Overview

The AP Language and Composition course develops sophisticated readers and writers who engage intelligently in sustained, original, and logical argumentation. Students interact with a variety of rhetorical genres and structures, learning and appreciating the important interplay of speaker, subject, and audience. Additionally, they express this understanding through critical analysis and interpretation of texts and synthesis of new ideas. Furthermore, students refine their close-reading abilities, augment their cooperative learning skills, develop research skills, demonstrate effective speaking and listening techniques, and acquire new vocabulary.

Objectives

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

- apply close reading strategies to annotate texts for meaning;
- engage in the process of rhetorical analysis;
- identify the components of narrative, descriptive, expository, and persuasive writing;
- characterize various types of writing by analyzing an author’s audience, purpose, tone, and style;
- identify and employ rhetorical techniques;
- examine conventional grammatical and rhetorical structures to improve personal writing and assess the writing of others;
- make appropriate inferences regarding purpose, tone, and audience of established writers;
- define and describe the effectiveness of an author’s use of figurative language;
- apply figurative language into personal writing;
- analyze fictional and non-fictional prose, poetry and visual texts while by monitoring various authors’ appeals to ethos, logos, and pathos;
- employ appeals to ethos, logos, and pathos in their own writing;
- explain and evaluate the writing of one author based on multi-text evidence and literary criticism;
- compare and/or contrast the works of two or more authors;
- research a contemporary issue by examining arguments favoring and opposing social action;
- identify, explain, and employ inductive and deductive reasoning;
- identify and avoid faulty reasoning;
- develop a position for or against a proposed social action (argument);
- employ classical reasoning that requires clear identification of argument, audience, concession, and rebuttal;
- formulate a thesis statement and support it with specific, relevant evidence;
- synthesize materials from at least three sources to defend, challenge, or qualify a position
Requirements
All students are required to take the AP Language and Composition test administered in May.

Additionally, students must maintain an AP-exclusive binder (2” minimum recommended) divided into the following sections:

- **Daily learning log**: Students will be required to keep a learning log/journal in which they take traditional notes and comments on classroom discussions and presentations made by other students, as well as complete daily classwork/homework assignments.

- **Vocabulary journal**: Students will keep a vocabulary journal of **100 words each quarter**. These words will be taken from the AP readings. Students will be required to reference the source and context of each word, record a definition, and write an original sentence with correct usage.

- **Directed reading**: Students must retain all of their directed reading articles and graphic organizers in this section (directed reading explanation to follow).

- **Course documents**: Students will include all course documentation distributed to them in class.

- **Allusion-a-Day**: Students will participate in the Allusion-a-Day series to expand their working knowledge of and familiarity with significant fiction and nonfiction texts.

- **Writing portfolio**: For each major writing assignment returned to them, students will record the date, the assignment, a self-reflection on their performance, and areas needing improvement.

Separate from the AP binder, students will also facilitate an **assertion journal** online via the class blogging site several times a month. This assertion journal challenges students to respond to a quotation through analysis and explanation. After initial observations, students are asked to agree or disagree with the quotation. Once students present their arguments, they will be asked to identify and discuss the effectiveness of a particular element of style, including comments on an author’s use of varied sentence patterns.

**Grading**: Students will complete both long- and short-term assignments, often concurrently, and the course requires homework daily. Students will receive grades for maintaining the aforementioned binder, analyses of visual texts, oral presentations, projects, classroom participation, quizzes, tests, papers, daily homework assignments, practice AP tests, etc.

Students’ overall course grades will adhere to the following percentages:

- Writing assignments, essays, papers: 30%
- Classwork (including maintenance of the AP binder): 20%
- Daily homework assignments: 20%
- Class discussion and participation: 20%
- Tests and quizzes: 10%

**Integrity**: Cheating, plagiarism, and their repercussions are clearly spelled out in the high school’s Student Handbook.
Scope and Sequence

First Quarter (Independent Reading from the Standard 11th Grade Curriculum: Of Mice and Men)

   a) The Language of Composition
   b) Key elements of Rhetoric
   c) The Rhetorical Triangle
   d) Appeals to Ethos, Logos, and Pathos
   e) Visual Rhetoric
   f) Rhetoric in Literature
   g) Patterns of Development
   h) When Rhetoric Misses the Mark
   i) E. J. Dionne, Jr. “Divisive in Any Language”
   j) Jeff Jacoby “Freedom of Hate Speech”
   k) Eugene Robinson “When Life Makes You Cry Uncle”

Writing: Students will read the above three articles with a focus on ethos, logos, and pathos, and will synthesize ideas from them to form a position on the limits of free speech. Then, with specific and direct references to at least two of the three readings, students will write an essay that supports, challenges, or modifies the statement: “Entirely free speech is no longer in the national interest.” Students will cite their sources by referring in parentheses to the author by last name. Students’ writing will address the three rhetorical appeals and style through the intentional use of varied sentence structures, diction, and literary devices. Students will meet individually with the teacher for personalized instruction on revision. Students will revise and submit essays.

a) Language of Composition
b) Analyzing Style
c) Talking with Text
d) Annotation
e) Dialectical Journal
f) Graphic Organizers
g) Close reading of Visual Text
h) Glossary of Selected Tropes and Schemes

   a) Successful responses to the analysis essay and what to avoid
   b) Literary vs. rhetorical analysis
   c) Sample analysis essay from 2018 AP Language exam

**Writing:** Analysis Essay
Option 1: Read the 1920 essay entitled “On Laziness” by Christopher Morley (LC pp. 64-65). Annotate it or create a graphic organizer; generate some questions about is style. Then, develop a thesis statement and write an essay in which you analyze the ways that the style of the piece helps Morley achieve his purpose.

Option 2: Using *Advanced Composition Skills*, students will read Poe’s “The Tell-Tale Heart” and an excerpt from Hawthorne’s *The Scarlet Letter* with a focus on diction and syntax. Knowing the writer’s sentence structure can reveal a great deal about the mentality of the character in a story. Students will study the passages, and then write an essay in which they analyze how the writer’s syntax indicates the mental state of the speaker in one of the stories, comparing it to that of the other writer. Students will peer edit and revise essays. Students will meet with the teacher after grading for individual instruction on further revisionary needs.

   a) What is argument?
   b) Staking a claim
   c) Presenting evidence
d) Shaping the argument

e) Analyzing visual texts as arguments

f) Argument terms and fallacies

g) From AP English Language and Composition: Expanding Definitions of Argument:

(1) Reading arguments actively
(2) Writing an argument essay using the classical model:
   (a) Finding a topic
   (b) Topic expansion
   (c) Thesis development
(3) Davis Guggenheim Waiting for Superman visual argument activity

Writing: Authentic argument essay: Working in small groups, students research the topic of charter schools and urban education to create a “nightstand” reading list that they think their character (from the Waiting for Superman activity above) would be interested in reading to learn more about the plight of students in struggling schools. With that research and reading list done, students watch Waiting for Superman and complete an argument-mapping chart from their character’s point of view. After students have watched the documentary and completed the chart, the generate original essay topics that acknowledge a selected point of view of one of the stakeholders in the film. They research this topic and develop authentic argument essays that enter into an existing conversation, one that contributes to this ongoing debate within education.

Second Quarter (Independent Reading from the Standard 11th Grade Curriculum: The Crucible)


   a) Using sources to inform an argument
   
   b) Using sources to appeal to an audience
   
   c) The Synthesis Essay:
       (1) Sample prompts and responses:
           (a) Outlining answers to prompts
           (b) What constitutes success

       (2) Student-generated synthesis prompts and source culmination

       (3) Writing a synthesis essay (LC)
(a) Identifying the issues: Recognizing complexity
(b) Formulating your position
(c) Framing questions
(d) Integrating quotations
(e) Citing sources

Writing: Synthesis essay: Students compose an in-class synthesis essay based upon the following prompt: Carefully read the provided eight sources (located on LC pp. 166-174), including the introductory information for each source. Then synthesize information from at least three of the sources, and incorporate it into a coherent, well-developed essay that evaluates the claim that those under age thirty are “the dumbest generation.”

6. “Education,” Chapter Five: Essential Question: To what extent do our schools serve the goals of a true education?

a) Central Essay: Francine Prose, I Know Why the Caged Bird Cannot Read

b) Classic Essay: Ralph Waldo Emerson, Education

c) Sherman Alexi, Superman and Me

d) Margaret Talbot, Best in Class

e) James Baldwin, A Talk to Teachers

f) Kyoko Mori, School

g) Kyoko Mori, On School

h) Sandra Cisneros, Eleven

i) Horace Mann, from Report of the Massachusetts Board of Education

j) Leon Botstein, High School: An Institution Whose Time Has Past

k) Todd Gitlin, from The Liberal Arts in an Age of Info-Glut

l) David S. Broader, A Model for High Schools

m) Floyd Norris, U.S. Students Fare Badly in International Survey of Math Skills (includes table)

n) Norman Rockwell, Spirit of Education (painting)

o) Student Writing: Argument: Using Personal Experiences as Evidence
p) Grammar as Rhetoric and Style: Appositives

7. Considering the American Literary Tradition:
   a) Jonathan Edwards, Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God
   b) Anne Bradstreet, An Author to Her Book
   c) James McBride, The Color of Water
   d) Edward Taylor, Huswifery
   e) Arthur Miller, The Crucible

Research Paper: Synthesis Essay: Upon completion of The Crucible, students will complete an MLA-formatted research paper based upon a thesis derived from their synthesis of information on the text, the Salem Witch Trials, and McCarthyism. Students will use a minimum of five sources including both primary and secondary. Students will learn to access and assess the validity of sources, as well as demonstrate their understanding of direct quotation, paraphrase, summary, and extended quotation, citing all properly. Students will submit thesis, outline, and annotated works cited for approval after completion of their research. Students will also engage in peer review and revision of their paper.

8. “Sports,” Chapter 9: Essential Question: How do the values of sports affect the way we see ourselves?
   a) Central Essay: Gay Talese, The Silent Season of a Hero
   b) Classic Essay: Grantland Rice, The Four Horsemen
   c) Theodore Roosevelt, The Proper Place for Sports
   d) William Faulkner, An Innocent at Rinkside
   e) Joyce Carol Oates, The Cruelest Sport
   f) John Updike, Ex-Basketball Player
   g) New York World, The Twelfth Player in Every Football Game (visual text)
   h) Sports Illustrated, Yes! (visual text)
   i) Student Writing: Rhetorical Analysis: Comparing Strategies
j) Grammar as Rhetoric and Style: Direct, Precise, and Active Verbs

Third Quarter

9. “Popular Culture,” Chapter 11: Essential Question: To what extent does pop culture reflect our society’s values?

a) Central Essay: James McBride, Hip Hop Planet
b) Classic Essay: Mark Twain, Corn-Pone Opinions
c) Scott McCloud, from Show and Tell (graphic essay)
d) David Denby: High School Confidential: Notes on Teen Movies
e) Steven Johnson, Watching TV Makes You Smarter
f) Chuck Klosterman, My Zombie, Myself: Why Modern Life Feels Rather Undead
g) Hans Ostrom, Emily Dickinson and Elvis Presley in Heaven (poetry)
h) Andy Warhol, Myths (painting)
i) Mark Tansey, The Innocent Eye Test (painting)
j) Student Writing: Analyzing Satire
k) Grammar as Rhetoric and Style: Modifiers

Writing: Now that students have examined several readings and other texts that focus on popular culture, they will explore one dimension of the topic by synthesizing their own ideas and the texts. Students may select from the options provided on pp. 884-885 LC. In addition, students will continue research on the topic. After selecting a topic, students will meet individually with me to discuss how their project will be assessed. We will establish goals and timelines. Students will properly integrate and cite all sources and prepare a works cited page in MLA format. Upon paper completion, students will peer edit and revise. Post-writing, students will meet with the teacher for personal critique and revision suggestions.

   a) Central Essay: Rachael Carson, from Silent Spring, an Entrance to the Woods

   b) Classic Essay: Ralph Waldo Emerson, from Nature

   c) Terry Tempest Williams, The Clan of One-Breasted Women

   d) Robert Crumb, A Short History of America (visual text)

   e) Royal Dutch/Shell, Let’s Go (visual text)

   f) Student Writing: Visual Rhetoric: Analyzing a Photo Essay

   g) Grammar as Rhetoric and Style: Cumulative, Periodic, and Inverted Sentences

Writing: Now that students have examined several readings and other texts that focus on the environment, they will explore one dimension of the topic by synthesizing their own ideas and the texts. Students may select from the options provided on pp. 1001-1003 LC. In addition, students will continue research on the topic. After selecting a topic, students will meet individually with me to discuss how their project will be assessed. We will establish goals and timelines. Students will properly integrate and cite all sources and prepare a works cited page in MLA format. Upon paper completion, students will peer edit and revise. Post-writing, students will meet with the teacher for personal critique and revision suggestions.

11. Considering the American Literary Tradition

   a. Rachael Carson, The Obligation to Endure


Fourth Quarter

12. “Politics:” Chapter Thirteen: Essential Question: What is the relationship between the citizen and the state?


   b. Essay: Jonathan Swift, A Modest Proposal

   c. Virginia Woolf, Thoughts on Peace during and Air Raid

   d. Henry David Thoreau, On the Duty of Civil Disobedience
e. Pablo Picasso, Guernica (visual text)

f. The New Yorker, March 17, 2003, and Harper’s April 2003 (visual texts)

g. Conversation: Focus on the Politics of Colonialism
   i. Red Jacket, Defense of Native American Religion
   ii. George Orwell, Shooting an Elephant
   iii. Chinua Achebe, The Empire Fights Back

h. STUDENT WRITING: Synthesis: Responding to a Quotation

i. Grammar as Rhetoric and Style: Subordination in the Complex Sentence

**Writing:** After reading Swift’s “A Modest Proposal,” students will choose three of Swift’s “other expedients” to write an essay in which they explain in some detail how each of them might work. Then, they will use these component solutions to synthesize a written action plan that might help to alleviate, if not eradicate, the problems associated with overpopulation and poverty. Students will discuss possible solutions with their groups and then write individually. Students will peer edit each other’s work and meet with me post-writing for individual instruction on further revision.

13. Preparing for the Multiple-Choice Segment of the AP Language Exam:
   Unifying Statement: The most effective approach for honing MC skills involves deconstruction and construction.

   a. Read each passage in its entirety first
   b. Focus on finding the correct choice for each question
   c. Deconstruction of passages and question
   d. Student-generated construction of questions
      i. Question Characteristics
      ii. Item Writing
      iii. Sample Multiple Choice Stems
   e. Joan Didion, At the Dam
f. Frederick Douglass, Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass

g. LeBron James passage

h. Sample MC passages and questions

14. Free Response Questions Review Prior to the AP Language Exam

a. AP Central.com

b. Sample free response question planning:
   i. Select an argument prompt, plan for ten minutes
   ii. Second week, do it again in seven minutes
   iii. Third week, add an analysis prompt and plan for both on 20 minutes
   iv. Fourth week, plan for both again in 15 minutes
   v. Fifth week, add a synthesis prompt, and plan for all three in 40 minutes
   vi. Sixth week, plan for all three again in 35 minutes
Works Cited

Primary Texts


Ancillary Texts


References


The AP Program offers two courses in English studies, each designed to provide high school students the opportunity to engage with a typical introductory-level college English curriculum. The AP English Language and Composition course focuses on the development and revision of evidence-based analytic and argumentative writing and the rhetorical analysis of nonfiction texts. The AP English Literature and Composition course focuses on reading, analyzing, and writing about imaginative literature (fiction, poetry, drama) from various periods. There is no prescribed sequence of study, and a school