

How to Set Up a High School Course Co-op

Setting up a high school course co-op is easy and makes doing high school credit work a lot of fun for students. Parents can provide leadership and logistics help and kids can take the content lead. We had one for high school English and Social Studies and this is how it worked.

1. Have a meeting for all interested parents and teens. Outline logistics such as time, place, format, requirements and commitments. Aim for at least 3 kids and maximum 12. Brainstorm possible titles for films to watch as a group.
2. Start an email loop or discord channel so all can communicate with each other.
3. Appoint one parent to do the meeting place bookings. We met weekly at the same library that was close to the train. We booked for 2 hours in the afternoon and intended one hour for English and one hour for social each week. On the days we couldn't get library time, we arranged to view a film at a kid/parent's house.
4. We did grade 10 social and English in the Fall from Sept to December and then grade 11 social and English in the Winter from February to May. We did grade 12 social and English in the next year's Fall.
5. We all purchased the textbooks off of Amazon for both English and Social.

Social was Globalization, Nationalism and Ideology with different titles for the -1 or -2 stream. The stream didn't matter. -2 is easier to read but the topics are the same in each stream. The quality of writing is what determines the mark in either -1 or -2.

English was Sightlines 10, Viewpoints 11, and Viewpoints 12 to provide the necessary visuals, short stories, essays, and articles at a high school level.

6. We are with different school authorities and have different facilitators. The coop provides the discussion, interpretation, debates, speeches, presentations and viewing needed for the courses. Each child would have to submit the writing assignments according to their school's requirements.

For example, for social we had to read the textbook, submit 3 cartoon analysis, 19 chapter questions with a 1 paragraph answer, 1 position and 1 research paper for each grade.

For English, we had to read 3 short stories, 6 poems, 3 visuals, 6 non-fiction prose pieces in Sightlines and Viewpoints, see 1 modern or Shakespeare play, see 1 film and read 1 novel (as per the Alberta Education Reading List) for each grade. We had to write 1 poem, several responses to the short-stories, visuals, and non-fiction pieces as per the questions in the textbook, and write 1 poem and 1 personal essay, and 1 critical essay on the films or novel.

The writing work was done outside the co-op individually, but the discussion for the writing work took place in the co-op. Tutors could be hired to mark essays.

7. One parent could plan and lead the meeting time for the whole session, or a month, or parents could rotate leading the meeting weekly. Try and get the kids to lead as much as possible.

8. This type of coop could be done for Career and Life Management courses as well as CTS options such as psychology, food studies and other topics.

9. Record keeping is simple. We had a basic plan of what we were doing and then adjusted the plan as the weeks went by. Nothing is written in stone and we could change things as needed. Parent/student self-reflects and gives an assessed mark.

10. Sample schedule below.

English 10-1 and Social 10-1 Fall 2017 Schedule - Name of Coop Here_ Self-Directed Course Discussion Group

Date - Week of	English	Social
Sept 7	Mind Map - discussed essay format Short story - <i>A Rupee Earned</i> - discussion and reflection on earning money. Question 1 page 278	Ch 1 p24 Discussed impact of 3 kinds of globalization - social, economic, and political. Brainstormed peaceful and non-peaceful protest methods. Debate pros and cons of Calgary Olympic Bid and it's global impact. Visit

		mayor candidate forum.
Sept 11	3 short stories to discuss: <i>Lather and Nothing Else</i> <i>A man who had no eyes</i> <i>Lysandra's Poem</i> Point of View, foreshadowing, conflict, Protagonist, Began the outline of a personal response essay on cultural appropriation.	Ch 2 p37, 42-43 Brainstorm symbols of our identity Discuss language and identity Discuss what is culture Cultural appropriation discussion - agree/disagree Watched film, " <i>The True Cost</i> " on Netflix.
Sept 18	Short stories cont. Discuss text worksheets, conflict, climax, types of characters for 2 short stories <i>The Possibility of Evil</i> <i>Lysandra's Poem</i>	Ch 3 p64 Discuss types of communications past and present and the effect on global identities. Discuss " <i>The True Cost</i> " and where things get made. Discussed licensing and country protectionism of creative culture.
Sept 25	Essay outline - Personal response - go the bones down for essay. Briefly discussed <i>Long Walk to Forever</i> , short story. Discussed poetry terms. Discussed oral presentation skills. 5 kids presented their 5 chosen poems at lectern. Discussed and analysed <i>Warren Pryor</i> and <i>On Children, and To a sad Daughter</i> . Wrote a limerick about a classmate.	Ch 4 p89-90 1 Political Cartoons - everyone bring a political cartoon to class to discuss. Discussed 5 cartoons. Discussed actions citizens could do to make Syrian refugees more welcome in Canada.
Oct 2	Discuss elements of poetry, iambic pentameter, and ballads. Listen to <i>Wreck of Edmond Fitzgerald</i> , <i>Northwest Passage</i> and <i>White Squall</i> . Discussed personification. Discussed personal response outline for <i>Lather and Nothing Else</i> .	Ch 5 p110 Identified what made us unique. Discussed essay outline format - Position paper.
Oct 10	Cancelled - Watch <i>A Beautiful Mind</i>	Cancelled - watched V for Vendetta.
Oct 16	Write 1 poem. Make up roasting Limericks. Write a journal entry (personal). Went over literary terms and figures of speech. Read out Urban Legends. Shared poems.	Ch 6 p 121, 131 Discussed and drew our own worldviews. Ch 7 p142 Discussed pros and cons of Capitalism and Communism.

Oct 23	Finish poetry by reading "Elizabeth Barrett Brown's Sonnet 6 non-fiction selections and the Responding questions to discuss: <i>My body is my own business</i> <i>I'm not my brother</i>	Ch 8 p167 Discussed informed consent and the language barrier between colonists and first nations that would have made treaties non-binding today. Ch 9 p200 Discussed the Zapatistas model and how education always is better than violence. 1 Political Cartoons- show and tell cartoons - worked on presentation skills with visuals. Debate - should polling before elections be banned or kept. Worked on debate protocol.
Oct 30	Non-fiction cont. <i>Ancestors - the genetic source</i> <i>My left foot</i> <i>I have a dream</i> <i>Handling Teen calls</i> Responding questions and speech best practices. Discuss <i>A Beautiful Mind</i>	Ch 10 p214 and Ch11 p242-243 Watch <i>Pocohontas</i> . Discussion questions on Socially Responsible Investments. Discussion questions of Dell business model of Direct to Customer.
Nov 6	Begin reading novel - <i>Animal Farm</i> for Grade 10s. 3 Visuals to discuss and present.	Ch 12 p265 Discuss how Canada can compete on information technology. Present our position papers. Mid-session evaluations.
Nov 13	Read/view Shakespeare (<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>) or Modern Film (<i>Les Miserables</i>) Watch Modern Film.	Ch 13 p275 and Ch14 p291 Discussions on assigned topics.
Nov 20	PR Essay final edit Watch <i>V for Vendetta</i> .	Ch 15 p321 Ch16 p347 Essay outline - Research paper
Nov 27	Shakespeare or Modern Film- Response and discussion	Ch 17 p358 1 Political Cartoon Presented and discussed. Discussions on assigned topics continued.
Dec 4	Novel Discussion on <i>Ash Garden</i> , <i>Animal Farm</i> , <i>Matrix</i> , <i>Les Miserables</i> , or <i>V for Vendetta</i> , or whatever novel chosen. 3 visuals and anything not presented could be addressed. Discussed 3 questions: * Discuss the role self-respect plays when an individual responds to	Ch 18 p380 Discussions on assigned topics continued.

	<p>injustice.</p> <p>* Discuss the significance of idealism and truth in an individual's life.</p> <p>* Discuss the impact of an individual's ambition on self and others.</p>	
Dec 11	Critical Analysis outline due. Potluck for last day.	Ch 19 p409, p415 Last Discussion.
Jan 8	Critical analysis essay edits	2 Essays due - final edits
Jan 15	Final exam	Final exam

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