

AP English Language and Composition (Grade 11) Summer Reading Assignment

Welcome to AP Language! We are very eager to introduce you to the world of rhetoric, and we hope that you are equally enthusiastic about your future exploration of this unique perspective on the English language. AP English Language and Composition is a deviation from the typical English class, so we have designed the following summer assignments both to offer you an opportunity to familiarize yourself with this type of study and to gauge the prior knowledge and skills that you will bring to our classes. Please have both assignments completed for the first day of class, and remember that everything is an argument: the work you hand in to us on the first day of class will set our expectations for the type of student you will be.

Preface

E-mail introduction to me.

Compose a letter/e-mail introduction to me. This introduction will be my first impression of you; it should tell me something interesting (e.g., hobbies, interests, passions, etc.) and familiarize me with who you are, what is important to you, your personal style—anything really that will give me a sense of who you are. Due on the first day of school OR e-mail it to me by June 27, 2008 (emailing it early= extra credit). E-mail me at cody_bema@khsd.k12.ca.us and I will e-mail you back.

Summer Reading List: Please purchase the following books to read over the summer.

- The Best American Non-required Reading 2007 – Dave Eggers (ed.)
- Fast Food Nation – Eric Schlosser

Assignment 1: The Best American Non-required Reading 2008

The Best American series produces anthologies of superior writing in various categories from a given year. (The series puts out new collections each year, so be sure to purchase the 2007 edition.) With the help of Dave Eggers, a group of high school students compiles the eclectic non-required collection, which includes everything from traditional short stories to the best names of horses expected to have undistinguished careers. This collection demonstrates the illimitable choices authors have at their disposal as they navigate the best route for their piece to achieve its purpose. Read through the entire collection paying close attention to these choices. Then pick four selections on which to respond, and write a one-page analysis of the author's choices. Devote one response to each of the following topics: structure, diction, syntax, and tone. (For example, you could talk about structure in Middle American Gothic, diction in Loteria, syntax in How to Tell Stories to Children, and tone in Darfur Diaries.) Make sure that your responses are focused and sophisticated, and use your one page wisely.

Here are some definitions that should make your life a little easier:

Tone – This refers the characteristic force (logical, ethical, or emotional) that pervades a work or part of a work—the spirit or quality that is the work’s essence—which allows the author to connect his purpose to the audience. A good preliminary technique to use in order to begin the tonal analysis of a writing sample is the SOAPS technique. SOAPS stands for the following:

S – the **S**ubject the writer is describing

O – the **O**ccasion for the writing

A – the specific **A**udience the writer addressing.

P – the **P**urpose of the writing

S - the **S**peaker’s characteristics/attitudes/views (The speaker can be the author or a persona the author assumes.)

Diction – This refers to the words which are used by the writer in his writing. There are many words in the English language which are highly connotative—that is, they have meanings and associations which go beyond the literal definitions. For example, look at the following list of words which essentially describe the same thing (beauty) and see how the words differ in their connotative meaning: lovely, attractive, cute, beautiful, hot, pretty, sexy. Usually, the diction helps the writer to convey his tone clearly. Learn to distinguish which words are used by the writer to make his tone clear.

Syntax – This refers to the sentence structures present in a piece of writing. Some common syntactical features which are used by writers include repetition and parallel structure. The use of a short sentence can emphasize a point clearly, while a long sentence can be used to delay or obscure the main point. A good writer uses different syntactical strategies to convey his tone clearly.

Structure – This is a term which covers a broad category of devices a writer can use to manipulate his writing. Structure includes such things as organization, arrangement of ideas, point of view used, style of writing used, etc.

Assignment 2: Fast Food Nation

Most of the reading material for AP Lang comes from non-fiction sources. Non-fiction varies significantly, in style and in purpose, from its fictional counterpart. Read *Fast Food Nation* with this in mind. How is this book different from the novels you are used to reading in English classes? Pay close attention to the argument, and write a two-page response to the goals of this book. Do you agree with the argument? When? Why? How does the author establish credibility? What types of evidence does the author use to support his claims? Do you see any holes in this argument? Does the author address those holes? Does the style of writing affect the effectiveness of the book? Keep these and related questions in mind as you read.

We hope you enjoy this assignment, and we are eager to discuss these selections with you next fall.