



AP English Language Course Overview

Course Title: **Arguments for Change: Rhetoric and Reasoning as Tools for Civic Engagement**

This AP English Language and Composition course invites students to critically examine how rhetoric shapes public understanding and elevates whose voices are heard or should be heard. Text selections will expose students to a range of change movements and social topics such as urban policy, environmental instability, migration, and racial justice, while emphasizing the rhetorical choices writers make to persuade specific audiences and advance their line of reasoning.

Throughout the course, students will follow a pattern of reading others' arguments and then writing their own. This ensures students move back and forth between analyzing arguments and practicing emulating effective argumentation techniques and strategies they have encountered in their reading and analysis.

This course is structured around six thematic units that focus on how arguments are made for social change in several dimensions of American life—from the politics of identity and environmental justice to historical and contemporary debates on reparations. Students will engage with nonfiction texts including speeches, essays, investigative journalism, memoirs, and legal arguments, alongside multimedia sources such as visual art, photography, and performance. By critically analyzing how writers construct arguments within and against systems of power, students will refine their ability to craft their own persuasive and research-based writing. Ultimately, the course frames civic engagement as the disciplined practice of analyzing, evaluating, and crafting arguments that inform public discourse and decision-making.

Course At-A-Glance

Unit	Core and Supplemental Texts	Aligned FRQ Task	# of Days
Unit 1 Rhetoric I: Is this America?	Note: There is no singular core text in Unit 1. Students will read a series of anthologized texts that are thematically tied by a focus on diverse perspectives about American identity, culture, and justice. Unit 1 Texts: • This Is America by Childish Gambino • Kendrick Lamar's Super Bowl Performance 2025 • Proclamation of the Delano Grape Workers for International Boycott Day by Dolores Huerta • "Letter to his wife" by John Downe (available in AP Classroom) • "A Call for Unity: Public Statement" by Eight Alabama Clergymen • Letter from the Birmingham Jail by Martin Luther King, Jr. • "A Latina Judge's Voice" by Sonia Sotomayor (available in AP Classroom) • "My Parents Were Deported" (Excerpt) by Diane	Rhetorical Analysis	15



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	Guerrero (available in AP Classroom)		
Unit 2 Argument I: Claiming Space in American Cities	Core Text: • How to Kill A City by P.E. Moskowitz Supplemental Texts: • “What happened? A brief history of gentrification in Denver” by Robert Davis • “The Astonishing Transformation of Austin” by Lawrence Wright (Excerpted, par. 3 - 11) • “Everything you need to know about affordable housing: applying, getting in, and staying put” by Dana Schulz (Excerpted, par. 1 - 16)	Argument	22
UNIT 3 Synthesis I: Environmental Crisis and Disaster Management	Core Text: • Fire Weather: A True Story from a Hotter World by John Vaillant Supplemental Texts: • “The Effects of Climate Change” by NASA • “The Impact of Plastic on Climate Change” by Kayla Vasarhelyi • “Our House is on Fire” by Greta Thunberg • “Misinformation and distrust in Science” interview with Naomi Oreskes • “Why Some Americans Do not See Urgency on Climate Change” by Pew Research Center (excerpted) • “Why is Climate ‘Doomism’ Going Viral – And Who’s Fighting It?” by Marco Silva (excerpted) • “How Americans View Climate Change and Policies to Address the Issue” (histograms only) from Pew Research Center	Synthesis	23
UNIT 4 Rhetorical Analysis II: Perspectives on Civic Responsibility	Note: There is no singular core text in Unit 4. Students will read a series of anthologized texts that are thematically tied by a focus on diverse perspectives about civic responsibility. Unit 4 Texts: • “1965 Howard University Commencement Address” by Lyndon B. Johnson • “Presidential Announcement Speech” by Shirley Chisholm • “The Ballot or the Bullet” by Malcolm X	Rhetorical Analysis	15



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	• “These Are the Times That Grow Our Souls” by Grace Lee Boggs		
UNIT 5 Argument II: Identity and Belonging in Public Discourse	Core Text: • Our Migrant Souls: A Meditation on Race and the Meanings and Myths of “Latino” by Hector Tobar Supplemental Texts: • “The Latinos of Asia: How Filipino Americans Break the Rules of Race” by Anthony Christian Ocampo • “How to Tame a Wild Tongue” by Gloria Anzaldúa • “My Body is a Cage of My Own Making” by Roxane Gay • “Just Walk on By: Black Men and Public Space” by Brent Staples	Argument	25
UNIT 6 Synthesis II: A Case for Reparations	Core Text: • “A Case for Reparations” by Ta-Nehisi Coates Supplemental Texts: • Fannie Lou Hamer’s Testimony in Congress • “Reparations mean more than money for a family who endured slavery and Japanese American internment” by Tracy Jan • “A Tale of Two Tribal Nations” Code Switch, NPR • “There Is No Middle Ground on Reparations” by Ibram X. Kendi	Synthesis	25
UNIT 7 AP Exam Preparation	• Complete Set (AP Language 2021) ○ 2021 AP Language Exam FRQ 1: Handwriting ○ 2021 AP Language Exam FRQ 2: Barack Obama ○ 2021 AP Language Exam FRQ 3: Perfection • Synthesis (FRQ 1) ○ 2022 AP Language Exam FRQ 1: STEM ○ 2017 AP Language Exam FRQ 1: Libraries ○ 2016 AP Language Exam FRQ 1: English Language ○ 2014 AP Language Exam FRQ 1: College Worth the Cost • Rhetorical Analysis (FRQ 2) ○ 2023 AP Language Exam Set 2 FRQ 2: Rita Dove	Rhetorical Analysis Argument Synthesis	10-15



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- [2020 AP Language Exam FRQ 2](#): Lady Bird Johnson
- [2012 AP Language Exam FRQ 2](#): President John F. Kennedy
- [2010 AP Language Exam FRQ 2](#): Benjamin Banneker
- Argument (FRQ 3)
 - [2024 AP Language Set 2 FRQ 3](#): Carlos Curbelo
 - [2018 AP Language Exam FRQ 3](#): The Unknown
 - [2019 AP Language Exam FRQ 3](#): Overrated
 - [2010 AP Language Exam FRQ 3](#): Humor

Novel HS ELA

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Units At-A-Glance

Unit 1 | Rhetoric I: Anthologized Texts

Essential Questions	- How does a writer's rhetorical situation shape the choices they make? - How do writers and speakers craft rhetoric to challenge dominant ideologies and advocate for change?
Central Texts	Unit 1 Texts This Is America by Childish Gamino Kendrick Lamar's Super Bowl Performance 2025 Proclamation of the Delano Grape Workers for International Boycott Day by Dolores Huerta "Letter to his wife" by John Downe (available in AP Classroom) "A Call for Unity: Public Statement" by Eight Alabama Clergymen Letter from a Birmingham Jail by Martin Luther King, Jr. "A Latina Judge's Voice" by Sonia Sotomayor (available in AP Classroom) "My Parents Were Deported" (Excerpt) by Diane Guerrero (available in AP Classroom)
Assessments	On-Demand Essay: Adapted from 2022 FRQ 2 Sonia Sotomayor Unit Assessment: Adapted from 2011 FRQ 2 Florence Kelley Process-Based Essay: Rhetorical Analysis task aligned to the core content of the unit: Excerpt from Dr. King's Letter from a Birmingham Jail Multiple Choice: From AP Classroom aligned to unit standards
AP Language Enduring Understandings	Rhetorical Situation (RHS-1): Individuals write within a particular situation and make strategic writing choices based on that situation. Claims and Evidence (CLE-1): Writers make claims about subjects, rely on evidence that supports the reasoning that justifies the claim, and often acknowledge or respond to other, possibly opposing, arguments.
AP Language Core Skills	1.A Reading: Identify and describe components of the rhetorical situation (exigence, audience, writer, purpose, context, message). 1.B Reading: Explain how an argument reflects an understanding of an audience's values or needs. 2.B Writing: Demonstrate an understanding of an audience's beliefs, values, or needs. 3.A Reading: Identify and explain claims and evidence within an argument. 3.B Reading: Analyze the thesis of an argument and how it structures the text. 4.A Writing: Develop paragraphs with claims supported by evidence. 4.B Writing: Write thesis statements that require defense and provide argument structure.



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Unit 2 | Argument I: *How to Kill a City*

Essential Questions	- How do writers effectively connect their evidence and claims to establish a clear line of reasoning, and how can specific methods of development advance their arguments? - How do writers synthesize a range of evidence and perspectives to develop defensible claims about complex issues like gentrification, affordable housing, and urban development?
Central Texts	Core Text: <i>How to Kill A City</i> by P.E. Moskowitz Supplemental Texts: “What happened? A brief history of gentrification in Denver” by Robert Davis “The Astonishing Transformation of Austin” by Lawrence Wright (Excerpted, par. 3 - 11) “Everything you need to know about affordable housing: applying, getting in, and staying put” by Dana Schulz (Excerpted, par. 1 - 16)
Assessments	On-Demand Essay: Adapted from 2003 AP Exam Form B FRQ 3: Individual and Society Unit Assessment Essay: Adapted from 2016 AP Exam FRQ 3: Civil Disobedience Process-Based Essay: Adapted from 2024 Set 2 FRQ 3: Jimmy Santiago Baca Multiple Choice: From AP Classroom aligned to unit standards
AP Language Enduring Understandings	Rhetorical Situation (RHS-1): Individuals write within a particular situation and make strategic writing choices based on that situation. Claims and Evidence (CLE-1): Writers make claims about subjects, rely on evidence that supports the reasoning that justifies the claim, and often acknowledge or respond to other, possibly opposing, arguments. Reasoning and Organizations (REO-1): Writers guide understanding of a text’s lines of reasoning and claims through that text’s organization and integration of evidence.
AP Language Standards and Skills	2.A Writing: Write introductions and conclusions appropriate to the purpose and context of the rhetorical situation. 3.B Reading: Identify and describe the overarching thesis of an argument, and any indication it provides of the argument’s structure. 4.A Writing: Develop paragraphs with claims supported by evidence. 4.B Writing: Write thesis statements that require defense and provide argument structure. 5.A Reading: Describe the line of reasoning and explain whether it supports an argument’s overarching thesis. 5.C Reading: Recognize and explain the use of methods of development to



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- accomplish a purpose.
- **6.A Writing:** Develop a line of reasoning and commentary that explains it throughout an argument.
- **6.C Writing:** Use appropriate methods of development to advance an argument.

Unit 3: Synthesis I: *Fire Weather* and Supplemental Readings

Essential Questions

- How can writers effectively synthesize multiple sources to construct a compelling argument?
- In what ways does climate change intersect with issues of justice, power, and responsibility, and how should those complexities shape our response?

Central Texts

Core Text:

- [*Fire Weather: A True Story from a Hotter World*](#) by John Vaillant

Supplemental Texts:

- [“The Effects of Climate Change”](#) by NASA
- [“The Impact of Plastic on Climate Change”](#) by Kayla Vasarhelyi
- [“Our House is on Fire”](#) by Greta Thunberg
- [“Misinformation and distrust in Science”](#) interview with Naomi Oreskes
- [“Why Some Americans Do not See Urgency on Climate Change”](#) by Pew Research Center (excerpted)
- [“Why is Climate ‘Doomism’ Going Viral – And Who’s Fighting It?”](#) by Marco Silva (excerpted)
- [“How Americans View Climate Change and Policies to Address the Issue”](#) (histograms only) from Pew Research Center

Assessments

- **On-Demand Essay #1:** [Adapted from 2009 FRQ 3: Adversity](#)
- **On-Demand Essay #2:** [Adapted from 2023 Set 1 FRQ 1-Urban Rewilding](#)
- **Unit Assessment:** [Adapted from 2023 Set 2 FRQ 1-Vertical Farms](#)
- **Process-Based Essay:** Synthesis task aligned to the core content of the unit: Write an essay that synthesizes material from at least three of the sources and develops your position on the most important factors that emergency management agencies should consider when preparing for and responding to crises.
- **Multiple Choice:** From AP Classroom aligned to unit standards

AP Language Enduring Understandings

- **Claims and Organization (CLE-1):** Writers make claims about subjects, rely on evidence that supports the reasoning that justifies the claim, and often acknowledge or respond to opposing arguments.
- **Reasoning and Evidence (REO-1):** Writers guide understanding of a text’s lines of reasoning and claims through that text’s organization and integration of evidence.



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	● Style (STL-1): The rhetorical situation informs the strategic stylistic choices that writers make.
AP Language Standards and Skills	● 3.A Reading: Identify and explain claims and evidence within an argument. ● 4.A Writing: Develop paragraphs with claims supported by evidence. ● 5.A Reading: Describe the line of reasoning and explain whether it supports an argument's overarching thesis. ● 5.C Reading: Recognize and explain the use of methods of development to accomplish a purpose. ● 6.A Writing: Develop a line of reasoning and commentary that explains it throughout an argument. ● 6.B Writing: Use transitional elements to guide the reader through the line of reasoning of an argument. ● 6.C Writing: Use appropriate methods of development to advance an argument.

Unit 4: Rhetorical Analysis II: Anthologized Texts

Essential Questions	● How do activists and leaders make strategic rhetorical choices to challenge injustice and inspire collective action? ● How do language and storytelling function as tools of resistance and empowerment?
Central Texts	Unit 4 Texts: ● Letter from the Birmingham Jail by Martin Luther King, Jr. ● "1965 Howard University Commencement Address" by Lyndon B. Johnson ● "Presidential Announcement Speech" by Shirley Chisholm ● "The Ballot or the Bullet" by Malcolm X ● "These Are the Times That Grow Our Souls" by Grace Lee Boggs
Assessments	● On-Demand Essay: 2025 AP Language Exam FRQ 2, Set 1: David Treuer ● Unit Assessment: 2019 AP Language Exam FRQ 2: Gandhi ● Process-Based Essay: 2018 AP Language Exam FRQ 2: Madeleine Albright ● Multiple Choice: From AP Classroom aligned to unit standards
AP Language: Enduring Understandings	● Rhetorical Situation (RHS-1): Writers make strategic rhetorical choices to convey messages that resonate with specific audiences and contexts. ● Claims and Evidence (CLE-1): Writers make claims about identity and support them with evidence drawn from personal experiences, historical contexts, and cultural critiques. ● Reasoning and Organization (REO-1): Writers structure their arguments to create a compelling narrative and logically advance their points.



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	● Style (STL-1): The rhetorical situation informs the stylistic choices writers make to enhance the impact of their message.
AP Language Standards and Skills	● 1.A Reading: Identify and describe components of the rhetorical situation (exigence, audience, writer, purpose, context, message). ● 1.B Reading: Explain how an argument demonstrates understanding of an audience's beliefs, values, or needs. ● 3.B Reading: Identify and describe the overarching thesis of an argument, and any indication it provides of the argument's structure. ● 3.C Reading: Explain ways claims are qualified through modifiers, counterarguments, and alternative perspectives. ● 4.A Writing: Develop paragraphs with claims supported by evidence. ● 4.B Writing: Write thesis statements that require defense and provide argument structure. ● 5.B Reading: Explain how the organization of a text creates unity and coherence and reflects a line of reasoning. ● 6.A Writing: Develop a line of reasoning and commentary that explains it throughout an argument. ● 7.A Reading: Explain how word choice, comparisons, and syntax contribute to the specific tone or style of a text. ● 7.B Reading: Explain how writers create, combine, and place independent and dependent clauses to show relationships between and among ideas.

Unit 5: Argument II: *Our Migrant Souls*

Essential Questions	● What are the ethical considerations of writing about personal identity and the identities of others? ● How do different rhetorical choices shape the way identity is understood and represented?
Central Texts	Core Text: ● <i>Our Migrant Souls: A Meditation on Race and the Meanings and Myths of "Latino"</i> by Hector Tobar Supplemental Texts: ● "The Latinos of Asia: How Filipino Americans Break the Rules of Race" by Anthony Christian Ocampo ● "How to Tame a Wild Tongue" by Gloria Anzaldúa ● "My Body is a Cage of My Own Making" by Roxane Gay ● "Just Walk on By: Black Men and Public Space" by Brent Staples



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Assessments	● On-Demand Essay: Adapted from 2016 AP Language Exam FRQ 2: Margaret Thatcher ● Unit Assessment: Adapted from 2023 Question Set 1 FRQ 3: Kingston (community of voices) ● Process-Based Essay: Adapted from 2017 AP Exam FRQ 3: Chris Hedges (artifice) ● Multiple Choice: From AP Classroom aligned to unit standards ● Mock Exam: 2026 Released Exam Questions (Pending May 2026 Release)
AP Language: Enduring Understandings	● Rhetorical Situation (RHS-1): Writers make strategic rhetorical choices to convey messages that resonate with specific audiences and contexts. ● Claims and Evidence (CLE-1): Writers make claims about identity and support them with evidence drawn from personal experiences, historical contexts, and cultural critiques. ● Reasoning and Organization (REO-1): Writers structure their arguments to create a compelling narrative and logically advance their points. ● Style (STL-1): The rhetorical situation informs the stylistic choices writers make to enhance the impact of their message.
AP Language Standards and Skills	● 1.B Reading: Explain how an argument demonstrates understanding of an audience's beliefs, values, or needs. ● 2.A Writing: Write introductions and conclusions appropriate to the purpose and context of the rhetorical situation. ● 3.C Reading: Explain ways claims are qualified through modifiers, counterarguments, and alternative perspectives. ● 4.C Writing: Qualify a claim using modifiers, counterarguments, or alternative perspective. ● 7.A Reading: Explain how word choice, comparisons, and syntax contribute to the specific tone or style of a text. ● 7.B Reading: Explain how writers create, combine, and place independent and dependent clauses to show relationships between and among ideas. ● 8.A Writing: Strategically use words, comparisons, and syntax to convey a specific tone or style in an argument. ● 8.B Writing: Write sentences that clearly convey ideas and arguments.

Unit 6: Synthesis II: *A Case for Reparations*

Essential Questions	● What are the historical and contemporary arguments for and against reparations and to what extent do different rhetorical strategies shape the debate on reparations? ● What are the challenges of addressing systemic injustices through policy, economics, and historical acknowledgment?
Central Texts	Core Text:



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	• “A Case for Reparations” by Ta-Nehisi Coates Supplemental Texts: • Fannie Lou Hamer’s Testimony in Congress • “Reparations mean more than money for a family who endured slavery and Japanese American internment” by Tracy Jan • “A Tale of Two Tribal Nations” Code Switch, NPR • “There Is No Middle Ground on Reparations” by Ibram X. Kendi
Assessments	• On-Demand Essay: Adapted from 2024 AP Exam Set 2- FRQ 1: Food Truck Regulations • Unit Assessment: Adapted from 2018 AP Exam- FRQ 1: Eminent Domain • Process-Based Essay: Research task based on the topic of the unit that students will work on throughout the unit. • Multiple Choice: From AP Classroom aligned to unit standards
AP Language Enduring Understandings	• Claim and Evidence (CLE-1): Writers make claims about a subject and support them with reliable, relevant evidence while acknowledging counterarguments. • Reasoning and Organization (REO-1): Writers structure their arguments to logically develop their claims and anticipate potential objections. • Style (STL-1): Writers make strategic stylistic choices to enhance the persuasiveness of their arguments.
AP Language Standards and Skills	• 1.A Reading: Identify and describe components of the rhetorical situation (exigence, audience, writer, purpose, context, message). • 1.B Reading: Explain how an argument demonstrates understanding of an audience’s beliefs, values, or needs. • 2.B Writing: Demonstrate an understanding of an audience’s beliefs, values, or needs. • 3.C Reading: Explain ways claims are qualified through modifiers, counterarguments, and alternative perspectives. • 4.C Writing: Qualify a claim using modifiers, counterarguments, or alternative perspective. • 7.A Reading: Explain how word choice, comparisons, and syntax contribute to the specific tone or style of a text. • 7.B Reading: Explain how writers create, combine, and place independent and dependent clauses to show relationships between and among ideas. • 7.C Reading: Explain how grammar and mechanics contribute to the clarity and effectiveness of an argument. • 8.A Writing: Strategically use words, comparisons, and syntax to convey a specific tone or style in an argument. • 8.B Writing: Write sentences that clearly convey ideas and arguments. • 8.C Writing: Use established conventions of grammar and mechanics to communicate clearly and effectively.

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Unit 7: AP Exam Preparation

Essential Questions	• How does the rhetorical situation influence the choices a writer or speaker makes? • What makes a rhetorical choice effective and how can I use them to improve my arguments? • What methods are most effective in organizing arguments and developing a clear line of reasoning?
Central Texts	Core Text: Available FRQs not used in Units 1 - 6: • Complete Set (AP Language 2021) ◦ 2021 AP Language Exam FRQ 1: Handwriting ◦ 2021 AP Language Exam FRQ 2: Barack Obama ◦ 2021 AP Language Exam FRQ 3: Perfection • Synthesis (FRQ 1) ◦ 2022 AP Language Exam FRQ 1: STEM ◦ 2017 AP Language Exam FRQ 1: Libraries ◦ 2016 AP Language Exam FRQ 1: English Language ◦ 2014 AP Language Exam FRQ 1: College Worth the Cost • Rhetorical Analysis (FRQ 2) ◦ 2024 AP Language Exam FRQ 2: Rita Dove ◦ 2020 AP Language Exam FRQ 2: Lady Bird Johnson ◦ 2012 AP Language Exam FRQ 2: President John F. Kennedy ◦ 2010 AP Language Exam FRQ 2: Benjamin Banneker • Argument (FRQ 3) ◦ 2024 AP Language Set 2 FRQ 3: Carlos Curbelo ◦ 2018 AP Language Exam FRQ 3: The Unknown ◦ 2019 AP Language Exam FRQ 3: Overrated ◦ 2010 AP Language Exam FRQ 3: Humor • Multiple Choice: From AP Classroom aligned to unit standards
Assessments	• ALL 2024 AP Language Set 1 FRQ Prompts ◦ Synthesis (FRQ 1): Historic Preservation ◦ Rhetorical Analysis (FRQ 2): Reshma Saujani ◦ Argument: J. Wortham (FRQ 3): Selfies • Multiple Choice: From AP Classroom aligned to unit standards
AP Language Enduring Understandings	• Rhetorical Situation (RHS-1): Individuals write within a particular situation and make strategic writing choices based on that situation. • Claims and Evidence (CLE-1): Writers make claims about subjects, rely on evidence that supports the reasoning that justifies the claim, and often acknowledge or respond to other, possibly opposing, arguments. • Reasoning and Organization (REO-1): Writers guide understanding of a text's lines of reasoning and claims through that text's organization and integration of evidence.



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	● Style (STL-1): Writers make strategic stylistic choices to enhance the persuasiveness of their arguments.
AP Language Standards and Skills	Priority standards aligned with essay type should be selected based on students' misconceptions and performance gaps on the practice mock exam.