

AP® ENGLISH LANGUAGE & COMPOSITION

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COURSE DESCRIPTION & OBJECTIVES

Welcome to AP® English Language and Composition. I am looking forward to a fast-paced, productive, and enjoyable semester with you. This course could easily be the most rewarding of your educational career. Additionally, it should require you to exercise your intellect as well as academically challenge and discipline you more than ever before. Many students sign up for this course because of the potential to earn college credit hours after passing the exam offered by the College Board. While that is a fine motivation, the AP student will gain much more. Thinkers and writers are born in the AP classroom environment, which benefits the individual and the society in ways much more significant than a couple of college credits. Taking the test in the spring will be optional, but highly encouraged. Student success on the exam is not guaranteed by this course – student skill and effort will be responsible for that. The AP® Language and Composition course is designed to allow students to demonstrate exit-level proficiency from mainstream, first-year college writing courses. As you are starting out as high school juniors, we have a lot of hard work ahead of us.

As stated in the AP® English Course Description, the AP® Language and Composition course’s purpose is “to read complex texts with understanding and to write prose of sufficient richness and complexity to communicate effectively with mature readers.” As the course progresses, students will become aware of their own composition process through self-assessment and evaluations by peers and the instructor. Additionally, students will work toward becoming “skilled readers of prose written in a variety of periods, disciplines, and rhetorical contexts, and in becoming skilled writers who compose for a variety of purposes.” These rhetorical contexts will include audio and visual “texts” as well as various written argumentative forms. These skills will allow the student to read critically and write effectively in different modes in the college classroom and beyond in professional and personal life. There is much joy in becoming skilled writers and critical thinkers, even if it does require significant effort.

COURSE TEXTS

Graff, Gerald, and Cathy Birkenstein. *They Say, I Say: Moves That Matter in Academic Writing*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2005. (*Students will be responsible for purchasing this text from the bookkeeper when it arrives.*)

Lunsford, Andrea A., John J. Ruszkiewicz, and Keith Walters. *Everything’s an Argument*. 4th ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2007.

Shea, Renee H., Lawrence Scanlon, and Robin Dissin Aufses. *The Language of Composition: Reading, Writing, Rhetoric*. New York, N.Y.: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2007.

Twain, Mark. *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn: A Norton Critical Edition*. 3rd ed. New York, NY: W. W. Norton, 1998.

BRIEF COURSE OUTLINE

- I. Introduction to Rhetoric and Close Reading
- II. Rhetorical Analysis
- III. They Say / I Say: Understanding and Developing Argument
- IV. Understanding the Synthesis Essay, Multiple Choice, and the Researched Argument

ASSIGNMENTS

- Summer Assignment
- Assertion Journals
- Timed Writes
- Process Papers (argument, analysis, and synthesis)
- The Junior Research Paper (i.e. a researched argument paper or big ol' synthesis essay)
- Other sundry activities as deemed appropriate for your intellectual enhancement

INTEGRITY

A major concern of mine is the lack of integrity that is sometimes shown at school. Therefore, I want to remind you that all individual assignments are meant to be done individually, and not as a group during lunch or any other time. Should I have a good reason to suspect that you are cheating, you will get a zero on the suspicious assignment. Should you choose to cheat again, appropriate action will be taken in accordance with school policy. Cheating, as you are well aware, not only hurts students academically, but makes a mark on one's character as well.

In keeping with this perspective, the following paragraph must be submitted with all student papers. Students **must** sign below the paragraph to indicate that they are aware of this policy:

Plagiarism is using another person's thoughts and accomplishments without proper acknowledgment or documentation. It is an unconscionable offense and a serious breach of the honor code. In keeping with the policy, students will receive a zero for the plagiarized work and that breach of the honor code goes on record with the administration.

EVALUATION

I assess work in a variety of ways and will have the final word as to which assignments will be assessed for grades or credit and which will not; unlike a normal class, not *everything* you do is worth points. Even so, there will not be "filler" or the dreaded "busy work" in this class. Our activities are designed to help you gain skills in rhetoric, analysis, and college writing. Do not expect to master these skills in a semester. After eight years of post high school education, I am still working on them. Active and enthusiastic participation in class/group activities and discussions is highly encouraged as it will aid your development. **In order to receive credit** for the course a student must earn a **60%** or better *and* complete **all** major papers and timed writes.

For the AP-prompt-style timed writes, the following percentage scale will be used to convert the AP 1-9 rubric:

9 = 100%	Enhanced 8	4 = 65%	Inadequate
8 = 94%	Effective	3 = 60%	Diminished 4
7 = 87%	Augmented 6	2 = 55%	Little success
6 = 77%	Adequate	1 = 50%	Diminished 2
5 = 72%	Limited dev.; uneven		

All timed writes will be evaluated using AP rubrics and will be graded with the rigor students can expect from the actual AP exam so they can measure their improvement over the duration of the course. Initially, students will not be expected to write at the level they should be capable of writing at the end of the class. To take this into account, the timed writes that go into the grade book will be weighted. Thus each timed write will be worth more than the previous timed write to reward students for their improvement as the course progresses.

The overall grading scale is consistent with the common scale below:

93-100 percent = A	77-79 percent = C+
90-92 percent = A-	73-76 percent = C
87-89 percent = B+	70-72 percent = C-
83-86 percent = B	60-69 percent = D
80-82 percent = B-	0-59 percent = F

As in-class engagement in discussion (thinking, listening, and speaking) are vital to this course, grading will encompass these aspects as well as the more concrete products of the class. Thus, the teacher will continually assess student performance and progress as demonstrated by papers, in-class task engagement, homework, and daily preparation. Throughout the course, students will also engage in self-assessment of their work and commitment to the goals of the class.

BELIEF OF THE INSTRUCTOR

Intellects develop in community discussion and debate through engagement and participation; intellectual laziness and disengagement only foster apathetic mediocrity.

I hope you have a great semester. If you ever need extra help in my class, my door is always open.

If your parents have any questions, feel free to call or email me (I am better with email).

Best Regards,

Andrew Giddings

Cut along the line and return the portion below the line.

I understand the expectations outlined in the above letter for AP English Language and Composition and will call/email Mr. Giddings with any questions or concerns.

Printed Student Name

Parent Signature

Student Signature

Parent Email

Student Email

Your email address is important for receiving regular progress reports