

Advanced Placement Language and Composition Summer Assignment, 2008

Purchase and read the following: *The Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne.
Respond to the following prompts.

Purchase and read selected essays from the following: *The Best American Essays* by Robert Atwan (Editor). No specific essay is required. The text will be used throughout the year.

Both texts can be purchased used on Amazon.com very cheaply.

Essay Question One:

In many works of literature, past events can affect positively or negatively, the present actions, attitudes, or values of a character. This applies significantly to a number of characters within *The Scarlet Letter*. Select a character in the novel and explore how he or she contends with some aspect of the past, either personal or societal. Then, write an essay in which you show how the character's relationship to the past contributes to the meaning of the work as a whole. Avoid mere plot summary and be sure to use the text for support.

Essay Question Two:

Critic Roland Brathes has said, "Literature is the question minus the answer."
Considering *The Scarlet Letter* and the most poignant question presented within the work, write an essay that analyzes that central question and the extent to which the work offers any answers. Explain how the author's treatment of the question affects your understanding of the work as a whole. Avoid mere plot summary and be sure to use the text for support.

Advanced Placement English Language and Composition Syllabus
Course Name: Advanced Placement English Language and Composition
Course Text: *The Bedford Reader*, 8th Edition

Course Overview:

The focus of the course in accordance with College Board guidelines is on a study of language. As determined by the College Board, an AP course in English Language and Composition attempts to aid students in becoming skilled readers of prose written in a variety of periods, disciplines, and rhetorical contexts, and in becoming skilled writers who compose for a variety of reasons. Both the writing and the reading opportunities provided within the course serve to make students aware of the interactions among a writer's purposes, audience expectations, and subject, as well as the way generic conventions and the resources of language contribute to effectiveness in writing.

The goals of an AP English Language and Composition course are diverse because the college composition course, which it is modeled after is one of the most varied in the curriculum. The college course provides students with opportunities to write about a variety of subjects and to demonstrate an awareness of audience and purpose. The AP Language class serves the same intents and purposes. Most composition courses emphasize the expository, analytical, and argumentative writing that forms the basis of academic and professional communication, as well as the personal and reflective writing that foster the development of writing facility in any context. The same can be said of this class. The writing process is one of the most essential components of the course. From the maintenance of a personal journal to develop and increase individual writing style, self awareness, and reflective thinking, to an extensive research based essay, the AP Language course requires a variety of writing types. Timed and process writing including multi-drafted compositions and test essays occur frequently. Both teacher commentary and peer review are essential aspects of this process. Students will write argumentative and analytical essays that combine the elements of narration, exposition, persuasion, and description.

The AP English Language and Composition course helps students move beyond such programmatic responses as the five-paragraph essay. In the AP Language classroom, students are encouraged to place their emphasis on content, purpose, and audience and to allow this focus to guide the organization of their writing. Throughout the year students write in both informal and formal contexts to gain authority and learn to take risk in writing. Imitation exercises, journal keeping, peer editing, teacher lead writing conferences, and in-class timed responses occur throughout the year. As well as engaging in varied writing tasks, students taking the AP Language course become acquainted with a wide variety of prose styles from many disciplines and American literary periods and gain understanding of the connections between writing and interpretive skill in reading. Concurrently, to reflect the increasing importance of graphics and visual images in texts published in print and electronic media, students are asked to analyze how such images both relate to written texts and serve as alternative forms to text themselves.

Student Selection Process:

Enrollment in AP Language is open to any student starting his or her junior year. Any students who are willing to work hard and who are motivated to learn are encouraged to challenge themselves with this Advanced Placement course.

Course Grading:

Test Grades (in-class objective based assessments, performance-based projects, final drafts of papers, culminating AP Timed Writes): 55% of the course grade.

Quiz Grades (in-class assignments, vocabulary quizzes, introductory AP Timed Writes, first drafts of papers, homework assignments): 30% of the course grade.

Georgia End of Course Test: 15% of the course grade.

Ongoing Course Assignments:

The following course assignments occur throughout the academic term:

SERP (Synthesis Essay Response Preparation) - Students select a current news event and find two news articles that address the current event. Students also find two editorials, arguing two different views on a particular issue. In addition to four writing articles, students also find one cartoon or nonprint source addressing the issue. Students complete an annotated bibliography, using MLA formatting guidelines, with a complete researched précis of each article and complete an interpretive analysis of the nonprint source. SERP's are tentatively due on the last Friday of each month. On the day the SERPs are due, a discussion of the information occurs during the first semester. In the second semester, using the SERP, students write sample synthesis essay prompts that are completed during class.

Weekly Journaling- Students write five entries, outside of class, per week. While some topics are assigned based on issues raised in class, most entries are at the discretion of the student. Each entry must be a full page, front and back.

KID (Kirk Interactive Discussion) Days- A take on the Socratic seminar, KID days help students make meaning of difficult texts. Used with essays, novels, and complex excerpts, students are allowed to question and examine language in a method that is open and inviting. Open-ended questions are used and a participation grade is assigned based on a written response completed at the close of the discussion.

KIT's (Kirk Imitation Themes)- A type of focused imitation exercise, students are given excerpts from a novel, essay, or other literary work and are asked to imitate the author's particular style.

Vocabulary- The development of mature academic voice is essential to the course and the mastery of new content vocabulary and language is ongoing. New vocabulary is

introduced each week and mastery of new language acquired within the course is assessed weekly.

Course Objectives:

Upon completion of the AP English Language and Composition course, the student will be able to:

- Recognize a variety of rhetorical strategies and techniques.
- Apply effective strategies and techniques in his or her own writing.
- Analyze and interpret samples of good writing, identifying and explaining an author's use of language to create and sustain arguments based on readings, research, and/or personal experience.
- Write for a variety of purposes.
- Produce expository, analytical, and argumentative compositions that introduce a complex central idea and develop it with appropriate evidence drawn from primary and/or secondary sources, cogent explanations, and clear transitions.
- Demonstrate understanding and mastery of standard written English as well as stylistic maturity in his or her own writings.
- Demonstrate understanding of the conventions of citing primary and secondary sources.
- Move effectively through the stages of the writing process, with careful attention to inquiry and research, drafting, revising, editing, and review.
- Write thoughtfully about his or her own process of composition.
- Revise a work to make it suitable for a different audience.
- Analyze image as text.
- Evaluate and incorporate reference documents into researched papers.

Course Planner:

Unit One: And in the beginning there was the word...

An Overview of American Literature and Rhetorical Analysis

The course opens with an immediate follow-up on a summer assignment, which consists of reading two American literary classics and keeping active notes on the readings. With a focus on the author's use of language to achieve purpose, students find ways to recognize what's remarkable in the two selected novels. Students consider rhetorical context- purpose, audience, and strategies- as they focus on close reading. Both novels are explored and numerous interactive discussions occur. An emphasis is placed on the linguistic and rhetorical choices of the authors. Imitation writing and short analytic essays are also assigned throughout this unit of study. The opening unit of the course also includes an introduction to the materials to be covered within the course and the objectives to be mastered within the course. A diagnostic test is administered and the expectation of the course for each learner is outlined. The unit culminates with a multi-drafted composition that provides an in-depth understanding of how the author's use of language achieved the author's purpose in their respective work. The culminating unit assessment consists of students completing a first draft of the paper and peer reviewing the product. Once revisions are made, the instructor evaluates the work and a writing conference is held. The final draft of the paper is then submitted for grading.

Unit Two: Opinions are Like Noses!

A study into the nature of Argumentation and Researched Writing

The second unit of study undertaken within the course addresses argumentation and researched-based writing. The guidelines established by the Modern Languages Association are used as the preferred style sheet and students are instructed on the appropriate use of MLA formatting. Essential components to AP Language, an understanding of argument and researched writing are necessary for student mastery of course goals. Through a study of non-fiction texts (current periodicals and *The Bedford Reader*), students are exposed to the elements of both argumentation and research. Through interactive discussion and in-class writings over non-fiction works, students will study the elements of effective persuasion and learn how to appropriately structure an argument. Both the Toulmin and the Rogerian method of argumentation are studied and analyzed for effectiveness. After providing a brief history in rhetoric and argumentation, the course goes into a study of modern day methods of persuasion. From non-print sources such as television and radio advertisements to more traditional editorials and cartoons, students are exposed to not only argumentation but to how argumentation impacts the world in which they live. With the importance and value of visual literacy growing within the composition course, students are instructed on how graphics and visual images both relate to written texts and serve as alternative forms of text themselves. The unit culminates with a researched based essay addressing a current event of the student's choosing that blends the elements of MLA formatting, sound academic research, and mastery of persuasive elements. Again, the culminating unit assessment is a multi-drafted composition. Students complete a first draft of the paper and peer review the product. Once revisions are made, the instructor evaluates the work and a writing conference is held. The final draft of the paper is then submitted for grading.

Unit Three: Taking a Closer Look...

An exploration of the American identity, the American Dream, and close reading

Close reading is not only modeled within this unit of study, but is emphasized. A work of fiction is selected and annotation, Cornell notation, and other methods of making meaning of text are studied and modeled. The emphasis of this unit of study is on how an author makes meaning within a text and how a reader makes meaning of a text. Large and small portions of text are analyzed and student understanding is discussed through interactive discussion, think-pair-share, informal writing, and imitation writing. In addition to the whole-class text selected, other works of literary merit (poems, excerpts from dramas, novels, essays that relate to the selected work or topics presented within the work, short stories, film excerpts, song lyrics) are utilized to show how language lends itself to meaning. Again, the importance of viewing graphics and visual images that relate to written texts and serve as alternative forms of text themselves is emphasized and studied for scholarly academic discourse. The unit culminates in a character analysis paper that addresses the stylistic devices employed by the author to create meaning within the text. As with aforementioned culminating assessments, the character analysis paper is a multi-drafted composition. Students complete a first draft of the paper and peer review the product. Once revisions are made, the instructor evaluates the work and a writing conference is held. The final draft of the paper is then submitted for grading.

Unit Four: My Novel, My Self

The Autobiography

Within this unit of study, students are be given an opportunity to select a memoir/autobiography of someone who is a member of a social group other than their own. While reading, analyzing, and studying the selected memoir, students locate and analyze various literary elements such as imagery, language, and other particular aspects of a text that contribute to theme or underlying meaning of the work and will draw comparisons between the specific incidents in the work and broader themes that illustrate the writer's important beliefs or generalization about life from the selected autobiography or memoir. The unit culminates in the submission of an ongoing discovery journal that explores the student's relation to the text, society, and language.