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Overview

The AP® English Language and Composition course is designed so that students may recognize, analyze, and utilize rhetoric and all its devices. Students will gain a better understanding of the relationship between reader, writer, and text, as well as develop the skills necessary to form an effective argument and synthesize information from a variety of sources and formats. Students will be exposed to rich and diverse texts; as stated in the College Board’s AP English Language and Composition Course Description, students will “understand that formal conventions of the English language in its many written and spoken dialects are historically, culturally, and socially produced.” With that, students will strive to become informed citizens, utilizing critical reading and thinking skills when reading or viewing texts. Additionally, students will develop the necessary skills to effectively communicate both in the written and spoken word.

This course is constructed in accordance with the guidelines described in the AP English Language and Composition Course Description.

The Texts

We will be reading from a variety of sources, including the following texts:

**The Language of Composition* – Renee H. Shea and Lawrence Scanlon *students each have a copy
They Say, I Say – Gerald Graff, Cathy Birkenstein, and Russel Durst
The Norton Field Guide to Writing – Richard Bullock and Maureen Daly Goggin
On Writing Well – William Zinsser

The course is broken down into four major areas:

Defining Rhetoric
Reading Rhetoric – Analysis
Writing Rhetoric – Argument
Writing Rhetoric – Synthesis

Readings will be organized thematically:

American Culture
The Human Experience
Issues of (In)Equality
Technology

For all reading assignments, students must note:

- Content
- Rhetorical Situation
- Appeals: ethos, logos, pathos
- Structure: arrangement, form, rhetorical function
- Style: diction, syntax, imagery, figurative language

In addition, each reading assignment will be accompanied by 1-3 multiple choice questions, which will help you become familiar with and prepare for the multiple choice section of the AP Exam.

The Class

Throughout the year, students will participate in a variety of classroom activities designed to promote deeper analysis of text and recognition of rhetorical devices. Such activities will be part of the classroom environment on a daily basis to reinforce the concepts presented in each quarter. Some of the activities included, but not limited to, are:

- Discussion—both in small groups and as a class.
- Socratic Circles
- Reading Circles
- News Stories “at-a-glance”—reviewing a current news piece and its components for 10-15 minutes.
- Anonymous Peer Review—both in small groups and as a class, students will review fellow classmates’ work to determine what works and what needs attention.
- Student Generated Prompts—students will create their own prompts, matching the style and focus of the current unit.

Throughout the writing process for any given assignment, students will conference with the teacher to check and review their approach and progress. Additionally, the teacher will provide the students with both written and oral feedback throughout the process and on graded assignments, examining such components as:

- Understanding of prompt / assignment
- Correct spelling, grammar, conventions of Standard English, fluency
- Structure, organization of thoughts, overall coherence
- Quality and depth of rhetorical analysis
- Appropriate vocabulary for assignment
- Use of evidence (textual, experiential, etc.) to support well-defined claims

Simply put, any late assignments will not be accepted and/or you will lose points from your grade. Obviously circumstances arise in which school is secondary—if this should happen, simply talk to me before/after class or have your parent/guardian get in touch with me (contact information at the top).

Whenever possible, let me know ahead of time if you will be out for any period of time.

Types of Assessments

- Homework – in addition to regular homework assignments, students will also have an ongoing assignment related to current events. Students will be asked to bring in one printed news story every Friday, from any media source, noting at least three major rhetorical devices utilized in the piece.
- Participation in Classroom and Small Group Discussion – please see attached rubric.
- Vocabulary Quizzes—Students will be quizzed on the major rhetorical terms to be used throughout the year, as well as any new vocabulary words or terms from our readings, in a series of quizzes. Vocabulary will continue throughout the year, with a focus on SAT® words and Greek/Latin roots.
- Essays – rhetorical analysis, argument, synthesis. These will be written: in class and at home over an extended period of time; or, in a single classroom session as preparation for the exam.
- Junior Capstone Project – this will be completed in Q4 after the exam, and will help students prepare for their next step: AP English Literature.

Classroom Participation Rubric

Does classroom participation count? YES. ALL students are encouraged and expected to engage in classroom discussions, reading, and group work. Teachers realize it can be uncomfortable raising your hand to offer your opinion or suggest an answer knowing your peers may disagree; it is this process however that builds confidence essential to flourishing in school and eventually the work place.

You are in a learning environment—I am here to guide you in the learning process—the classroom is a safe place in which you can explore new material and ask questions without scrutiny. Your classroom/group participation & etiquette will count for one (1) quiz grade each quarter.

CATEGORY	4	3	2	1
Contributions	Routinely provides useful ideas with participating in the group and in classroom discussion. A definite leader who contributes a lot of effort.	Usually provides useful ideas when participating in the group and in classroom discussion. A strong group member who tries hard.	Sometimes provides useful ideas when participating in the group and in classroom discussion. A satisfactory group member who does what is required.	Rarely provides useful ideas when participating in the group and in classroom discussions. May refuse to participate.
Focus on the task	Consistently stays focused on the task and what needs to be done Very self-directed.	Focuses on the task and what needs to be done most of the time. Other group members can count on this person	Focuses on the task some of the time. Other group members must sometimes prod, and remind to keep this person on-task.	Rarely focuses on the task and what needs to be done. Lets others do the work.
Preparedness	Brings needed materials to class and is always ready to work.	Almost always brings needed materials to class and is ready to work.	Almost always brings needed materials but sometimes needs to settle down and get to work.	Often forgets needed materials or is rarely ready to get to work.
Pride	Work reflects this student’s best efforts.	Work reflects a strong effort from this student.	Work reflects some effort from this student.	Work reflects very little effort on the part of this student.
Working with others	Almost always listens to, shares with, and supports the efforts of others. Tries to keep people working well together.	Usually listens to, shares with, and supports the efforts of others. Does not cause “waves” in the group.	Often listens to, shares with, and supports the efforts of others, but sometimes is not a good team member.	Rarely listens to, shares with, and supports the efforts of others. Often is not a good team player.
Social Behavior	Consistently follows school rules and uses appropriate behaviors and social skills when asked.	Follows school rules and uses appropriate behaviors and social skills when asked.	Follows school rules and uses appropriate behaviors and social skills only when required to do so.	Refuses to follow school rules and / or does not use appropriate behaviors or social skills.

Introduction to AP English Language and Composition

from collegeboard.com

An AP English Language and Composition course requires students to become skilled readers of prose written in a variety of rhetorical contexts and skilled writers who compose for a variety of purposes. Both their reading and their writing should make students aware of interactions among a writer's purposes, reader expectations, and an author's propositional content, as well as the genre conventions and the resources of language that contribute to effectiveness in writing.

At the heart of an AP English Language and Composition course is the reading of various texts. Reading facilitates informed citizenship and thus increases students' capacity to enter into consequential conversations with others about meaningful issues. Also contributing to students' informed citizenship is their ability to gather source materials representing particular conversations and then make their own reasonable and informed contributions to those conversations. Students' ability to engage with outside sources in their reading, writing, and research is an important measure of their intellectual growth.

While writing represents a significant component of this course, the core skill required is the ability to read well. In reading another writer's work, students must be able to address four fundamental questions about composition:

- What is being said?
- To whom is it being said?
- How is it being said?
- Why is it being said?

The answers to these questions inform students' own composition processes as they learn to read like writers and write like readers.

Reading Level of Course Texts and Volume of Reading

- Are students reading challenging texts every day?
- Do students employ rereading as an interpretive strategy?
- Do students gain sufficient practice to develop skills in reading purposefully and rhetorically?
- Do students write on a regular basis about what others have written?
- Do the selected readings provoke responses from multiple perspectives and thus generate public discussion?
- Are students given the opportunity to immerse themselves in substantive texts – ones that require several days or weeks to read – as well as texts that can be read and reread within a single class period?
- Are students spending at least 8 hours per week (both inside and outside of class) engaged in their reading and writing? Is there a clear connection between their reading and writing?
- Are students reading texts that require teacher involvement or scaffolding, or can the texts be read independently?

Course Goals

1. **Developing critical literacy:** In most colleges and universities, the course is intended to strengthen the basic academic skills students need to perform confidently and effectively in courses across the curriculum. The course introduces students to the literacy expectations of higher education by cultivating essential academic skills such as critical inquiry, deliberation, argument, reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Few colleges and universities regard completion of this entry-level course as the endpoint of students' English language education; subsequent courses in general and specialized curricula should continue building and refining the skills students practice in their rhetoric and composition courses.
2. **Facilitating informed citizenship:** While most college rhetoric and composition courses perform the academic service of preparing students to meet the literacy challenges of college-level study, they also serve the larger goal of cultivating the critical literacy skills students need for lifelong learning. Beyond their academic lives, students should be able to use the literacy skills practiced in the course for personal satisfaction and responsible engagement in civic life.

To support these goals, rhetoric and composition courses emphasize the reading and writing of analytic and argumentative texts instead of, or in combination with, texts representing English-language literary traditions. Like the college rhetoric and composition course, the AP English Language and Composition course focuses students' attention on the functions of written language in and out of the academy, asking students to practice the reading as well as the writing of texts designed to inquire, to explain, to criticize, and to persuade in a variety of rhetorical situations. In this approach to the study and practice of written language, a writer's style is important because of its rhetorical, rather than its aesthetic, function.

End Notes

Assignments, readings, announcements, and supplementary materials will be posted on the Google Classroom.

Whether you believe it or not, junior year is perhaps the most important year of high school for you—both as a student and as an individual. You have gained (or will be gaining) a tremendous amount of independence and responsibility; just driving and getting a job is a huge step out of the world of safety nets and dependency. With such steps, you begin to form a new identity, separate from your family, school, and friends you’ve grown up with—you’re beginning to truly stand on your own and decide what kind of person you are, and what image you want to project to the rest of the world. On top of all of this, you now have at least one AP course, SATs and perhaps ACTs, some serious thinking about where you want to go to college or what career you want to pursue after high school, additional standardized testing, perhaps sports or outside hobbies, some time with the family, and ideally a social life. There is a lot to tackle this year, but you will get through it, and, if given the proper attention and effort, our class will be an organic extension of your journey, rather than a burden that isolates you from what really matters.

I am looking forward to helping you along in that journey.

Please cut and detach the slip below by Wednesday, Sept. 7th.

We have received the AP Language and Composition Syllabus, understand its contents, and any questions have been asked.

Student Name: _____

Signature: _____

Parent Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____