

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 upon your return to school). 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 should 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. Discipline issues and disruptive behaviors have no place in AP.
 - 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).
 - Independence: While working collaboratively is a necessary skill, equally important is the ability to complete tasks on your own. Unless specified otherwise, all work is to be completed individually. Students “sharing” answers or students who plagiarize will receive zeroes.

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 qualifying score on the exam (which could mean exemption from Freshman Composition I/II in college).

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 2017 Reading Assignment

1. *The Overachievers: The Secret Lives of Driven Kids* by Alexandra Robbins
2. Choose ONE of the following titles:
 - o *Nickel and Dime: On (Not) Getting By in America* by Barbara Ehrenreich
 - o *How Starbucks Saved My Life: A Son of Privilege Learns to Live Like Everyone Else* by Michael Gates Gill
 - o *Beneath the Surface: Killer Whales, Sea World, and the Truth Beyond Blackfish* by John Hargrove
 - o *The Glass Castle* by Jeannette Walls

**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 18th.**

Select one quotation or passage for approximately every 15 pages (with a maximum of 20; for example, if the book is over 300 pages, stop at quotation #20). 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">o Raise questions about the beliefs and values implied in the texto Give your personal reactions to the passageo Discuss the words, ideas, or actions of the author or a charactero Tell what it reminds you of from your own experienceso Write about what it makes you think or feelo 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: Essay Preparation

Our first major in-class writing assignments will be these two topics. You can prepare for these assignments by making notes as you read and outlining a draft prior to the in-class writing. The date of the writings will be announced within the first few days of school.

Essay 1: Analysis Essay

An author hopes to get a message (or several) across in his/her writing. Choose one of the books, think about a significant message the author hopes to convey to his/her audience, and write an essay analyzing how the author communicates the message you identified. 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 an anecdote...”

Essay 2: Persuasive/argument Essay

For the other book, identify one of the main arguments. Respond to this argument in the form of a multiple paragraph persuasive essay in which you take a position on the argument presented (“According to the information presented, the author feels strongly about _____, and he/she is correct/wrong because...”). Support your argument with examples from the text in addition to evidence from your observations, personal experiences, and outside “real world” knowledge.