

AP Language and Composition Course Description, Class Expectations, and Summer Assignment Instructions

If you are enrolled in AP English Language and Composition, here are some things you should know before the start of summer:

1. AP English Language and Composition is a college level course that involves you reading and writing at an advanced level. It is not a remediation course. If you are not reading on grade level or if you have difficulty writing lengthy and detailed essays, you may struggle with the course content.
2. There is a summer reading assignment, and it is attached to this notice. You are expected to complete this assignment before the start of school in August (read 2 books, complete the dialectal journals, write 2 essays). Electing not to complete this assignment will jeopardize your first quarter grade from the start (and also affect the first impression you give the teacher). You can purchase these books at Barnes and Noble or online retailers. You are responsible for obtaining these books.
3. Since you have willingly registered for this course, you have already signed the “Program Expectations and Agreement” which outlines parent/teacher/student relationships, schedule changes or corrections, summer and winter assignments, the Honor Code, and AP Exams, and are aware of the expectations.
4. You should not take this course if you generally do not enjoy Language Arts classes. Many students have the misconception that “I speak English. I need the English credit. I’m just going to take AP.” You would not sign up for AP Physics unless you really enjoy (and are proficient in) Physics; it is exactly the same for Language Arts classes. If you hate reading and writing, this is not the class for you.
5. Your end goal is to demonstrate proficiency in reading, writing, analysis, synthesis, and argument as determined by the AP Exam in May. Everything you do both in and out of class builds up to this goal, and ultimately it is your responsibility to be prepared for the exam.
 - One of the keys to performing well is being “well read.” As you read more widely, your vocabulary becomes broader and richer. Exposure to a variety of literature will allow you to recognize good writing styles and to imitate their correctness in your own writings. By the end of the year you will have to be able to read challenging texts quickly and accurately. Like anything (sports, music, etc.), the only way to improve is to practice frequently.
 - Another key to performing well is developing a writing style that incorporates depth of thinking in analysis of a writer’s techniques, methods, and style and presenting intelligent papers about such concepts.
6. To be successful, you must possess the following qualities:
 - Self-discipline and maturity: Take responsibility for your actions and decisions. Understand that behaviors demonstrated in some of your high school classes are not appropriate for an AP classroom.
 - A good work ethic: You cannot slack off, copy someone else’s work, and/or do just enough to “get by” and expect to be successful. Put forth your best effort and be proud of what you do.
 - Organization: If you are taking a number of advanced courses or participate in a number of extracurricular activities, you need to find a way to balance your load. You will not get extensions on deadlines because you have practice, or a job, or an assignment due in APUSH.
 - An open mind and respect for others: This course involves discussion, debate, and analyzing and constructing arguments. You will not agree with everyone’s views, nor will everyone agree with you. That is okay. All discourse will remain respectful and professional.
 - Collaboration skills: Interaction with your peers is a big component of this class. You need to be able to work effectively with others (remaining on task, engaging in exchange of ideas, sharing tasks and responsibilities).

So, what exactly does AP English Language and Composition entail? The following information is from the College Board/Advanced Placement English Language and Composition Course Description:

AP English Language and Composition course aligns to an introductory college-level rhetoric and writing curriculum, which requires students to develop evidence-based analytic and argumentative essays that proceed through several stages or drafts. Students evaluate, synthesize, and cite research to support their arguments. Throughout the course, students develop a personal style by making appropriate grammatical choices. Additionally, students read and analyze the rhetorical elements and their effects in non-fiction texts, including graphic images as forms of text, from many disciplines and historical periods.

Prerequisite: Students should be able to read and comprehend college-level texts and apply the conventions of Standard Written English in their writing.

The AP English Language and Composition course is designed to help students become skilled readers and writers through engagement with the following course requirements:

- Composing in several forms (narrative, expository, analytical, argumentative essays) about a variety of subjects
- Writing that proceeds through several stages or drafts, with revision aided by teacher and peers
- Writing informally (imitation exercises, journals, collaborative writing) which helps students become aware of themselves as writers and the techniques employed by other writers
- Writing expository, analytical, and argumentative compositions based on readings representing a variety of prose styles and genres
- Reading nonfiction (essays, speeches, technical writing, science writing, criticism) selected to give students opportunities to identify and explain author's use of rhetorical strategies and techniques
- Analyzing graphics and visual images both in relation to written text and as alternative forms of text themselves
- Developing research skills and the ability to evaluate, use, and cite primary and secondary sources
- Conducting research and writing argument papers in which students present an argument of their own that includes the analysis and synthesis of ideas from an array of sources
- Citing sources using a recognized editorial style (Modern Language Association)
- Revising their work to develop:
 - A wide-ranging vocabulary used appropriately and effectively
 - A variety of sentence structures, including appropriate use of subordination and coordination
 - A balance of generalizations and specific, illustrative detail
 - An effective use of rhetoric, including tone, voice, diction, and sentence structure

One of the biggest factors in your success in this course and on the AP Exam in May is the effort you put forth. If you actively participate, complete assignments as instructed, accept and learn from constructive feedback, you should be rewarded with a passing score on the exam (which means FREE college credit).

If you have questions during the summer regarding the course (expectations, summer reading assignment, etc.), I can be reached via email. If you are up for the challenge of AP English Language and Composition, then I welcome you and look forward to our year together!

Mrs. Ingram

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AP English Language and Composition
Summer 2016 Reading Assignment

1. Choose ONE of the following titles:

- *In Cold Blood* by Truman Capote
- *Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America* by Barbara Ehrenreich
- *How Starbucks Saved My Life: A Son of Privilege Learns to Live Like Everyone Else* by Michael Gates Gill
- *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* by Rebecca Skloot
- *The Glass Castle* by Jeannette Walls

2. *The Overachievers: The Secret Lives of Driven Kids* by Alexandra Robbins

If you have read any of the choice books for another class, please do not choose it again for this class.

Because you are asked to read, analyze, explain, and interpret the items we are reading in the course of the year, it is important that you do not substitute Spark Notes or other summaries or condensations, nor should you rely on movie versions of the books if available, since they are different. The best way to be successful with this assignment, or any other assignment during the year, is to read the books carefully and thoughtfully. The bottom line is that **you must do all the reading assignments; therefore, be sure to begin summer reading early in order to complete the assignments on time** (especially if you are taking more than one AP course). Those students who wait until August to begin the summer reading often cannot give the reading assignment the full concentration it requires.

Assignment #1: Dialectal Journal

As you read, keep a dialectal journal for each book. You should write these journals in one notebook. Do not type your journals. These journals will consist of quotations to which you will respond critically. **Journals are due on Friday, August 19th.**

Select one quotation or passage for approximately every 15 pages. Respond to the quotations by focusing on the way the author uses language to create an effect. What is it about the language that stands out and makes the quotation/passage distinctive? How does the passage reflect the author's style and reveal larger themes of the work? Responses should be developed thoughtfully and intellectually. Responses should be no less than 60 words in length. The dialectal journals should be constructed in the following manner:

Page Range	Quotation	Response
Pages 1-15	"This is where you write the quote from the book. Be sure to copy it precisely as it is written and include MLA citation" (14).	Your response and analysis of the quote should be written on the right side of the page. For the response column, you have several ways you can respond: <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Raise questions about the beliefs and values implied in the text○ Give your personal reactions to the passage○ Discuss the words, ideas, or actions of the author or a character○ Tell what it reminds you of from your own experiences○ Write about what it makes you think or feel○ Argue with or speak to the author or character
Pages 16-30	"Next quotation followed by the page number in parentheses" (25).	Next response...

Assignment #2: Essays

Essay 1: Analysis Essay

An author hopes to get a message (or several) across in his/her writing. Using the book you selected from the list, think about a significant message the author hopes to convey to his/her audience and write an essay analyzing how the author communicates that message. Do not just tell what that message is, but also explain how the author gets that message across in the book. You may consider:

Character action	Language choices
Character relationships	Figures of speech
Tone	Symbols
Setting	Descriptions
Facts/details	Cause and effect relationships

These are not the only devices that you may choose to discuss in your essay; they are merely suggestions. Keep this essay in 3rd person. Instead of writing “**I think** the author wants the reader to understand how the choices **we** make affect more than just **our** own life but also the lives of others. **I think** this because in the second chapter **you** see when he says...,” phrase your statements as “The author wants the reader to understand how the choices one makes affects more than his or her own life; it affects the lives of others. The author communicates the idea starting in the second chapter when he begins with sharing a personal experience...”

Essay 2: Persuasive/argument Essay

Identify one of the main arguments of your choice book. Respond to this argument in the form of a multiple paragraph persuasive essay in which you take a position on the argument presented. Support your argument with examples from the text. You may not use any other sources or materials. Keep this essay in 3rd person as well.

Both essays are due on Friday, August 19th and must include:

- For your heading, put your name, the date, my name, the class, and the assignment name in the top left-hand corner. Use MLA format...look this up online if you do not know what this is: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>
- An interesting title (centered)
- An introduction with an interesting opener, the author and title, the thesis statement (the message the author hopes to convey/the argument you've identified), and the reasons (the ways the author gets that message across/your stance on the argument)
- Several body paragraphs with transitions, topic sentences, specific details from the novel, strong support with your voice and insight, and at least five direct quotes for each essay with parenthetical documentation; for example: “This is a sentence from the novel that is in my paper” (152).
- A solid conclusion which draws the reader back to the topic and thesis and ends in a strong way, leaving the reader with something to think about or a final impression.

You will also be graded on:

- Proper grammar and spelling
- Active voice (few “be” verbs—am, is, are, was, were, be, being, been)
 - Active voice: *The student wrote the essay.* (Subject does the verb/“student wrote”)
 - Passive voice: *The essay was written by the student.* (The subject is acted upon...the subject does not do the verb/the essay does not write)
- MLA style: typed, double-spaced using a 12-point font—no fancy fonts please, no cover pages or folders

Each paper must be completely yours alone; besides OWL at Purdue (website listed above), do not use any resources other than the texts themselves to help you (as in no internet sources to give you ideas). The reader wants to know what you observed while reading the books, not what someone else noted. All work must be done independently. Do not do your journals or essays with a classmate. Plagiarized work will receive zeroes.