia?
6. Students will understand that the ancient and early modern “Middle World” was interconnected and cross-pollinating. Students will understand that the Middle World was dominated by powerful imperial societies that controlled large geographic areas and populations.

- I can find the relevant continents and bodies of water on a world map
- I can trace the trade routes that connected peoples and ideas across the Middle World
- I can outline on map the significant imperial societies of the Middle World:
  - the Graeco-Roman sphere of influence
  - the Sassanid empire
  - the Arabian tribes
  - the Byzantine empire/the Holy Roman Empire/Christendom
  - the Islamic khaliphates

Corresponding Essential Questions:

- What can maps tell us about how and why societies in the ancient and early modern “Middle World” interacted with one another?
- What types of authority did the imperial societies of the “Middle World” hold?
ENDURING YEAR-LONG SKILLS GOALS

1. **Students will develop core close reading and interpretative skills**
   - I approach a text with the understanding that I will have to read it multiple times to fully understand it
   - I can annotate texts based on the 9th grade structured system for annotation:
     - I can self-check for literal understanding
     - I can circle and look up challenging vocabulary
     - I can compose questions for clarification of meaning in the margins
       - Asking, what about this text doesn’t make sense?
     - I can pose analytical questions and comments in the margins
       - Asking, what connections can I make? What does this make me curious about?
   - I can summarize the plot and main ideas of a text; I can make basic inferences and logical predictions about the literal meaning/progression of the text
   - I can begin to develop a personal system for annotating texts
   - I can analyze the relationship between the form/structure/elements of the text and the meaning that the text conveys
   - I can ground my discussion and written claims in evidence from the text, returning to the text whenever I make a claim
   - I can articulate textual themes, phrased in the form of a question, about the human condition; and I support my ideas with evidence from the text
   - I can appreciate and comment on what I find beautiful or thought-provoking in a text

**Literature-specific skills**
- I can define the following literary elements: symbol, sensory imagery, tragedy, hubris, tragic flaw/hamartia, allusion, chorus, character foil, metaphor, simile, motif, allegory, alliteration, onomatopoeia, epigraph, first point of view
- I can recognize the above literary elements in a text
- I can articulate my perspective on how an authorial choice of image or language (literary elements) conveys particular meanings and elicits particular responses
- I can annotate the text, commenting on the meaning and purpose of literary elements
- I can identify plot points, analyze themes, and identify conceptual shifts in a larger literary work
History-specific skills

- I can construct narratives about the past and evaluate narratives about the past using:
  - sourcing
    - Asking, who is the author/creator of this source? When and where was it created? What is the basic purpose of this source? Why might it have been created, and who might have read, used, or received it?
  - contextualization
    - Asking, why then and there? What was happening during this historical time period, and how does that context help explain the source’s perspective and purpose?
  - corroboration
    - Asking, what further questions do you have about what happened and why? What might be other possible primary sources you could look at? What do other primary sources say? What different questions do the various primary sources answer?

Corresponding Essential Questions:

- What do I know and what do I need to know to help me interpret the meaning and significance of this text?
- How do I know what to believe in what I read?
- What logical inferences can I draw from this text?
- What are the central ideas of this text?
- What specific evidence in the text supports my conclusions?
- What is the author trying to make me feel or see?
- What other kinds of texts might broaden my understanding of this text or give me different perspectives?
- What should I do when I don’t understand something in the text?
- How have my ideas about this text changed through close reading?
- How does this text relate to me? Where do I connect emotionally or spiritually?

2. **Students will apply strategies for successfully collaborating for learning with peers, and continually monitor anavah, asking, “Am I taking up the right amount of space? Am I contributing? Am I giving others the chance to contribute?”**

- I articulate thorough and detailed explanations of my ideas:
- I ask my own questions to deepen understanding
- I build on the ideas of others in a clear and respectful manner; I acknowledge others’ ideas and relate them to my own understanding in order to move the discussion forward:
  - I reference the text(s): Am I providing evidence for my ideas?
  - I listen to others: Do I understand what others are saying, and how does that understanding help me to modify my own ideas?
Corresponding Essential Questions:

- How important is it to communicate with others? What if I don’t feel like talking?
- To whom am I speaking?
- How can I ensure that others really listen to me?
- What are my responsibilities when talking with a small group? A big group? Just one other person? Does the situation matter?
- What are my personal goals for improving my oral communication skills?
- What’s working with our group? What’s not? Should we make adjustments to our work process?
- How can I determine if I am achieving the right balance of listening and talking?
- How can I communicate my ideas more effectively?
- How can I move the discussion forward to greater understanding?
- How can I think about the text and the discussion at the same time?
- How do I consider others’ perspectives while developing my own? What do I do if I disagree with someone?

3. Students will develop the core dispositions and skills of historical thinking

- I can determine and explain historical significance
- I can identify patterns of change and continuity
- I can articulate causal explanations
- I can use geospatial awareness and chronology to make historical connections
- I can practice historical empathy: recognizing the internal coherence of historical worldviews, and investigating why historical actors felt and thought as they did
- I can articulate the relationship between historical contingency and human agency, and I can weigh the significance of individual decisions against the impact of structural forces
- I can use my knowledge of historical patterns and connections to construct arguable and defensible claims about the past, supported by primary and secondary source evidence
- I wait to exercise moral judgement over past events, and their implications for the present, until after I have conducted a thorough historical investigation; and I balance my personal belief system with historical empathy

Corresponding Essential Questions

- Is everything that happened in the past important to understanding our world today, or are some things more important to learn about than others?
- To what extent does history repeat itself, and to what extent is every human situation unique?
- Is it possible to explain why things happen?
- How can we understand someone who lived in a distant time and place? Can you understand someone who thought, said, or did things that you find morally repugnant?
- Do individuals have any control over the course of history? Do I?
- To what extent do structural forces, such as environment, technology, or biology, determine a person’s destiny?
- How much evidence do I need to make a reasonable claim about the past? What kind of evidence is important?
- How do I pass judgment on people from the past and learn from their experiences, while still trying to understand their perspectives?
4. **Students will analyze and empathize with the perspectives of historical and literary individuals and groups.** Students will understand that our personal beliefs, values, decisions, and actions are shaped by the cultures in which we live, but that many aspects of the human condition are universal. **Students will work towards developing a sense of identity and moral agency** through exploration and consideration of literature and history.

- I can use a five-part sequential framework to explore the behavior of literary characters and historical actors: inquire, observe, gather evidence, analyze, reflect
- I can recognize the internal coherence of historical worldviews, and I can investigate why historical actors felt and thought as they did
- I can interrogate the beliefs and behavior of literary characters as I read the text, asking how cultural systems and human psychology help explain these beliefs and behavior
- I can connect literary characters’ and historical actors’ perspectives, actions, and experiences to my own perspectives, actions, and experiences

**Corresponding Essential Questions:**

- What’s the relationship between me and a character or historical actor?
- How do I decide when to change my stance on something, and when to hold fast to my position?
- Is it possible to detach myself from my culture and view it objectively? Do I exist outside my group?
- What criteria do I use to decide if someone or something is wrong or bad? How about right or good?
- How do I decide if something is “true?”
- How can I respond to different cultures intelligently and sensitively, with a nuanced understanding of their internal coherence, while retaining my own values and beliefs?
- How do I find my way as an individual?

5. **Students will communicate effectively through writing**

- I can interpret an essay or free write prompt and create a plan for structuring a response
- I can formulate a clear, arguable, and specific thesis about how a text works and/or what it reveals
- I can construct an analytical paragraph (claim, evidence, analysis) with correct formatting of textual evidence
- I can balance concision with depth, justifying my editorial choices
- I can construct an evidence-based persuasive essay
- I can synthesize and contextualize an array of primary and/or secondary sources
Corresponding Essential Questions:

- What strategies help me understand what the question is asking?
- Why does it matter what I think about this?
- How do effective writers engage their readers?
- How do I decide what I want to argue? How do I know if my argument is too big or too small?
- How much evidence is enough?
- What types of evidence are convincing? How can I best use my evidence?
- Is there more than one way to organize my arguments and evidence? How do I decide the best way for each piece of writing that I undertake?
- What do I do if my ideas change in the middle of writing?
- Can more than one argument be true at the same time? What if two arguments conflict with each other - how do I evaluate which is more meaningful?

6. Students will use strategies for sorting, prioritizing, and comprehending new information from a variety of sources

- I can take concise and effective notes on oral and written sources, following the structured Cornell Notes system
- I can identify the significant parts of a text or lecture
- I can ask clarifying and analytical questions about a text or lecture
- I can summarize the meaning and claims of a text or lecture
- I can analyze my notes to ask further questions, synthesize information, and construct meaningful arguments

Corresponding Essential Questions:

- How do I figure out what information is essential and what information is less central?
- What role should questions play in my notes?
- Why take notes? How can my notes help me craft an argument?

7. Students will convey their ideas clearly in writing, without mechanical errors

- I use apostrophes correctly
- I use capitalization correctly, including the recognition of proper nouns and conventions associated with historical writing
- I can appropriately format the title of a literary work
- I don’t start sentences with “this” with no modifier
- I use “then” and “than” correctly
- I use transition words and phrases, and I use them correctly
- I do not use informal language in formal writing
- I use the past tense for historical references
- I use the literary present tense
- I use commas correctly
- I use quotation marks correctly
- I use parenthetical references correctly, including correct placement of quotation marks
- I proofread my work
Corresponding Essential Questions:

- When is my work just for me, and when is it also for others?
- What difference do writing mechanics make? Aren’t the ideas what matter? Are mechanics more important in some situations than in others, and if so, how do I decide how much to pay attention to mechanics?
- How can I figure out which errors most interfere with my reader’s ability to understand my ideas?
- What’s the best strategy for me to practice avoiding those errors?
- How do I know when a piece of writing is ready to show to others?

8. Students will understand revision as a necessary component of effective writing.
   Students will master the steps of the revision process. Students will develop personal strategies for effective revision.
   - I can match teacher feedback with assignment expectations
   - I can summarize feedback about my areas of strength and my areas for growth
   - I can use my summary of teacher feedback to formulate a detailed revision plan
   - I can set personal long-term goals for improving my writing, based on teacher feedback and personal reflection on the writing and revision process
   - I can highlight the parts of each new writing assignment rubric that correspond with my personal writing goals

Corresponding Essential Questions:

- What is the teacher’s responsibility in the revision process, and what is my responsibility?
- What are the steps that work best for me in reading and understanding my teacher’s comments?
- What do I do if I don’t understand my teacher’s comments?
- What did I learn about writing, and especially my writing, from this revision process?
- How do I make sure that I transfer what I learned from this revision to the next writing assignment? What should I focus on for the next writing assignment?
- How do I know when I am done revising? Is a writer ever done?
9. Students will understand that their Gann community library is an important resource for supporting intellectual and personal growth, and students will master core strategies for digitally and physically navigating the Gann library catalog, visiting the library, and selecting books for personal enrichment.

- Students will be able locate the librarian’s name and email address
- Students will browse the physical library, and develop strategies for and selecting a variety of books of interest from the shelves
- Students will be able to find the Gann Library Lounge page
- Students will be able to find the Gann Library Catalog and use strategies to browse the catalog
- Students will be able to find the call numbers of books they are interested in reading
- Students will be able to use call numbers to find books on the Gann library shelves in both the fiction and nonfiction areas
- Students will be able to reflect on the books that they selected from the Gann library, and students will be able to communicate their ideas about their reading to others

**Corresponding Essential Questions:**

- How can I identify books that fuel my passion for literature?
- What is the purpose of the Gann library in our community? What is the purpose of libraries in human societies?
- Why is it important to read from a variety of genres?
- How can I personally connect with literary and historical actors and their stories?
- What is the value of sharing my personal experience of a text with others?