



2011-2012 Departmental Description ENGLISH

The English program at Uskudar American Academy is one of the best in Turkey. The goals of our language and literature program are to develop fluency in the English language, to become well-versed in literature, to encourage students to become independent and original thinkers, and to help students prepare for further study at a university. Ultimately, our students will take leadership roles and perform as enlightened citizens in a global society. The five-year high school program focuses on the continuous development of language. This development is achieved through the integration of seven (7) strands in every unit: literature, reading/vocabulary, writing/grammar, speaking, listening, technology, and research.

Teachers maintain student-centered classrooms, which is a new experience for many students. While an active classroom is expected, excellent classroom management skills should be employed at the same time to make sure that a learning environment is maintained at all times. Collaboration amongst teachers within and without the department is expected. The department currently has 22 full and part-time teachers in 2011-12, most of whom are native speakers coming from Britain, Canada, and the United States, while other members are bi-lingual Turkish teachers. Presently, fifteen members of the English department hold masters degrees while one has earned a doctorate.

PREP

The Prep English program is a one-year, English-language immersion program that comes at the beginning of the high school years. It has the specific goal of preparing incoming students for both the level of English and the other study skills they will be expected to use in all of their high school years. As Math and Science are taught in English, teachers are expected to collaborate and support the language skill development in these subjects. Technology, in the form of Word skills, is also an integral aspect of the curriculum. Core courses are Prep Literature (7 hours) and Prep Language (10 hours), and Prep Communication (5 hours) totaling 22 class periods per week. In addition, students have 4 hours of Turkish, 2 hours each of Math and Science (both are taught in English), PE, Second Foreign Language, and Music.

Students enter the Prep program after the 8th grade through a competitive nationwide exam. Once students have been accepted for enrolment in Uskudar American Academy, a language placement test determines the English language level. The entry level varies widely. Students are placed in classes, ranging in language ability from beginners to advanced learners. Classes average 18 students in size. Because of its high status among Turkish schools, Uskudar American Academy attracts some of the most intelligent students in the country.

The English curriculum maintains a strong emphasis on a continuum of skills throughout the year. The Prep course includes 7 hours per week of literature, a demanding course which focuses on vocabulary, expository writing, reading comprehension, and moves from folk tales to the novel; 10 hours of language, a course which explores academic reading and writing; and 5 hours of communication, in which students develop note taking, listening, and speaking skills. The latter includes pronunciation and articulation. All courses include skill development in reading, vocabulary, speaking/listening, writing, research, technology, grammar, and literature. Textbooks for the 2011-2012 year include the following:

Understanding and Using English Grammar,

3rd Edition by Betty Azar

Myths and Legends by Francis and Murray

Timeless Tales: Myths by Reiff

Introduction to Academic Writing: 3rd edition by
Oshima and Hogue

Consider the Issues- NPR

The Pigman by Paul Zindel

The Pearl by John Steinbeck

The Diary of Anne Frank – Drama Script

Discovering Fiction- Judith Kay

Writers' Inc.

Face the Issues – NPR

Raise the Issues - NPR

GRADE 9

In Grade 9 English students meet 7 periods per week, 40 minutes each period. Class sizes are approximately 24. The course is designed to develop skills in the following areas: study skills, research, oral and written communication, language usage, reading, and critical thinking. Units this year have included study skills, reading fiction and non-fiction through units containing novels, grammar review, and research. Each semester requires three written, common assessments. Ongoing activities include silent reading and vocabulary. Texts address the themes of “loss of innocence” and “coming of age”. The 2011-2012 reading list includes the following:

The Outsiders –S.E. Hinton

The Giver and Related Readings-

Lois Lowry

House on Mango Street – Sandra Cisneros

Twelve Angry Men – Reginald Rose

Writers’ INC.

Raise the Issues - NPR

To Kill a Mockingbird (screenplay)- Horton Foote & Harper Lee

In Grade 9 English, two-period elective courses are required for all students to enrich the English program. The following electives allow the students to further their interests in a specific area: Drama 1, Public Speaking, Readers’ Theater, Young Adult Literature, Journalism, and Creative Writing. Language Strategies for Success targets the lower-ability language student and provides support in English, math, and science.

GRADE 10

In Grade 10 English students meet 5 periods per week, 40 minutes each period. Class size is approximately 24. The course is designed to continue developing skills in the following areas: study skills, research, written and oral communication, language usage, reading of fiction and non-fiction, and critical thinking. Research is assigned to provide students with a solid background in the use of the internet and other electronic resources as well as print media. Each semester requires three common written assessments. Texts address the themes of “question of identity” and “the quest”. The 2011-2012 reading list includes the following:

The Alchemist - Paul Coelho

Oedipus Rex – Sophocles

Curious Incident of the Dog in Night Time – Mark Haddon

Writers’ INC.

Things Fall Apart – Chinua Achebe

The Catcher in the Rye – J. D. Salinger

In Grade 10 English, two-period elective courses are offered to enrich the English program. The following electives allow the students to further their interests in a specific area: Readers’ Theater, Drama, Public Speaking, and Creative Writing.

GRADE 11

In Grade 11 English students meet 5 periods per week, 40 minutes each period. The class size ranges from 17-24. Students continue to develop their spoken skills through individual and group creative orals. In addition, the reading of nonfiction is emphasized. The creation of voice and different writing skills are introduced through a character reference letter for *The Chocolate War*, and persuasive writing through the texts of *1984* and *The Crucible*. Additional activities aim to prepare students for standardized tests, such as the International English Language Testing System (IELTS), the SAT and/or the TOEFL. Each semester requires three common written assessments. Texts address the themes of “question of truth” and “the evil within”. The 2010-2011 reading list includes the following:

1984 – George Orwell

The Crucible- Arthur Miller

Writers’ Inc.

The Chocolate War – Robert Cormier

Macbeth – William Shakespeare

In Grade 11 English, two and four -period elective courses are offered to enrich the English program. The two-period electives allow the students to further their interests in a specific area: Film Making, American Literature, and English SAT Preparation. The four-hour elective Honors American Literature is designed for students who are seriously interested in exploring in depth the literary and cultural history of the US and/or are interested in taking the Advanced Placement Literature and Composition exam. As an honors course, students are expected to be self-motivated learners.

GRADE 12

In Grade 12 English, students meet 5 periods per week, 40 minutes each period. Class size is currently between 16 and 21. The course is designed to practice skills in the following areas: research, written and oral communication, language, and critical thinking while reading plays and analyzing the respective films. Research is conducted during the first semester for debates on topics from *Black Elk Speaks*. These research activities provide students with a solid background in the use of the internet and print media. TOEFL practice skills are honed. Students write a personal response essay, a letter of recommendation, and a college application essay. During the second semester, students examine how documentary filmmakers can manipulate audiences through the use of visual and audio techniques, and practice dramatic interpretation through the performance of a character monologue. The 2011-2012 list includes the following:

The Kite Runner - Khaled Hosseini
Writers' INC.

A Streetcar Named Desire – Tennessee Williams
Black Elk Speaks – John Neihardt & Christopher Sergel

In Grade 12 English, two-period elective courses are offered to enrich the English program. These electives allow the students to further their interests in a specific area such as: Cinema Studies, British Literature, and Shakespeare. For the 2012-2013 year, four-hour electives will also be offered. These include Honors British Literature and Honors World Literature. Both courses require students who wish to explore in greater detail the cultures, history, and literature of Britain or other countries, such as Norway, Greece, Colombia, Italy, and Russia. Students can opt to take the Advanced Placement Literature and Composition exam.

GRADING

According to the Turkish Ministry of Education guidelines, any class meeting three or more periods per week must set a minimum of three (3) written grades. These will mainly be essays (processed and written examination), while one may be an extended project. Any class which meets two periods per week is required to set a minimum of two (2) written grades. In addition, our courses have 1-2 oral grades which reflect class participation, quizzes/homework, oral presentations, and the use and quality of spoken English.

COURSE PREPARATION

Students are expected to attend class prepared with the required materials and completed assignments. These assignments may include the following: reading assigned material, completing research, maintaining vocabulary journals, writing essay drafts, and preparing questions regarding previous homework or reading. Maintaining a homework or assignment book is recommended to avoid missing an exercise or assignment. All courses require class materials that are outlined in the course description given to students the first week of school. Students are expected to participate and share ideas with the class in a courteous and open manner. Students are encouraged to read English materials, magazines, or books, in addition to the assigned class work. Vocabulary and comprehension of the English language is further developed in this way. Students are expected to speak only English in class.

TERM HOMEWORK/PROJECTS

The Turkish Ministry of Education requires each student to complete a term homework project in one course in all grades. All prep students produce their term project in either the language or the literature course. This project is a silent reading project. Suggested projects in the English Department include creative writing, literature-based, or research. Students follow the designated guidelines and format for

the project. Time spent on the project is spread throughout the six months of work. The project submitted should be an example of the student's ability, ideas, and originality.

GENERAL INFORMATION

English teachers are provided with a laptop computer, equipped with Microsoft Office, for their use. The laptops can be connected to the LCD projectors in the classroom ceilings for projecting lessons and films onto the wall. Classrooms are equipped with interactive white boards. Supplementary materials such as DVDs, videos and audiocassettes, as well as cassette/radio/ CD players, and printers are located in the English offices. Software provided for teachers of English are the following: turnitin.com and a grading program. Other responsibilities include attending department and weekly level meetings, writing curriculum, holding office hours, covering for colleagues' absences, and becoming an active team member. All curricula are currently being mapped on Rubicon Atlas.

SPONSORED CLUBS

Every member of the faculty is expected to participate in the extra-curricular life of the school. The members of the English Department are involved with a number of clubs which include *Serve*, a student-written and designed creative writing magazine in both Turkish and English; the English Speaking Union Club, in which students create and present speeches; the drama club which presents at least one play per year in English while also participating in the International Schools' Theatre Association (ISTA) festivals; film clubs; photography club; Greenpeace; Memorandum, the school yearbook; chess; hiking; and Book Club.

In addition, department members are also involved with the Model United Nations Club which participates in domestic and international conferences. Every December Uskudar American Academy hosts the English-language Turkish International Model United Nations conference (TIMUN) which is attended by 450 students from Turkish and international schools.

ENGLISH HONORARY

In 2009, Uskudar American Academy was granted a charter and a chapter of the National English Honor Society (NEHS). This organization encourages students to excel in English, to participate in English-language activities, and to promote the use of English. The first year saw the induction of thirteen juniors and seniors who demonstrated high academic grades in English, involvement in activities, and responsibility and leadership skills. In 2011, eighteen students joined the returning ten and have promptly become involved in reading to the kindergarten students and in peer-tutoring.

FUTURE PLANS

The English Department continues to evolve. First, every year, courses and level groups examine and create the material and skills introduced, reviewed, and mastered in each course. These courses are mapped on Rubicon Atlas. This allows for easy access to unit plans and materials according to course and level. Secondly, with the inclusion of IELTS, all grade levels are working towards including activities which develop the tested skills. New department members are expected to become knowledgeable in the use of smart boards. In addition, the department continues to shift its focus from literary analysis to academic writing for other disciplines; to require more involvement in language development; to increase oral communication skills; and to collaborate across the curriculum. Finally, teachers should be comfortable in teaching all aspects of English: language, composition, literary analysis, academic writing, critical thinking, spoken arts, study skills, technology, and research and all levels.