

Advanced Placement English Language and Composition 2023-24 Summer Assignment Packet

Dear AP Language Student,

We are excited that you have elected to take Advanced Placement English Language and Composition. Like other AP courses, this course offers a college-level curriculum. More specifically, this class aligns to a college-level introductory course in rhetoric and writing, and as such, you have the opportunity to earn **college credit** with success on the AP Lang exam.

Before we get into what you're required to do over the summer, let's talk a bit about what the course is. AP English Language and Composition is designed to allow students to read and carefully analyze a broad and challenging range of nonfiction texts. We use the term "text" to refer to anything that can be read and analyzed, including essays, speeches, letters, news articles, op-eds, advertisements, documentaries, images, charts, graphs, social media posts...the list goes on. Over the course of the year, you will deepen your awareness of rhetoric and how language works - to move and to manipulate, to persuade and to polarize, to inform and to indoctrinate. You will become an expert at interpreting and analyzing arguments in all forms, which is a skill that applies beyond the classroom.

But AP Lang is not *only* about reading, of course. You will write. You will write a lot. Over the course of a year, you will compose essays in a variety of modes for a variety of audiences. You will develop your own writing voice and an ability to articulate how the resources of language function in any given text. You will write in both formal and informal contexts. You will take part in imitation exercises, journals, collaborative essays, extended out-of-class essays, and timed, in-class essays, all in order to help you become a more confident writer, to employ techniques you have witnessed being utilized by authors you have read.

In his book *On Writing*, author Stephen King describes the act of writing in this way:

You can approach the act of writing with nervousness, excitement, hopefulness, or even despair...with fists clenched and your eyes narrowed, ready to kick ass and take down names. You can come to it because you want a girl to marry you or because you want to change the world. Come to it any way but lightly. Let me say it again: *you must not come lightly to the blank page.* (King 106)

We'll go out on a limb and guess that this is how many of you are approaching AP Lang: with a mixture of **nervousness**, **excitement**, **hopefulness**, and maybe even a bit of **despair**. But if you approach this course as King advises writers to approach the blank page - *any way but lightly* - we truly believe it can be one of the most valuable courses you take during your time at Weddington High.

That all starts now, with this year's summer assignment. This year, you will read excerpts from a book called *Thank You for Arguing* (an excellent intro to the ideas explored in the course), a few essays that will get you started off on the right foot, and an AP essay prompt with accompanying student sample essays.

Summer Assignment Instructions

- 1) Purchase a copy of *Thank You for Arguing* by Jay Heinrichs (preferably the 4th edition, though the 2nd or 3rd editions will also work). Read and complete the accompanying assignment, which you can find at the end of this document, [or by clicking here](#).
- 2) Read and annotate each of the texts included at the end of this document: “How to Mark a Book” by Mortimer J. Adler, “The Pleasure Principle” by Philip Larkin, and “Two Ways of Seeing a River” by Mark Twain. (Note: You are not required to answer the discussion questions at the end of the Twain passage).

Early in the year, we will work on focusing your annotations. For now, your goal is to document your thoughts and demonstrate that you are reading actively. Some suggestions for annotation:

- Underline or highlight major points or important, forceful statements
- Circle or highlight key words or phrases.
- Define unfamiliar vocabulary.
- Star the few most important points made by the author.
- Number sequences.
- Write in the margins. Ask questions. Summarize difficult sections. Write your thoughts about passages that surprise you, disturb you, or resonate with you.

While “How many annotations do I need?” is not a question we will answer, just remember: the goal of annotating is to help YOU process what you’re reading. Reading actively is an absolute must in AP English Language and Composition, where you will often be assigned challenging texts that you may not “get” with only a quick, cursory read.

All annotations must be written by hand to earn credit. Be sure to bring your annotations on the first day of class. Annotations will be collected for your first grade of the semester.

***BE PREPARED FOR A TEST ON THESE TEXTS ON THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL.**

- 3) Read the Rhetorical Analysis essay prompt and accompanying student sample essays. Annotate each sample essay, paying attention to what works and doesn’t work in each essay. Then, read the scoring commentaries for each essay, which gives each essay’s score. You will also find a College Board scoring guide attached at the back of the packet.

***THANK YOU FOR ARGUING ASSIGNMENT (in Google docs) and ANNOTATIONS (on paper) MUST BE COMPLETED BY THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL. PLEASE FEEL FREE TO EMAIL YOUR TEACHER IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS.**

We hope that your summer will be enjoyable, and we look forward to working with you in the fall.

Sincerely,

Mr. Cole (joshua.cole@ucps.k12.nc.us)

Mr. Calandro (anthony.calandro@ucps.k12.nc.us)

AP Language and Composition Instructors