

Advanced Placement English Language and Composition

Summer Work 2019

Welcome to AP Language! While most English courses focus on *what a work means*, this course focuses on addressing *how this meaning is created*. Consequently, a major component of the course is the careful and critical analysis of language. Through close reading, you will deepen your understanding of the way writers use language to create meaning.

To deepen your analytical reading skills, you will complete the following assignments. Both are DUE THE FIRST DAY OF CLASS and will be used as a starting point for much of what we do. Electronic copies of the summer work and other useful information can be found online at mrspixler.weebly.com. Please contact us at kpixler@nsd131.org or jstevenson@nsd131.org with questions about the summer reading or the course.

Happy reading!

Mrs. Pixler & Mrs. Stevenson

Assignment #1: *Thank You for Arguing* by Jay Heinrichs

Thank You for Arguing covers the core rhetorical teachings of Aristotle and Cicero, but Heinrichs does it entirely using modern examples, drawing on political, marketing, workplace, and cultural references, as well as his own family arguments. One paragraph discusses Socrates; the next discusses Sherlock Holmes. The balance between formal lessons and practical examples makes the book highly valuable and applicable to our study of persuasive language and writing.

Obtain a copy of *Thank You for Arguing* (a PDF is available at mrspixler.weebly.com). Read the first two sections – “Offense” and “Defense” – and take notes on the text, focusing on Heinrich’s main ideas and your “ah-ha” moments. We will return to this text throughout the year and apply the concepts to our work, starting with summer assignment #2.

Assignment #2: Journal on National Issues

The purpose of this assignment is to help you understand the ongoing discussion and argument in our nation and to practice the close reading techniques and critical thinking skills you need to master college-level English assignments. The AP English curriculum requires you to comprehend much more than just what happens; within the scope of this class, you must work to understand HOW the author uses diction and style to convey meaning and WHY these conversations are important to our understanding of the world. Furthermore, you will be asked to respond to these conversations and develop your own arguments on a wide range of issues.

This assignment requires you to read and respond to FIVE opinion articles by different columnists over national issues that are under current discussion (June-August 2019). To locate possible articles, refer to prominent newspapers or weekly magazines such as:

- * *The New York Times*: nytimes.com/section/opinion
- * *Newsweek*: newsweek.com/opinion
- * *USA Today*: usatoday.com/opinion
- * *Washington Post*: washingtonpost.com/opinions

The focus of your reading should be on the central argument that the author is making. For each article, you will complete a journal entry including the following elements.

MLA Citation

Provide the full MLA 8 citation for the article. You should refer to the Purdue OWL or tools like EasyBib to ensure your citations are correct.

Rhetorical Précis

A rhetorical précis analyzes both the content (the what) and delivery (the how) of a unit of spoken or written discourse. It is a highly structured four-sentence paragraph, outlined below, which blends summary and analysis. Each of the four sentences requires specific information. Practicing this sort of writing fosters precision in both reading and writing, forcing a writer to employ a variety of sentence structures and to develop a discerning eye for connotative shades of meaning.

1. Name of author and phrase describing the author; genre and title of work (publication date in parentheses); a rhetorically accurate verb (such as “assert,” “argue,” “suggest,” “imply,” “claim,” etc.); and a THAT clause containing the major assertion (thesis statement) of the work.
2. An explanation of how the author develops and/or supports the thesis, usually in chronological order.
3. A statement of the author’s purpose followed by an “in order to” phrase and explanation.
4. A description of the intended audience and/or the relationship the author establishes with the audience.

Key Passage & Response

Find an interesting, memorable, or provocative quotation (phrase, sentence, or paragraph) that you find significant. Quote the passage correctly; then, in 200+ words, explain the significance of this quote and why you found it captivating.

Sample Journal Entry

Tough, Paul. “To Help Kids Thrive, Coach Their Parents.” *The New York Times*, The New York Times Company, 21 May 2016, www.nytimes.com/2016/05/22/opinion/sunday/to-help-kids-thrive-coach-their-parents.html.

Bestselling author Paul Tough, in an opinion article titled “To Help Kids Thrive, Coach Their Parents” (2016), asserts that stable, nurturing environments are they key to child development, especially for children living in poverty. Tough primarily develops his argument with logos by citing multiple university studies in which parents and teachers were coached on ways to interact with children, resulting in improved noncognitive skills such as perseverance and resilience. Tough’s purpose is to inform readers about the positive impact of such coaching in order to advocate for implementing simple measures that can be taken to improve child development both emotionally and academically. Since this article is adapted from Tough’s book *Helping Children Succeed: What Works and Why*, the intended audience is professionals who work with children and families.

When analyzing the results of the 1986 experiment cited in the article, Tough states, “[it] helps make the case that if we want to improve children’s opportunities for success, one of the most powerful potential levers for change is not the children themselves, but rather the attitudes, beliefs and behaviors of the adults who surround them.” This assertion sides with the Nurture perspective in the psychological “Nature vs. Nurture” debate by discussing the impact various adults – shapers of the environment – can have on child development. Personally, I am struck by the weight of this statement and by how small the window of opportunity is to have the greatest impact on student’s future success. This further supports my views on the importance of educating parents and offering well-developed pre-schools and programs such as Head Start in our communities.

Summer SAT Practice (Optional)

All juniors will take the SAT in April; furthermore, you may elect to take PSAT/NMSQT in October. The PSAT/NMSQT is tied to numerous opportunities for recognition, including scholarships. Stay sharp on these skills by using the SAT practice tools at khanacademy.org/sat or by downloading the [Daily Practice app](#) on your phone. Study for 6+ hours and you can be entered in to monthly College Board scholarship drawings – learn more at cb.org/opportunity.