AP Language and Composition Summer Assignment: Foundations of Citizenship and Language

Welcome to AP Language and Composition!

We are excited to meet you in August. This summer assignment is designed to introduce you to foundational ideas about citizenship, your role in society, and the powerful ways language shapes our understanding of these concepts. AP Language is a course about understanding how language shapes the way people think, feel, and act. Throughout the year, we will analyze speeches, advertisements, essays, social media, political arguments, journalism, and everyday communication to better understand how language influences individuals and societies.

This summer assignment is designed to help you begin noticing the power of language before the school year even starts.

Assignment Overview

There are two parts to this assignment:

- **Part I: The Language Collection**
- **Part II: Foundational Readings**

Bring both parts with you on the first day of class. If you are unable to print the readings, copies will be provided, but you must inform us before the first day of class.

Part I: The Language Collection

Over the summer, collect **10 examples of language** that caught your attention.

Your examples can come from anywhere, including:

- Speeches
- Commercials
- TikTok captions
- Song lyrics
- Text messages
- Political slogans
- Movie quotes
- Headlines
- Memes
- Advertisements

- Social media posts
- Podcasts
- Sports commentary
- Any other source of communication

For each example:

1. Include the Example

Paste, screenshot, photograph, or copy the language.

2. Explain Why It Stands Out

In 2–4 sentences, explain what caught your attention.

3. Analyze Its Purpose

In 2–4 sentences, describe what the language is trying to make the audience think, feel, believe, or do.

Example

Language Example:
"Just Do It." — Nike

Why It Stands Out:
The phrase is extremely short and memorable. It feels motivational while also sounding confident and direct. It commands rather than suggests. It makes the complex simple.

Purpose:
The slogan encourages people to stop overthinking and take action. It connects the brand with ideas of determination, confidence, and personal achievement. It is the answer for those who ask why and procrastinate. Just do it! That's why! It makes procrastination sound like defeat.

Part II: Foundational Readings

Texts to Read and Analyze

Here are links to the four texts:

1) Plato's "Crito" grapples with the question of obedience to the law versus one's own moral compass.

2) Henry David Thoreau's "Civil Disobedience" examines the moral obligation to disobey unjust laws.
3) Martin Luther King Jr.'s "Letter from Birmingham Jail" defends peaceful protest as a means to achieve social justice.
4) John F. Kennedy's "Inaugural Address" calls for active citizenship and service to a greater good.

As you read, consider the following questions:

- What responsibilities do citizens have?
- When should people follow authority?
- When should people challenge authority?
- How does language persuade people to act?
- What makes an argument effective?

You are not required to complete a separate reading packet or worksheet.

Instead, come prepared to discuss the ideas, arguments, and questions raised by these texts. Maybe **annotated copies or notes will be helpful**.

First Week Activities

During the first week of class, you may be asked to:

- Discuss the readings in small groups and class discussions.
- Reference examples from your Language Collection.
- **Complete an assessment on the readings**.
- Write about connections between the readings and the language examples you collected.

One possible prompt might be:

"Using one of the assigned summer readings, explain how the author's ideas relate to one or two examples from your Language Collection."

Purpose of the Assignment

This assignment is not about finding the "right" answers.

It is about developing the habit of noticing language and thinking critically about how communication influences the world around you.

Successful AP Language students are curious observers of language. Begin paying attention this summer.

We hope you have a great summer and look forward to a productive and stimulating junior year! If you have any questions, you can email us at canderson@orangeusd.org and dheck@orangeusd.org.