

## AP Language and Composition

### Course Overview:

The 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. (College Board, AP Language and Composition Course Overview)

### Course Requirements as stated in the AP English Language Course Description:

- Composing in several forms (e.g., narrative, expository, analytical, and argumentative essays) about a variety of subjects
- Writing that proceeds through several stages or drafts, with revision aided by teacher and peers
- Writing informally (e.g., imitation exercises, journal keeping, 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 (e.g., essays, journalism, science writing, autobiographies, criticism) selected to give students opportunities to identify and explain an author's use of rhetorical strategies and techniques<sup>1</sup>
- Analyzing graphics and visual images both in relation to written texts 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 (e.g., Modern Language Association, The Chicago Manual of Style)
- Revising their work to develop:
  - wide-ranging vocabulary used appropriately and effectively;
  - A variety of sentence structures, including appropriate use of subordination and coordination;
  - Logical organization, enhanced by techniques such as repetition, transitions, and emphasis;
  - A balance of generalization and specific, illustrative detail; and
  - An effective use of rhetoric, including tone, voice, diction, and sentence structure.

### Grading and Grading Policies

- **Journals** – Beginning in the summer and throughout the year, students will explore their thinking about reading and practice their expression of ideas by writing journals. The entries will take various forms over the course of the year.
- **Assigned Writings** -- Students will complete several multi-draft essays. Papers will be assessed on the strength of assertions, quality of evidence, and sophistication of style.
- **Timed In-Class Writings** – Much of our testing will be timed in-class essays with prompts similar to those students will see on the AP Exam.
- **Presentations** – Students will complete various presentations, both formal and informal.

- **Research** – Students will complete a number of research assignments in MLA, APA and Chicago documentation styles. There is a long-term research assignment examining a focus in American culture: American women, Poverty in America, Race in America, American Education, Class in America, America's Role in the World, or American Politics. Students will read numerous nonfiction articles, identify a longer nonfiction work to read in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter, and will compose and revise the paper in the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter.
- **AP Exam Preparation** – Throughout the course, students will practice both objective and timed open-ended AP exam questions. That preparation will come from the College Board released exams and students will work regularly to prepare. In the first weeks of school, students will take a full objective portion of the exam in order to establish a baseline score. In the third quarter, students will take another full objective portion to measure growth.
- **Vocabulary** – Students will learn new terms in context in order to develop a wide-ranging vocabulary.
- **Late Work** – Late work is generally not accepted unless the student has spoken with me to arrange an extension. Extension may be granted with penalty if the situation deems it.
- **Extra Credit** – There are no extra credit assignments, but students may revise writing assignments for an average score between the original and the revision.
- **Plagiarism/Cheating** – Any cheating or plagiarism will receive a grade of a 0 without the possibility of revision or re-submission. There are some minor cases of unintentional plagiarism that may be resolved through re-teaching, revision and resubmission for a penalized grade, rather than a 0. These minor errors might include very minor errors in citation; however, any essay that reveals a blatant disregard for documentation rules, copying, or copying and pasting from any source will not be subject for this revision.

### Major Works

- *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald
- *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain
- *The Other Side of the River* by Alex Kotlowitz
- *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* by Rebecca Skloot
- *The Awakening* by Kate Chopin
- *The Things They Carried* by Tim O'Brien
- *Death of a Salesman* by Arthur Miller
- Various shorter pieces will be regularly assigned

### Unit 1: Race and Rhetoric; An Introduction to Rhetoric, Close Reading and Argument (eight weeks)

- Course Elements to Establish during Unit 1:
  - First Quarter Journal Assignment: Students will read one article a week about the research topic in American culture, keep track of new vocabulary terms in the vocab log and write about the rhetorical strategies.
  - Vocabulary Logs: Students will keep a running vocabulary log with terms they encounter in their reading that is unfamiliar to them.
  - Research Assignment: A year-long research assignment begins in quarter one, as students begin their journal assignment. They start by reading one article a week and begin to identify a focus of American culture: American women, Poverty in America, Race in America, American Education, Class in America, America's Role in the World, or American Politics.
  - Rhetorical Terms – Students will receive a list of rhetorical terms.
  - Practice AP Exam – Students will take the objective portion of a former AP Exam to introduce the format and establish a baseline score.
  - Summer Reading – Students will build a synthesis essay on whether or not *Huck Finn* is an appropriate reading assignment. Students will draft essays, peer conference and revise. The focus is on writing a structured and supported argument in sophisticated writing style.
  - Timed Writing – Students will write a timed essay on *The Other Side of the River*, built from prompts from former AP Exams. We will use this opportunity to review former student answers to the

prompt and examine the AP Readers scores and Commentaries. After than examination, students may revise their first timed writing.

- Quiz: MLA Citation Review

#### Readings:

- Summer Reading Assignments: *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain and *The Other Side of the River* by Alex Kotlowitz
- “People Like Us” by David Brooks
- “Still I Rise” by Maya Angelou
- Various articles pertaining to the long-term research assignment
- “Good Readers and Good Writers” by Vladimir Nabokov
- Excerpts from “How to Mark a Book” by Mortimer Adler
- “What Do Students Need to Know about Rhetoric?” by Hepzibah Roskelly
- Chapters 1-4 in *Everything’s an Argument*
- “Professions for Women” by Virginia Woolf
- “I Want a Wife” by Judy Brady
- “Ain’t I a Woman” by Sojourner Truth
- *The Awakening* by Kate Chopin -- Students read *The Awakening* by Kate Chopin and will conduct a Socratic Seminar discussing the novel.

#### Viewing:

- Political cartoons on the controversy over the “N” word in *Huck Finn*; students will learn OPTIC as a method to analyzing visual medium and will write a short paper explaining the purpose and comment of the illustrator

Writing Assignments: summer reading journals; synthesis paper on *Huck Finn* with revisions; timed essay on *The Other Side of the River* with revisions; timed essay from former AP Exam; First Quarter Journals, Socratic Seminar Reflection.

### Unit 2: The American Dream (eight weeks)

- Journals: Students will keep dialectical journals on *The Great Gatsby* and will lead class discussions.
- Rhetorical Terms: Students will examine, identify and evaluate rhetorical devices in speeches, fiction and nonfiction. Students will imitate various uses of rhetorical device and will take a quiz on rhetorical terms.
- Vocabulary Logs
- Writing Focus: Rhetorical Analyses and Timed Writing
- Revision Focus: Structure and Style – Students will review academic vocabulary and sentence structures in order to improve the sophistication of their own writing. Students will evaluate writing style of professional authors and imitate. They are also learning rhetorical terms and will not only define and identify, but also use these devices in their own writing.

#### Reading:

- “Gettysburg Address” by Abraham Lincoln
- “I Have a Dream” by Martin Luther King, Jr.
- *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald
- Analyze visual images including “The Great GAPsby” with OPTIC
- “I Hear America Singing” by Walt Whitman
- “Let America Be America Again” and various poems by Langston Hughes
- “American Dream a Biological Impossibility, Neuroscientist Says” by Brando Keim
- “How to Restore the American Dream” by Fareed Zakaria

- “The Case for Working with Your Hands” by Matthew B. Crawford
- “On Dumpster Diving” by Lars Eighner
- “Celestial Eyes: From Metamorphosis to Masterpiece” by Charles Scribner III
- “The End of Solitude” by William Deresiewicz
- “Growing up Digital, Wired for Distraction” by Matt Richtel
- *Death of a Salesman* by Arthur Miller
- Chapters 5-7 of *Everything’s an Argument*
- A work of nonfiction to further the research project.

Writing Assignments: Dialectical journals; visual analysis using OPTIC, rhetorical analysis timed essay with revisions; AP Exam synthesis essay; assigned synthesis essay with peer conferences

### Unit 3: Researching and Writing the Argument (eight weeks)

- Journals: Students will maintain a dialectical journal on *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*
- Vocabulary Logs
- Writing Focus: Research writing, synthesis timed writing
- Revision Focus: Weaving outside sources smoothly into student writing, research writing, maintaining unity and sophisticated writing style in research writing
- Documentation Styles: MLA and APA Documentation

Reading:

- *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* by Rebecca Skloot
- Chapters 7-9 in *Everything’s an Argument*
- Chapter 13 in *Everything’s an Argument*
- Chapters 17-22 in *Everything’s an Argument*
- Sources for individual research assignment

Writing Assignments: Students will focus on developing strong research strategies including narrowing a research topic, evaluating sources, citing in MLA and APA documentation styles, organizing and synthesizing information, thesis writing, and writing a sophisticated synthesis. Students will draft, revise and submit a major research paper in MLA documentation style. Students will present an argument about an element of American culture supported by a number of primary and secondary sources. Topics of writing workshop this quarter include writing a sophisticated thesis statement, organizing the ideas in a logical arrangement, synthesizing sources, weaving sources with student writing, maintaining a focused and unified paper, and editing for a sophisticated writing style, focusing on vocabulary, sentence construction and syntax.

### Unit 4: The Essay as an Art Form (eight weeks)

- Journals: Students will participate in an online forum with original posts and comments based on class readings and class discussions
- Writing Focus: APA Documentation, the personal essay, rhetorical film analysis
- Revision Focus: Students will workshop to produce narrative and synthesis essays. In addition, students will review their writing portfolio and select one essay from the year to revise one last time.
- AP Exam

Reading:

- *The Catcher in the Rye* by J.D. Salinger
- Chapters 15 and 19 in *Everything’s an Argument*
- Various personal, expository and argumentative essays, including:
  - “Shakespeare’s Sister” by Virginia Woolf
  - “Shooting an Elephant” by George Orwell

- “I Know Why the Caged Bird Cannot Read” by Francine Prose
- “Best in Class” by Margaret Talbot
- “My Favorite Teacher” by Thomas Friedman
- Excerpts from *Poets in the Kitchen* by Paule Marshall

Viewing: *Waiting for Superman*

Writing Assignments: A shorter synthesis paper in APA format, a personal essay, a film analysis, online journals

Revision