

**Fair Lawn Public Schools
Fair Lawn, NJ**

**Comedy in Literature
and Culture**

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I. Course Synopsis

This course will explore the role of comedy and humor in literature, as well as in the contemporary American “pop” culture. It will pose the essential questions, “What makes us laugh? Why? How have the comic sensibilities of the culture changed and evolved over the centuries?” Students will consider the social and political impact of humor, as well as its various forms, including: satire, farce, parody, and irony. The course will consider literature of the 19th, 20th, and 21st centuries (all necessary social and historical contexts will be considered). Various literary genres will be analyzed within a series of specific units of study. These genres will include essays, plays, novels, television shows, movies, and comic strips. Students will also be expected to compose their own humor pieces.

II. Philosophy & Rationale

“Comedy in Literature and Culture” will enable students to develop and refine all of the necessary college-level skills provided in a “traditional” English course while, at the same time, allowing them the unique opportunity to focus on a specific area of study. In doing so, students will achieve mastery of the subject matter, thus enhancing and informing their future learning in all subjects.

III. English 12 Objectives

Students will be able to:

1. Identify the great writers and genres of literature.
2. Develop literal, interpretive reading skills, using major works of literature.
3. Understand how the works studied reflect the period and the values of the time in which they were written.
4. Recognize various literary techniques as used in works of literature.
5. Recognize and discuss the major movements of literature.
6. Show an understanding of literary devices, such as figurative language.
7. Show in their writing an understanding of organization/content, sentence construction, usage and mechanics.
8. Develop an understanding of the writing process: thinking, planning, writing a first draft, editing, and rewriting.
9. Write for various audiences by composing clear, coherent and unified writings.
10. Develop a more precise and varied use of vocabulary in writing.
11. Broaden vocabulary through writing.
12. Apply writing techniques and assignments in this course to the SAT format for writing.
13. Comprehend narrative, informational, persuasive, and workplace text at literal and inferential levels.
14. Develop their listening and speaking skills through a variety of activities which include: oral presentation, collaborative groups, debates, class discussions, etc.

15. Use technology for generating essays and presentations (i.e. Power Point, Publisher, etc.)
16. Read aloud with meaning.
17. Gather and use information obtained from the resources of the library.
18. Develop listening skills as a strategy for learning.
19. Develop a portfolio or collection of writing.
20. Use multimedia technology for Problem Based Learning.
21. Evaluate media techniques and message.
22. Create and use a variety of strategies to improve their reading and writing skills.
23. Show the ability to follow the writing process to create clear, coherent and unified writing in a timed format.

IV. Scope & Sequence

Unit 1: Satire, Parody & Political Humor <6 weeks>

- Selected Works by David Sedaris
 - “The Santa Land Diaries,”
 - “Season’s Greetings to Our Friends and Family!!!,”
 - “Diary of a Smoker,”
 - “Remembering My Childhood on the Continent of Africa,”
 - “What I Learned”
 - “6 to 8 Black Men” (texts)
- “Advice to Youth,” by Mark Twain (text)
- “Local News,” “Da Vinci: The Lost Notebook,” “Vincent and Theo on AOL,” and “Adolf Hitler: The Larry King Interview,” by Jon Stewart (texts)
- “Casey at the Bat (Road Game),” by Garrison Keillor (text)
- “In Persuasion Nation,” by George Saunders (text)
- Selected articles from “The Onion”
- Selected political cartoons
- Clips from The Daily Show
- Clips from The Colbert Report
- Make ‘Em Laugh: Satire and Parody (film)
- This Is Spinal Tap (film)

Unit 2: Observational Humor <6 weeks>

- Born Standing Up: A Comic’s Life, by Steve Martin
- Stand-up comedy clips (online; various)
- Make ‘Em Laugh: The Groundbreakers (film)
- Ferris Bueller’s Day Off (film)

Unit 3: Absurdist and Experimental Humor <4 weeks>

- Waiting for Godot, by Samuel Beckett
- “The Bald Soprano” and “The Lesson,” by Eugene Ionesco
- Monty Python and The Holy Grail (film)

- The Kids in the Hall, (selected episodes)
- “The Far Side,” by Gary Larson (selected cartoons)

Unit 4: The Evolution of the American Situation Comedy <4 wks>

- Make ‘Em Laugh: The Funny Business of America (DVD)
- “I Love Lucy” (selected episodes)
- “The Dick Van Dyke Show” (selected episodes)
- “The Brady Bunch” (selected episodes)
- “All in the Family” (selected episodes)
- “The Cosby Show” (selected episodes)
- “Everybody Loves Raymond” (selected episodes)

V. Unit Descriptions

Unit 1: Satire, Parody & Political Humor

Enduring Understanding

1. To understand that a deeper meaning resides within satire and parody, and that this meaning is often staid, despite the comical nature of the text.
2. To understand that the principle criticisms of society endure, regardless of the culture or time period in which the satire / parody is produced.

Essential Question(s)

1. In what ways is satire an effective tool in emphasizing the flaws of society?
2. What commonalities do all examples of satire share? What are the major differences we observe?
3. What is the purpose of parody and how does it differ from the role of satire?
4. How does political humor serve to reflect the time period in which it is created?
5. Why are satire and parody considered “cerebral” forms of humor?

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Define satire and its different types
- Identify the target of a piece of satire
- Identify select literary devices and apply them to a variety of satirical essays and stories.
- Characterize the tone and style of satirical writers, such as David Sedaris, Jon Stewart, and others
- Identify the characteristics of a political cartoon
- Identify plot, themes, and characterization present within the selected readings
- Identify the cultural impact of / relevance of The Daily Show and The Colbert Report

- List the similarities and differences between The Daily Show and The Colbert Report and mainstream media
- Demonstrate understanding of characterization and voice
- Identify the evolution of satire within American film and television
- Compose an original piece of satire
- Analyze the satirical elements of a film
- Demonstrate comprehension of selected readings as pieces of literature and as satires

Suggested Activities

Students will:

- Read selected articles from “The Onion” and identify the intended target, as well as the humor present
- Discuss tone / style “The Santa Land Diaries”
- Analyze provided political cartoons
- Compose original punchlines to existing political cartoons
- Respond to analytical questions related to the satirical stories and essays (listed above)
- Compose FLHS-centric “knock-knock” jokes
- View The Daily Show and discuss the intent of the satire and how it is achieved
- View The Colbert Report and discuss the intent of the satire and how it is achieved
- Create a Facebook page for a select character from HHG and defend the content therein
- View Make ‘Em Laugh: Satire and answer provided study guide questions
- Compose a piece of original satire based on a provided topic / subject
- Complete a unit test on satire and parody, applying understanding of its components and types
- View This Is Spinal Tap and maintain a log of humorous dialogue
- Compose a reaction that analyzes a chosen item from the This Is Spinal Tap log

Assessments:

- Multiple analyses of provided satirical articles from “The Onion”
- Quizzes: “The Santa Land Diaries,” “Season’s Greetings,” and selected other stories / essays
- Make ‘Em Laugh study guide
- Creative writing: Original satire based on a rule / tradition / behavior at FLHS
- Satire and parody unit test
- Reaction Paper #1
- This Is Spinal Tap study guide
- Analysis of satirical humor in This Is Spinal Tap

Common Core State Standards

Reading: Literature

Key Ideas and Details

RL.11-12.1. Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

RL.11-12.2. Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.

RL.11-12.3. Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).

Craft and Structure

RL.11-12.4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful.

RL.11-12.5. Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.

RL.11-12.6. Analyze a case in which grasping a point of view requires distinguishing what is directly stated in a text from what is really meant (e.g., satire, sarcasm, irony, or understatement).

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

RL.11-12.7. Analyze multiple interpretations of a story, drama, or poem (e.g., recorded or live production of a play or recorded novel or poetry), evaluating how each version interprets the source text.

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

RL.11-12.10. By the end of grade 11, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 11–CCR text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.

Reading: Informational Texts

Key Ideas and Details

RI.11-12.1. Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

RI.11-12.2. Determine two or more central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to provide a complex analysis; provide an objective summary of the text.

RI.11-12.3. Analyze a complex set of ideas or sequence of events and explain how specific individuals, ideas, or events interact and develop over the course of the text.

Craft and Structure

RI.11-12.4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze how an author uses and refines the meaning of a key term or terms over the course of a text (e.g., how Madison defines faction in Federalist No. 10).

RI.11-12.5. Analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of the structure an author uses in his or her exposition or argument, including whether the structure makes points clear, convincing, and engaging.

RI.11-12.6. Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text in which the rhetoric is particularly effective, analyzing how style and content contribute to the power, persuasiveness or beauty of the text.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

RI.11-12.7. Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem.

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

RI.11-12.10. By the end of grade 11, read and comprehend literary nonfiction in the grades 11–CCR text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.

Writing

Text Types and Purposes

W.11-12.1. Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

- Introduce precise, knowledgeable claim(s), establish the significance of the claim(s), distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and create an organization that logically sequences claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.
- Develop claim(s) and counterclaims fairly and thoroughly, supplying the most relevant evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both in a manner that anticipates the audience's knowledge level, concerns, values, and possible biases.

- Use words, phrases, and clauses as well as varied syntax to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships between claim(s) and reasons, between reasons and evidence, and between claim(s) and counterclaims.
- Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.
- Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.

W.11-12.2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

- Introduce a topic; organize complex ideas, concepts, and information so that each new element builds on that which precedes it to create a unified whole; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., figures, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.
- Develop the topic thoroughly by selecting the most significant and relevant facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience's knowledge of the topic.
- Use appropriate and varied transitions and syntax to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships among complex ideas and concepts.
- Use precise language, domain-specific vocabulary, and techniques such as metaphor, simile, and analogy to manage the complexity of the topic.
- Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.
- Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented (e.g., articulating implications or the significance of the topic).

W.11-12.3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

- Engage and orient the reader by setting out a problem, situation, or observation and its significance, establishing one or multiple point(s) of view, and introducing a narrator and/or characters; create a smooth progression of experiences or events.
- Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, reflection, and multiple plot lines, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.
- Use a variety of techniques to sequence events so that they build on one another to create a coherent whole and build toward a particular tone and outcome (e.g., a sense of mystery, suspense, growth, or resolution).
- Use precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters.

- Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on what is experienced, observed, or resolved over the course of the narrative.

Production and Distribution of Writing

W.11-12.4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1–3 above.)

W.11-12.5. Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.

Research to Build and Present Knowledge

W.11-12.7. Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

W.11-12.9. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

- Apply grades 11–12 Reading standards to literature
- Apply grades 11–12 Reading standards to literary nonfiction

Range of Writing

W.11-12.10. Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes

Speaking and Listening

Comprehension and Collaboration

SL.11-12.1. Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11–12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

- Come to discussions prepared, having read and researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from texts and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas.
- Work with peers to promote civil, democratic discussions and decision-making, set clear goals and deadlines, and establish individual roles as needed.

- Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that probe reasoning and evidence; ensure a hearing for a full range of positions on a topic or issue; clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions; and promote divergent and creative perspectives.
- Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives; synthesize comments, claims, and evidence made on all sides of an issue; resolve contradictions when possible; and determine what additional information or research is required to deepen the investigation or complete the task.

SL.11-12.2. Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) in order to make informed decisions and solve problems, evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source and noting any discrepancies among the data.

SL.11-12.3. Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric, assessing the stance, premises, links among ideas, word choice, points of emphasis, and tone used.

Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas

SL.11-12.4. Present information, findings, and supporting evidence, conveying a clear and distinct perspective, such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning, alternative or opposing perspectives are addressed, and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and a range of formal and informal tasks.

SL.11-12.5. Make strategic use of digital media (e.g., textual, graphical, audio, visual, and interactive elements) in presentations to enhance understanding of findings, reasoning, and evidence and to add interest.

SL.11-12.6. Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating a command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

Language

Conventions of Standard English

L.11-12.1. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

- Apply the understanding that usage is a matter of convention, can change over time, and is sometimes contested.
- Resolve issues of complex or contested usage, consulting references (e.g., *Merriam-Webster's Dictionary of English Usage*, *Garner's Modern American Usage*) as needed.

L.11-12.2. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

- Observe hyphenation conventions.
- Spell correctly.

Knowledge of Language

L.11-12.3. Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.

- Vary syntax for effect, consulting references (e.g., Tufte’s *Artful Sentences*) for guidance as needed; apply an understanding of syntax to the study of complex texts when reading.

L.11-12.4. Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on *grades 11–12 reading and content*, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.

- Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence, paragraph, or text; a word’s position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.
- Identify and correctly use patterns of word changes that indicate different meanings or parts of speech (e.g., *conceive, conception, conceivable*).
- Consult general and specialized reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronunciation of a word or determine or clarify its precise meaning, its part of speech, its etymology, or its standard usage.
- Verify the preliminary determination of the meaning of a word or phrase (e.g., by checking the inferred meaning in context or in a dictionary).

L.11-12.5. Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

- Interpret figures of speech (e.g., hyperbole, paradox) in context and analyze their role in the text.
- Analyze nuances in the meaning of words with similar denotations.

L.11-12.6. Acquire and use accurately general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

Unit 2: Observational Humor

Enduring Understanding

1. To understand that, through comedy, we can better understand (and improve) ourselves as a society, and as individuals.

2. To understand that the humorous experiences of any one individual can be universally understood and appreciated, and therefore, serve to unite a society and define its identity.

Essential Question(s)

1. How does comedy serve to define us as a people and a culture?
2. What makes common, everyday behavior and activity humorous?
3. What do we stand to accomplish, or learn, by finding the humor in the mundane?
4. How does observational humor serve to reflect the realities of the culture in which it is created?
5. How does observational humor establish and promote a sense of community amongst members of a society?
6. How can observational humor be used as a means of self-reflection and personal improvement?

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Define “observational humor” and identify common topics addressed within
- Apply scientific data to the inherent humor of observation
- Identify comedic style of Steve Martin
- Demonstrate understanding of the cerebral nature of comedy and comprehension of Martin’s stand-up career
- Create original observational humor related to lunch in the cafeteria
- Identify the techniques that comedians use to make observations funny
- Describe / discuss the cultural impact of an assigned, groundbreaking comedian
- Defend a thesis using textual evidence
- Identify the writing style of David Sedaris and his fusion of observational humor and satirical writing
- Identify what can be learned about life from observational humor
- Demonstrate comprehension and understanding of Born Standing Up
- Make text-to-self connection via film study

Suggested Activities

Students will:

- View clips of Billy Cosby and Jerry Seinfeld and compare / contrast content of their material
- Read and discuss an article about comedian Bill Burr and the study of his comedy by psychologists
- View stand-up clips of Steve Martin and discuss his style / presentation
- Read Born Standing Up and answer study guide questions
- Generate a list of observations related to lunch in the cafeteria
- Compose a humorous explanation of an item from the brainstormed list about lunch in the cafeteria

- View Make 'Em Laugh: The Groundbreakers and take notes on an assigned comedian featured in the documentary
- Cite evidence in Born Standing Up to prove / defend a provided thesis about comedy
- Read “Six to Eight Black Men” and discuss Sedaris’ use of satire and observational humor
- Brainstorm a list of “what was learned” from reading Born Standing Up
- View Ferris Bueller’s Day Off and compose an essay comparing a single character to him / herself
- View brief stand-up clips daily and discuss / analyze the humor present therein

Assessments

- Completion of Born Standing Up study guide
- Born Standing Up quizzes (following completion of chapters “Disneyland” and “Standing Down”)
- Creative writing: Cafeteria observational humor piece
- Essay: Groundbreaking comedian essay / analysis
- Thesis analysis / defense: Steve Martin
- Thesis analysis / defense: David Sedaris
- Text-to-self comparative analysis of Ferris Bueller’s Day Off
- Born Standing Up essay test
- Reaction Paper #2

Common Core State Standards

Reading: Literature

Key Ideas and Details

RL.11-12.1. Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

RL.11-12.2. Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.

RL.11-12.3. Analyze the impact of the author’s choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).

Craft and Structure

RL.11-12.4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on

meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful.

RL.11-12.5. Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.

RL.11-12.6. Analyze a case in which grasping a point of view requires distinguishing what is directly stated in a text from what is really meant (e.g., satire, sarcasm, irony, or understatement).

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

RL.11-12.7. Analyze multiple interpretations of a story, drama, or poem (e.g., recorded or live production of a play or recorded novel or poetry), evaluating how each version interprets the source text.

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

RL.11-12.10. By the end of grade 11, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 11–CCR text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.

Reading: Informational Texts

Key Ideas and Details

RI.11-12.1. Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

RI.11-12.2. Determine two or more central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to provide a complex analysis; provide an objective summary of the text.

RI.11-12.3. Analyze a complex set of ideas or sequence of events and explain how specific individuals, ideas, or events interact and develop over the course of the text.

Craft and Structure

RI.11-12.4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze how an author uses and refines the meaning of a key term or terms over the course of a text (e.g., how Madison defines faction in Federalist No. 10).

RI.11-12.5. Analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of the structure an author uses in his or her exposition or argument, including whether the structure makes points clear, convincing, and engaging.

RI.11-12.6. Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text in which the rhetoric is particularly effective, analyzing how style and content contribute to the power, persuasiveness or beauty of the text.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

RI.11-12.7. Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem.

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

RI.11-12.10. By the end of grade 11, read and comprehend literary nonfiction in the grades 11–CCR text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.

Writing

Text Types and Purposes

W.11-12.1. Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

- Introduce precise, knowledgeable claim(s), establish the significance of the claim(s), distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and create an organization that logically sequences claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.
- Develop claim(s) and counterclaims fairly and thoroughly, supplying the most relevant evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both in a manner that anticipates the audience's knowledge level, concerns, values, and possible biases.
- Use words, phrases, and clauses as well as varied syntax to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships between claim(s) and reasons, between reasons and evidence, and between claim(s) and counterclaims.
- Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.
- Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.

W.11-12.2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

- Introduce a topic; organize complex ideas, concepts, and information so that each new element builds on that which precedes it to create a unified whole; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., figures, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.
- Develop the topic thoroughly by selecting the most significant and relevant facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience's knowledge of the topic.
- Use appropriate and varied transitions and syntax to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships among complex ideas and concepts.
- Use precise language, domain-specific vocabulary, and techniques such as metaphor, simile, and analogy to manage the complexity of the topic.
- Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.
- Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented (e.g., articulating implications or the significance of the topic).

W.11-12.3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

- Engage and orient the reader by setting out a problem, situation, or observation and its significance, establishing one or multiple point(s) of view, and introducing a narrator and/or characters; create a smooth progression of experiences or events.
- Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, reflection, and multiple plot lines, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.
- Use a variety of techniques to sequence events so that they build on one another to create a coherent whole and build toward a particular tone and outcome (e.g., a sense of mystery, suspense, growth, or resolution).
- Use precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters.
- Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on what is experienced, observed, or resolved over the course of the narrative.

Production and Distribution of Writing

W.11-12.4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1–3 above.)

W.11-12.5. Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.

Research to Build and Present Knowledge

W.11-12.7. Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

W.11-12.8. Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the strengths and limitations of each source in terms of the task, purpose, and audience; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and overreliance on any one source and following a standard format for citation.

W.11-12.9. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

- Apply grades 11–12 Reading standards to literature
- Apply grades 11–12 Reading standards to literary nonfiction

Range of Writing

W.11-12.10. Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes

Speaking and Listening

Comprehension and Collaboration

SL.11-12.1. Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11–12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

- Come to discussions prepared, having read and researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from texts and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas.
- Work with peers to promote civil, democratic discussions and decision-making, set clear goals and deadlines, and establish individual roles as needed.
- Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that probe reasoning and evidence; ensure a hearing for a full range of positions on a topic or issue; clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions; and promote divergent and creative perspectives.

- Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives; synthesize comments, claims, and evidence made on all sides of an issue; resolve contradictions when possible; and determine what additional information or research is required to deepen the investigation or complete the task.

SL.11-12.2. Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) in order to make informed decisions and solve problems, evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source and noting any discrepancies among the data.

SL.11-12.3. Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric, assessing the stance, premises, links among ideas, word choice, points of emphasis, and tone used.

Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas

SL.11-12.4. Present information, findings, and supporting evidence, conveying a clear and distinct perspective, such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning, alternative or opposing perspectives are addressed, and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and a range of formal and informal tasks.

SL.11-12.5. Make strategic use of digital media (e.g., textual, graphical, audio, visual, and interactive elements) in presentations to enhance understanding of findings, reasoning, and evidence and to add interest.

SL.11-12.6. Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating a command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

Language

Conventions of Standard English

L.11-12.1. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

- Apply the understanding that usage is a matter of convention, can change over time, and is sometimes contested.
- Resolve issues of complex or contested usage, consulting references (e.g., *Merriam-Webster's Dictionary of English Usage*, *Garner's Modern American Usage*) as needed.

L.11-12.2. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

- Observe hyphenation conventions.
- Spell correctly.

Knowledge of Language

L.11-12.3. Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.

- Vary syntax for effect, consulting references (e.g., Tufte’s *Artful Sentences*) for guidance as needed; apply an understanding of syntax to the study of complex texts when reading.

L.11-12.4. Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on *grades 11–12 reading and content*, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.

- Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence, paragraph, or text; a word’s position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.
- Identify and correctly use patterns of word changes that indicate different meanings or parts of speech (e.g., *conceive, conception, conceivable*).
- Consult general and specialized reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronunciation of a word or determine or clarify its precise meaning, its part of speech, its etymology, or its standard usage.
- Verify the preliminary determination of the meaning of a word or phrase (e.g., by checking the inferred meaning in context or in a dictionary).

L.11-12.5. Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

- Interpret figures of speech (e.g., hyperbole, paradox) in context and analyze their role in the text.
- Analyze nuances in the meaning of words with similar denotations.

L.11-12.6. Acquire and use accurately general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

Unit 3: Absurdist and Experimental Humor

Enduring Understanding

1. To understand that comedic sensibilities are different for each individual and that “humor” can be perceived / found in any number of unique situations.
2. To understand that absurdist and experimental comedy contributes to the society’s view of acceptable humor and that what is considered “acceptable” is ever-changing.

Essential Question(s)

1. How do we determine what is funny and what is *not* funny?
2. Why is it important to push comedic boundaries?
3. How has absurdist and experimental humor aided in the evolution of comedy in our culture?
4. How does absurdist and experimental humor reflect (or emphasize) the human condition?

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Define “absurdist humor”
- Compose / create original absurdist humor
- Identify the characteristics of absurdist humor within different media (literature, sketch comedy, stand-up comedy, and cartoons)
- Identify and explain the history / characteristics of Theater of the Absurd
- Demonstrate comprehension of Beckett’s Waiting For Godot
- Identify absurdist elements in Waiting For Godot
- Analyze the metaphorical significance of characters in Waiting For Godot
- Interpret Beckett’s intention in writing Waiting For Godot

Suggested Activities

Students will:

- Select random instructions, follow them, and present their responses with an assigned partner
- View clips of Kids in the Hall and discuss the absurdist elements therein
- View Theatre of the Absurd introductory film and take notes
- Complete an Act 2 study guide for Waiting For Godot
- View the Lucky / Pozzo scenes in Act 1 and Act 2 and discuss the absurdist elements therein
- Write a response to the question, “How is Lucky like the common man?”
- Discuss the meaning of Waiting For Godot and the symbolic interpretation of Vladimir and Estragon
- Complete a quiz on absurdist humor and Theatre of the Absurd
- Compose an absurdist scene using a series of randomly selected prompts / writing situations and perform the scenes to the class
- Interpret the meaning of select quotes from Waiting For Godot in group discussion
- Complete a reading comprehension quiz on Waiting For Godot
- Analyze the absurdism present in Gary Larsen’s “The Far Side” cartoons
- Full class discussion and analysis of the absurdism present in Monty Python’s Flying Circus

Assessments

- Waiting For Godot Act 2 study guide
- Waiting For Godot quiz
- Theatre of the Absurd / Absurdism quiz

- Essay: Respond to the question, “How is Lucky like the common man?”
- Creative writing: Original absurdist scene / script
- Performance of original absurdist scene

Common Core State Standards

Reading: Literature

Key Ideas and Details

RL.11-12.1. Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

RL.11-12.2. Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.

RL.11-12.3. Analyze the impact of the author’s choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).

Craft and Structure

RL.11-12.4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful.

RL.11-12.5. Analyze how an author’s choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.

RL.11-12.6. Analyze a case in which grasping a point of view requires distinguishing what is directly stated in a text from what is really meant (e.g., satire, sarcasm, irony, or understatement).

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

RL.11-12.7. Analyze multiple interpretations of a story, drama, or poem (e.g., recorded or live production of a play or recorded novel or poetry), evaluating how each version interprets the source text.

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

RL.11-12.10. By the end of grade 11, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 11–CCR text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.

Reading: Informational Texts

Key Ideas and Details

RI.11-12.1. Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

RI.11-12.2. Determine two or more central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to provide a complex analysis; provide an objective summary of the text.

RI.11-12.3. Analyze a complex set of ideas or sequence of events and explain how specific individuals, ideas, or events interact and develop over the course of the text.

Craft and Structure

RI.11-12.4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze how an author uses and refines the meaning of a key term or terms over the course of a text (e.g., how Madison defines faction in Federalist No. 10).

RI.11-12.5. Analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of the structure an author uses in his or her exposition or argument, including whether the structure makes points clear, convincing, and engaging.

RI.11-12.6. Determine an author’s point of view or purpose in a text in which the rhetoric is particularly effective, analyzing how style and content contribute to the power, persuasiveness or beauty of the text.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

RI.11-12.7. Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem.

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

RI.11-12.10. By the end of grade 11, read and comprehend literary nonfiction in the grades 11–CCR text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.

Writing

Text Types and Purposes

W.11-12.1. Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

- Introduce precise, knowledgeable claim(s), establish the significance of the claim(s), distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and create an organization that logically sequences claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.
- Develop claim(s) and counterclaims fairly and thoroughly, supplying the most relevant evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both in a manner that anticipates the audience's knowledge level, concerns, values, and possible biases.
- Use words, phrases, and clauses as well as varied syntax to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships between claim(s) and reasons, between reasons and evidence, and between claim(s) and counterclaims.
- Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.
- Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.

W.11-12.2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

- Introduce a topic; organize complex ideas, concepts, and information so that each new element builds on that which precedes it to create a unified whole; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., figures, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.
- Develop the topic thoroughly by selecting the most significant and relevant facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience's knowledge of the topic.
- Use appropriate and varied transitions and syntax to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships among complex ideas and concepts.
- Use precise language, domain-specific vocabulary, and techniques such as metaphor, simile, and analogy to manage the complexity of the topic.
- Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.
- Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented (e.g., articulating implications or the significance of the topic).

Production and Distribution of Writing

W.11-12.4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1–3 above.)

W.11-12.5. Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.

Research to Build and Present Knowledge

W.11-12.7. Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

W.11-12.9. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

- Apply grades 11–12 Reading standards to literature
- Apply grades 11–12 Reading standards to literary nonfiction

Range of Writing

W.11-12.10. Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes

Speaking and Listening

Comprehension and Collaboration

SL.11-12.1. Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11–12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

- Come to discussions prepared, having read and researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from texts and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas.
- Work with peers to promote civil, democratic discussions and decision-making, set clear goals and deadlines, and establish individual roles as needed.
- Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that probe reasoning and evidence; ensure a hearing for a full range of positions on a topic or issue; clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions; and promote divergent and creative perspectives.
- Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives; synthesize comments, claims, and evidence made on all sides of an issue; resolve contradictions when possible; and determine what

additional information or research is required to deepen the investigation or complete the task.

SL.11-12.2. Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) in order to make informed decisions and solve problems, evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source and noting any discrepancies among the data.

SL.11-12.3. Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric, assessing the stance, premises, links among ideas, word choice, points of emphasis, and tone used.

Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas

SL.11-12.4. Present information, findings, and supporting evidence, conveying a clear and distinct perspective, such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning, alternative or opposing perspectives are addressed, and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and a range of formal and informal tasks.

SL.11-12.5. Make strategic use of digital media (e.g., textual, graphical, audio, visual, and interactive elements) in presentations to enhance understanding of findings, reasoning, and evidence and to add interest.

SL.11-12.6. Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating a command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

Language

Conventions of Standard English

L.11-12.1. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

- Apply the understanding that usage is a matter of convention, can change over time, and is sometimes contested.
- Resolve issues of complex or contested usage, consulting references (e.g., *Merriam-Webster's Dictionary of English Usage*, *Garner's Modern American Usage*) as needed.

L.11-12.2. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

- Observe hyphenation conventions.
- Spell correctly.

Knowledge of Language

L.11-12.3. Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.

- Vary syntax for effect, consulting references (e.g., Tufte’s *Artful Sentences*) for guidance as needed; apply an understanding of syntax to the study of complex texts when reading.

L.11-12.4. Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on *grades 11–12 reading and content*, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.

- Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence, paragraph, or text; a word’s position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.
- Identify and correctly use patterns of word changes that indicate different meanings or parts of speech (e.g., *conceive, conception, conceivable*).
- Consult general and specialized reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronunciation of a word or determine or clarify its precise meaning, its part of speech, its etymology, or its standard usage.
- Verify the preliminary determination of the meaning of a word or phrase (e.g., by checking the inferred meaning in context or in a dictionary).

L.11-12.5. Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

- Interpret figures of speech (e.g., hyperbole, paradox) in context and analyze their role in the text.
- Analyze nuances in the meaning of words with similar denotations.

L.11-12.6. Acquire and use accurately general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

Unit 4: The Evolution of the American Situation Comedy

Enduring Understanding

1. To understand that the evolution of the traditional situational comedy reflects the changing values, beliefs and goals of the American society, especially in relation to the portrayal of the family unit.
2. To understand that society’s perception of “what is funny” has been greatly influenced and dictated by the television age.

Essential Question(s)

1. How has the depiction of the family unit in situation comedies evolved and changed throughout the age of television?
2. How do situation comedies idealize the realities of the American experience? How do they accurately reflect these realities?
3. What is the contribution of television to the evolution of comedy and society's comic sensibilities?
4. Why does television comedy endure? What does it provide to society that film, theatre and text can *not* provide?

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Identify the images of the traditional American family in the 1950's, 60's, 70's, 80's and 90's
- Define "situation comedy"
- Identify the characteristics of television sitcoms
- Demonstrate understanding of how portrayals of the American family have changed from decade to decade
- Compare / contrast the social representation of the sitcoms viewed

Suggested Activities

Students will:

- Complete a survey concerning their favorite sitcoms and share their findings
- View Make 'Em Laugh: Breadwinners and Homemakers and complete a study guide
- Brainstorm a list of characteristics common to sitcoms in full class discussion
- Complete a graphic organizers while viewing the following sitcoms: *I Love Lucy*; *The Dick Van Dyke Show*; *All In The Family*; "*The Cosby Show*," and *Everybody Loves Raymond*.
- Compose an essay comparing the social stereotypes / cultural realities of two sitcoms viewed

Assessments

- Make 'Em Laugh study guide
- Discussion to show understanding of pertinent concepts and ideas being taught
- Sitcom viewing guides
- Reaction Paper #4: Compare / contrast two sitcoms viewed

Common Core State Standards

Reading: Literature**Key Ideas and Details**

RL.11-12.1. Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

RL.11-12.2. Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.

RL.11-12.3. Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).

Craft and Structure

RL.11-12.4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful.

RL.11-12.5. Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.

RL.11-12.6. Analyze a case in which grasping a point of view requires distinguishing what is directly stated in a text from what is really meant (e.g., satire, sarcasm, irony, or understatement).

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

RL.11-12.7. Analyze multiple interpretations of a story, drama, or poem (e.g., recorded or live production of a play or recorded novel or poetry), evaluating how each version interprets the source text.

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

RL.11-12.10. By the end of grade 11, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 11–CCR text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.

Writing

Text Types and Purposes

W.11-12.1. Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

- Introduce precise, knowledgeable claim(s), establish the significance of the claim(s), distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and create an organization that logically sequences claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.
- Develop claim(s) and counterclaims fairly and thoroughly, supplying the most relevant evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both in a manner that anticipates the audience's knowledge level, concerns, values, and possible biases.
- Use words, phrases, and clauses as well as varied syntax to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships between claim(s) and reasons, between reasons and evidence, and between claim(s) and counterclaims.
- Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.
- Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.

W.11-12.2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

- Introduce a topic; organize complex ideas, concepts, and information so that each new element builds on that which precedes it to create a unified whole; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., figures, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.
- Develop the topic thoroughly by selecting the most significant and relevant facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience's knowledge of the topic.
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Production and Distribution of Writing

W.11-12.4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1–3 above.)

W.11-12.5. Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.

Research to Build and Present Knowledge

W.11-12.9. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

- Apply grades 11–12 Reading standards to literature
- Apply grades 11–12 Reading standards to literary nonfiction

Range of Writing

W.11-12.10. Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes

Speaking and Listening

Comprehension and Collaboration

SL.11-12.1. Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11–12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

- Come to discussions prepared, having read and researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from texts and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas.
- Work with peers to promote civil, democratic discussions and decision-making, set clear goals and deadlines, and establish individual roles as needed.
- Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that probe reasoning and evidence; ensure a hearing for a full range of positions on a topic or issue; clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions; and promote divergent and creative perspectives.
- Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives; synthesize comments, claims, and evidence made on all sides of an issue; resolve contradictions when possible; and determine what additional information or research is required to deepen the investigation or complete the task.

SL.11-12.2. Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) in order to make informed decisions and solve problems, evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source and noting any discrepancies among the data.

SL.11-12.3. Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric, assessing the stance, premises, links among ideas, word choice, points of emphasis, and tone used.

Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas

SL.11-12.4. Present information, findings, and supporting evidence, conveying a clear and distinct perspective, such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning, alternative or opposing perspectives are addressed, and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and a range of formal and informal tasks.

SL.11-12.5. Make strategic use of digital media (e.g., textual, graphical, audio, visual, and interactive elements) in presentations to enhance understanding of findings, reasoning, and evidence and to add interest.

SL.11-12.6. Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating a command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

Language

Conventions of Standard English

L.11-12.1. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

- Apply the understanding that usage is a matter of convention, can change over time, and is sometimes contested.
- Resolve issues of complex or contested usage, consulting references (e.g., *Merriam-Webster's Dictionary of English Usage*, *Garner's Modern American Usage*) as needed.

L.11-12.2. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

- Observe hyphenation conventions.
- Spell correctly.

Knowledge of Language

L.11-12.3. Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.

- Vary syntax for effect, consulting references (e.g., Tufte's *Artful Sentences*) for guidance as needed; apply an understanding of syntax to the study of complex texts when reading.

L.11-12.4. Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on *grades 11–12 reading and content*, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.

- Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence, paragraph, or text; a word’s position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.
- Identify and correctly use patterns of word changes that indicate different meanings or parts of speech (e.g., *conceive*, *conception*, *conceivable*).
- Consult general and specialized reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronunciation of a word or determine or clarify its precise meaning, its part of speech, its etymology, or its standard usage.
- Verify the preliminary determination of the meaning of a word or phrase (e.g., by checking the inferred meaning in context or in a dictionary).

L.11-12.5. Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

- Interpret figures of speech (e.g., hyperbole, paradox) in context and analyze their role in the text.
- Analyze nuances in the meaning of words with similar denotations.

L.11-12.6. Acquire and use accurately general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

VI. Course Materials

Primary Texts

- Selected works by David Sedaris, from his collections Holidays on Ice, Naked, Me Talk Pretty One Day, and Dress Your Family in Corduroy and Denim.
- Born Standing Up: A Comic’s Life, by Steve Martin
- Waiting for Godot, by Samuel Beckett

Secondary Texts

- “Advice to Youth” (text)
- “All in the Family” (selected episodes)
- “I Love Lucy” (selected episodes)
- “Roseanne” (selected episodes)
- “Saturday Night Live” (selected episodes)
- “The Bald Soprano” and “The Lesson,” by Eugene Ionesco
- “The Brady Bunch” (selected episodes)
- “The Colbert Report” (selected episodes)
- “The Cosby Show” (selected episodes)
- “The Daily Show” (selected episodes)

- “The Dick Van Dyke Show” (selected episodes)
- “The Far Side,” by Gary Larson (selected cartoons)
- Ferris Bueller’s Day Off (film)
- “In Persuasion Nation,” by George Saunders (text)
- Kick Me, by Paul Feig (selected stories)
- Make ‘Em Laugh: The Funny Business of America (film)
- Me Talk Pretty One Day, by David Sedaris (selected essays)
- Monty Python and The Holy Grail (film)
- Selected works by Jon Stewart, from his collection Drawings of Famous People
- “The Simpsons” (selected episodes)
- This Is Spinal Tap (film)

VII. Assessments

1. Performance assessment project involving the creation of a stand-up comedy routine.
2. Ongoing creation of Reader Response journals to generate and supplement class discussion.
3. Analytical compositions:
 - Independently view and analyze the comedic style of a selected piece of satire.
 - Argue that “experimental” humor is an integral component of comedy.
 - Analyze the social commentary expressed in observational humor.
 - Analyze a provided piece of satire.
4. Creative compositions:
 - Compose the skeleton script to the pilot episode of an original situation comedy.
 - Adapt an overheard conversation into an absurdist scene.
 - Comedic re-telling of a personal experience / memory.
 - Original satire.
5. Tests / quizzes related to each primary text studied.
6. Final exam.

VIII. Cross Curricular Aspects

“Comedy in Literature and Culture” may potentially be linked with the History Department. Because the course deals specifically with the evolution of comedy across generations, it may be possible to contextualize society’s changing comic sensibility by placing it against the backdrop of significant historical events (i.e. American film comedy in the time of the “Red Scare.”)