

# Advanced Placement Language and Composition

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## Course Description:

Welcome to AP English, Language and Composition. I am delighted to be working with you this year as we strive to expand your critical reading acumen and your writing style and repertoire. The AP® English Language and Composition course is designed to “cultivate the reading and writing skills that students need for college success and for intellectually responsible civic engagement” (College Board). We will do this by introducing you to a variety of texts from time periods ranging across the breadth of human writing. We will also introduce you to a variety of rhetorical situations and give you experience writing in different rhetorical modes. Over the course of the semester, you will learn to analyze both visual and written arguments for purpose and effect, and respond to the ideas of others through writing and discussion. You will learn to synthesize these various ideas in your own writing, citing them with proper MLA formatting. And finally, you will learn to write for various audiences while developing your own personal style and voice. You will practice the conventions of standard written English, while simultaneously developing an understanding and appreciation of the English language in all its written and spoken forms.

## Course Goals:

- To enable students to identify themselves as writers
- To develop students’ confidence in writing as they define their personal voices and style
- To develop students’ facility with writing
- To develop students’ critical analysis skills in reading and writing
- To help students develop into informed citizens

## Required Texts and Materials:

- Several nonfiction pieces that range from creative nonfiction to argument to autobiography and more. These will be on OneNote, Canvas, or paper.
- A composition notebook.
- OneNote, Canvas, Membean, AP Classroom.

## Class Policies:

The following are general policies regarding day-to-day operations in class:

1. There is no such thing as extra credit.

2. Turn assignments in on time. Because this is a college-level class, I will exercise the same stringency I do with my college students; that is, no late work will be accepted. If you have an emergency that might encourage me to make an exception to this rule, you should write me a professionally worded and formal email laying out the circumstances of your petition for exception.
3. I will use **Skyward** to record grades and communicate with your parents. Both you and they can check your progress at any time.
4. Additionally, I will ask you to submit all major papers to Turnitin via Canvas. I will show you how to do this. Canvas will be the main location for work, submission, and deadlines.
5. Classroom Behavior: Each student is required to conduct himself/herself in an appropriate manner at all times. Show respect for every person in the classroom. Racist, sexist, or other offensive or discriminatory language will not be tolerated.
6. Cell phones must be turned off or silenced during class. If I see your phone, I will ask you to put it away. If I have to ask again, I will take it and you can retrieve it from the front office with all the penalties attendant. Additionally, you should keep your laptops closed and earbuds put away until such time as I tell you that they are allowed.
7. Going to the Bathroom: Please use the six minute class-change time to use the restroom if you can. I will, of course, allow you go when you really need to, but don't make it a habit to always use my class time as your bathroom time—we have a lot to do accomplish in this class and limited time in which to accomplish it.
8. Class Expectations: We are a community of learners. Complete the assignments on time and be ready to participate in discussion. Participation should demonstrate thoughtfulness, politeness and the use of listening and conversation skills. Group discussions and reports to the class need to demonstrate the participation of all members. You are expected to arrive on time to class, prepared for the day's class. This means having completed the assigned reading and assigned homework, bringing a copy of homework to class, and being prepared to participate actively for the entire period.

### **Plagiarism**

**The following plagiarism statement is borrowed from Patricia Cain, a teacher of AP Language and Composition and a trainer in that program.**

Because of the accelerated course content and atmosphere, as well as the clear expectations for academic honesty, it is the responsibility of each student to adhere to a high **code of honor and integrity**. Students work hard and deserve to succeed. It is in an atmosphere of trust, comfort and openness that learning will take place. This relationship of mutual respect between the student and the teacher requires honesty in all situations. Should cheating or plagiarism occur, the student will receive no credit for the assignment, be referred to his or her assistant principal for disciplinary action, and be subject to possible removal from the AP program. In addition, a student involved in an instance of academic dishonesty should be aware of the ramifications regarding teacher recommendations and college admission.

**Cheating and plagiarism are serious offenses.** They include:

- Stealing passages or ideas from any other source and using them in your own writing assignments without proper documentation
- Collaborating with another student on an individual assignment, including close reading guides
- Recording/copying/repeating test questions or answers to pass to other students and/or receiving copied questions or answers, including timed writing prompts
- Using technology to “share” prompts, tests, or other graded assignments
- Cheating on a quiz or test.

### **Assignments:**

Because this is a college-level class, you should expect that the work load will be commensurate with college expectations. For that reason, be prepared to do both a substantial amount of reading and writing.

Reading & Quizzes: You will read several works of nonfiction, including narrative nonfiction, academic and news articles, memoirs and autobiographies, and exploratory and personal essays. As pre-college students, I will expect you to do a good bit of reading outside of class, and there will be quizzes to incentivize you to complete this reading.

For each of the works we read, we will consider rhetorical context—purpose, audience, and strategies—as we focus on close reading. We will concentrate on recognizing strategies and tactics that authors use to persuade, to explain, to entertain, and to justify.

Writing: We will explore each book and essay, article, visual, etc. through a series of both formal and informal writings. The formal papers are described in detail below (see the bottom of each unit on the schedule).

We will also engage in several less formal kinds of writing. You will write in various informal modes, including

- dialectical journal writing
- freewriting
- personal response
- peer dialoging
- mentor-text imitation
- and others.

This will give you an opportunity to explore the themes and styles of the class, as well as your own beliefs and evolving thinking about the issues discussed, without the pressure of an essay grade.

Visual Analyses: Also during this first unit and continuing throughout the semester, we will consider the various formats in which an argument can be made, from visual, to oral, to written. And because you have grown up in an image-saturated culture, we will start our analysis of argument by dissecting some powerful visual arguments.

Vocabulary: We will be using a software program that individualizes vocabulary for each student called Membean. As AP students, your vocabularies are often more advanced than many of your peers, so I'm hoping this software program can push you to develop those even further. Completion of vocabulary exercises, with the subsequent weekly quiz, will be checked and graded on a weekly basis.

Grammar & Style Exercises: Even my brightest college students often lacked an understanding of the basics and the metalanguage of grammar and mechanics. I want you to have that. As a result, we will be conducting a modified DGP program (many of you have done DGP—for those who have not, I will explain in greater depth in class how this program works). We will also explore a variety of sentence styles and syntactic arrangements that can help your writing gain style and flair. We will do this by examining and then imitating mentor sentences.

## Brief Schedule

First Quarter/Term:

Course Orientation, Introduction to Close Reading, Rhetorical Awareness, and Rhetorical Analysis.

The course will be designed around some of the most fundamental questions in human thought and philosophy: What does it mean to be human? What does it mean to be a good, an ethical human? What are the limits of human?

This quarter we will explore answers to the first two questions. We will read a variety of essays and philosophies from ancient to modern. We will analyze visual rhetoric and the ways that non-print media can be used to address a rhetorical situation. We will also explore the question of good and ethical behavior as we read the nonfiction book, *The Life of Frederick Douglass*.

Major Paper #1: After considering these essential philosophical questions, students will draft a rhetorical analysis essay. After initial drafting, students will peer review one another's papers, suggesting changes that need to be made before the paper is then submitted to me for *my* feedback. I will comment on each individual paper, but I will also use your papers as a jumping-off point for future instruction. This will help me to construct lessons on areas that the whole class may be in need of. If, for example, everyone struggled with introductions and transitions, we will take special care to review introductions and transitions. At that point, students will have an opportunity for one final revision.

Second Quarter/Term:

During the second nine weeks, we will continue to focus on the rhetorical situation and how to effectiveness analyze rhetoric. We will look at famous arguments ancient and modern as exercises in analysis but also as models for writing argument ourselves.

Major Paper #2: We will consider questions of racism, gender, corruption, and dignity. Drawing on this reading and our reading of other, shorter works, students will draft argument essays laying out a position on one of these topics, considering counter positions, and arguing for a course of action or belief. This paper,

too, will undergo a rigorous writing process including peer and instructor feedback and the resultant revisions.

We will also begin the Synthesis Research Project by selecting and then narrowing research topics and questions through exploratory research.

Third Quarter/Term:

In the second half of the course, we will anchor our discussions around synthesis and research. After choosing a research question, we will explore gathering sources and using them to construct new meaning or to add information to develop knowledge.

Major Paper #3: During this block, we will learn the methods and strategies for finding, evaluating, and using research sources, and we will use these to create an annotated bibliography. You will write a research—or synthesis—paper using your collected sources in order to answer your self-chosen research question. You will use MLA to document your sources, and we will spend time in class explicitly learning these citation styles. As with all major papers, we will follow the steps in the writing process to produce thoughtful, polished work. These steps include drafting, soliciting peer and instructor feedback, and engaging in consequent revision.

Fourth Quarter/Term:

During these last few weeks together, we will review the different styles of writing we've learned about thus far, and we will practice our skills in each through a series of timed writings. Writing under the pressure of a limited time constraint is a valuable skill that you will need in college and beyond, so we will focus our efforts here in this final quarter.

We will also apply our non-fiction analysis skills to fiction in order to help transition to more fiction heavy courses next year. We will read an extended work (play or novel) of American literature chosen with both 12 English CP and 12 AP Literature in mind (and with the help and suggestion of the instructors of those courses).

This schedule is purposely brief to allow us the flexibility to go where our reading and writing takes us. However, the fundamentals of the course—the readings and writings outlined above—will structure our explorations. I am looking forward to working with each of you this semester.

*~Scribendo cogito~*