

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

Congratulations, you have enrolled in AP English Language and Composition for the 2018-2019 school year! Since you have willingly enrolled in this course, you are agreeing to the expectations and standards set forth by the College Board. Here are some things you should know before the start of summer. It's a long list, but it is vital for you to be aware of what the course entails.

1. AP English Language and Composition is a COLLEGE LEVEL COURSE that involves reading and writing at an advanced level. It is not a remediation course. If you are currently enrolled in Intensive Reading, if you have not maintained at least a B in English Honors courses, if you are not reading and writing on grade level, and/or if you have difficulty writing lengthy and detailed essays, you may struggle with the course content.
2. There is a summer assignment and it is attached to this notice. You are expected to complete this assignment before the start of the school year. Electing to not complete this assignment will jeopardize your first quarter grade and will also affect my first impression of you as a student. You can purchase these books at Barnes and Noble or online retailers. You are responsible for obtaining copies of these books.
3. You should take this course only if you generally enjoy and excel in Language Arts classes. Many students have the misconception that "I speak English and need the English credit. I'm just going to take AP Language." You would not sign up for AP Physics unless you really enjoy and are proficient in Physics—it is the same for AP Language. If you dislike reading and writing, if you see reading as a chore, and/or if you are always looking for shortcuts on assignments, this is not the course for you.
4. 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 prepare 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 recognize good writing styles and to imitate their correctness in your own writings. By the end of the year you have to be able to read challenging texts quickly and accurately. Like sports and music, the only way to improve your skills in by practicing 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 composing intelligent and coherent essays about such topics.
5. To be successful, you must possess the following qualities as a student:
  - A. 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 and will not be tolerated.
  - B. 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. Not everything we do will count for a grade, but it is important that you complete every task with your best effort, as everything we do in class helps reinforce the skills needed to demonstrate proficiency on the AP Exam.
  - C. Organization skills: If you are taking a number of advanced courses or participate in various extracurricular activities, you will need to find a way to balance your commitments. You will not get extensions on deadlines because you have practice, a job, or homework in APUSH.
  - D. 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 yours. That is okay. All discourse will remain respectful, academic, and professional (see subset A above).
  - E. Collaboration skills: Interaction with your peers is a big component of this course. You need to be able to work effectively with others, such as remaining on task, engaging in exchange of ideas, and sharing tasks and responsibilities.
  - F. 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 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 peers and teacher
- Writing informally (imitation exercises, journals, collaborative writing) which help 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 texts (essays, speeches, technical writing, science writing, etc.) 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 syntax

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 with effort, and 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 (student expectations or the summer reading assignment), I can be reached via email. If you are up for the challenge of AP Language and Composition, then I welcome you and look forward to our year together.

Mrs. Ingram

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AP Language and Composition  
Summer 2018 Reading Assignment

1. *The Overachievers: The Secret Lives of Driven Kids* by Alexandra Robbins
2. Choose ONE of the following titles:
  - *The Road from Coorain* by Jill Ker Conway
  - *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
  - *Beneath the Surface: Killer Whales, Sea World, and the Truth Beyond Blackfish* by John Hargrove
  - *The Glass Castle* by Jeannette Walls

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 similar summaries or condensations, nor should you rely on movie versions of the books if available.** 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 the summer reading assignment 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 assignment often cannot give it 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 17<sup>th</sup>. You will add to this journal with additional out-of-class readings throughout the year.

Select one quotation or passage for every 15 pages (with a maximum of 20 per book; for example, if the book is 400 pages, stop at quote #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 or passage distinctive? How does the passage develop the author's style and reveal larger themes of the work? Responses should be developed thoughtfully and intellectually and should avoid phrases such as "this quote makes me think of..." or "I like this quote because..." 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" (12).	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"><li>○ Discuss the words, ideas, or actions of the speaker</li><li>○ Explain how the quote contributes to the overall message or theme</li><li>○ Support, challenge, or qualify the statement with your own ideas and evidence</li></ul>
Pages 16-30	"The next quotation goes here followed by the page number in parentheses" (25).	Next response...

## Assignment #2: Essay Preparation

Our first major in-class writing assignment will be these two topics. You should prepare for these assignments by reading and understanding the prompts before you begin reading, making notes in the margins and on sticky 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 convey a message (or several) in his/her text. Choose one of the books, think about a significant message the author communicates to the audience, and write an essay analyzing the choices the author makes in getting across that message. Do not just identify the message, but also explain how that message is shared and why the author chose to share it in that way. You may consider (but are not limited to):

Character action	Language choices	Symbolism
Character relationships	Tone	Cause and Effect Relationships
Setting	Figures of speech	Descriptions
Anecdotal evidence	Facts/details	Rhetorical appeals

These are not the only devices and strategies that you may choose to discuss in your essay; they are merely suggestions of what to consider when looking at how the author is communicating his message. Write this essay from a 3<sup>rd</sup> person point of view. Avoid phrases like “**I think** the author wants **you** to understand how the choices **we** make can affect not just **your** own life but the lives of others. **I think** this because in the second chapter, **you** see when he says...” Instead, rephrase it as “The author wants the reader to understand how the choices a person makes can affect not just his own life but the lives of others. The author introduces this idea in the second chapter with an anecdote...” See the difference?

### Essay 2: Argument/Persuasive Essay

For the book you did not choose for the Analysis Essay, write an essay that identifies one of the author's main arguments (claims, assertions, opinions supported by evidence). Respond to this argument in the form of a multiple paragraph persuasive essay in which you take a position on the argument presented. It can follow a format such as “According to the information presented, the author feels strongly about \_\_\_\_\_. He/she supports this claim with (evidence, examples, facts, anecdotes). He/she is correct/wrong because...” Support your argument with examples from the text in addition to evidence from your own observations, experiences, readings, and outside “real world” knowledge. This essay can be written from a 1<sup>st</sup> person point of view, especially when you are explaining your own personal experiences.