

AP English Language and Composition
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Course Description

Advanced Placement English Language and Composition is a college-level course that emphasizes prose written in a variety of historical periods, disciplines and rhetorical contexts. The course focuses on expository, analytical, and argumentative essays and critical reading of nonfiction texts. Students develop skills in close reading and analytical writing. Students will build upon a grammatically and structurally sound writing foundation to develop the ability to present critical, eloquent, and persuasive texts of their own in a natural voice appropriate in a given rhetorical context. Through close study of a wide range of authors, time periods, texts and contexts students will develop recognition and an understanding of the relationship between text and context, between a writer's language choices and the effects of those choices in a given context.

Through the process of reading, writing and discussing texts, students will become skilled in composing for different audiences and purposes. Students will learn to understand and appreciate the diverse ways that authors make meaning in both oral and written texts. Students will identify structures and conventions and effectively use them in their own writing. They will learn to identify and evaluate the choices that they and their peers have made in the composition process and increase their revision skills.

As stated in the Advanced Placement Course Description for the English exams, the purpose of the AP Language and Composition course is "to enable students to read complex texts with understanding and to write prose of sufficient richness and complexity to communicate effectively with mature readers" (from *Teacher's Guide — AP Language and Composition*). As the course progresses, students will become more aware of their own composition process through self-assessment and evaluations by peers and the instructor. These skills will allow the student to read critically and write effectively in different modes in the college classroom and beyond.

Time will also be spent learning the AP exam essay grading rubric and engaging in peer review and revision. Students will complete writing assignments or exercises that call on them to present arguments supported with accurately documented outside sources. Papers assigned to be completed outside of class will follow MLA format and documentation.

Primary Texts

- *Brave New World* - Aldous Huxley
- *Nineteen Eighty-Four* - George Orwell
- *Man's Search for Meaning* - Victor Frankl
- *The Elephant Man* (1980), dir. David Lynch
- Other essays listed below in their corresponding units

Course Components

(1) Essay Studies

Much of class time will involve reading and analyzing essays, paying specific attention to rhetoric, structure, audience and purpose. Most essays read in class will lead to a specific writing assignment, or revision of a work-in-progress. Essays chosen for the class reflect a wide range of time periods, topics, identities, and cultures, and they will also showcase effective usage of rhetorical strategies and methods of development (narration, description, exemplification, comparison and contrast, process analysis, division or analysis, classification, cause and effect, definition and argument).

(2) Visual Analysis

Students will analyze visual art using methods similar to those of rhetorical analysis. Students will connect the visual arts to the basic elements of rhetoric (ethos, pathos, and logos), in order to better understand both art and rhetoric itself. Classes will integrate guided questions, group discussions, and Socratic seminars, among other methods, to better analyze texts, and to communicate our findings clearly.

(3) Short Writings and Reading Responses

Daily grades will often involve short writings in response to assigned readings, debatable questions, dialectical journals, or free writes responding to a chosen epigram.

(4) Dialectical Journals

Students will keep a dialectical journal which they shall update throughout the course about a variety of texts. The purpose of this journal is to teach the class how to comment on an essay as they read, using a variety of annotation strategies. This way, when students write an essay about a specific text, they will start from the basis of their dialectical journals, and not need to start researching from scratch. These journals will be checked by the teacher throughout the course for thoroughness and effort.

(5) Rhetorical Analysis Essay

Students will write a rhetorical analysis essay on Martin Luther King Jr.'s "Letter from Birmingham Jail", where they will explain how King structures his argument, why and how King advocates for "extremism," and how King's knowledge of his target audience shapes the content and style of his text.

(6) Argument Essay

Students will write an argumentative essay, then deliver their essay as a speech in front of their classmates. We will use this as an opportunity to touch on public speaking skills, and the rhetorical differences between written and spoken language.

(7) Synthesis Essay

Students will examine multiple sources, including at least 1 visual source, to write a synthesis essay examining whether a college education is worth it in modern society.

Course Plan

Note: Class readings are subject to change. This syllabus is a living document shaped by the needs of the students.

(1) Summer Reading, the AP exam & the Rhetorical Situation

Early in the course students will be introduced to the rhetorical triangle, elements of the rhetorical situation, and the essential elements of logos, pathos and ethos, as well as the four modes of discourse (narration, description, exposition and persuasion) and primary methods of development (narrative, description, process analysis, illustration/exemplification, cause/effect, compare/contrast, definition, classification). Class will focus on audience and purpose, and students will complete short writings in which they demonstrate an understanding of the changes necessary to achieve a determined purpose with respect to a given audience and topic.

The class will discuss the meaning of the term "rhetoric," and debunk some common misconceptions about the misuse of the term in popular culture. Student attention will be focused on the idea of rhetoric as a tool for communication. We will differentiate between different forms of communication (face-to-face, online, written, symbolic, etc.), and evaluate the forms according to the specific purposes and audiences.

Students will read *1984* and *Brave New World* as part of a summer reading assignment, so the course begins with an examination of both novels in the context of Neil Postman's *Amusing Ourselves to Death*, where Postman articulates the dangers of technological addiction and television's harmful effects on public discourse. Students will discuss how Postman's critiques can be extended further into the 21st century with the rise of social media. Then students will read George Orwell's "Politics and the English Language", where Orwell warns readers about the dangers of sloppy language, and also discusses his six rules for writing well. After several mini-lessons on clarity & concision, students will revise their summer reading essays.

(2) Rhetorical Analysis & Visual Art**Essential questions:**

- How should knowledge of our audience shape our rhetoric?
- How does our use of rhetorical devices change the style of our writing?
- What makes a given piece of rhetoric "effective" or "ineffective"?
- What rhetoric exists in visual art, and how is visual rhetoric similar to/different from written rhetoric?

Texts discussed include excerpts from:

- Will Schoder: "Mr. Rogers and the Power of Persuasion"
- Jonathan Edwards: "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God"
- Benjamin Banneker: *Letter to Thomas Jefferson*
- John Taylor Gatto: "The Seven Lesson Schoolteacher"
- Howard Zinn: *A People's History of the United States*
- Loren Eiseley: "The Bird and the Machine"
- 8 Southern Pastors: "A Call to Unity"

- Martin Luther King Jr.'s Letter from Birmingham Jail
- Diego Velasquez: *The Surrender of Breda*
- Emanuel Leutze: *Washington Crossing the Delaware*
- Francisco Goya: *The Third of May, 1808*
- Christopher Nevinson: *La Mitrailleuse*
- Olive Mudie-Cooke: *In an Ambulance*
- Pablo Picasso: *Guernica*
- David Lynch: *The Elephant Man*

AP Exam skills covered (cumulative):

- **Writing a rhetorical analysis essay**
- Rhetorical situation
- SOAPStone
- Identifying claims and evidence
- Dialectical Journals
- Annotation
- Revision
- Identifying rhetorical modes of persuasion

(3) Argument

Essential questions:

- What makes a text persuasive?
- How can we recognize and avoid using logical fallacies?
- What differences exist between persuasive prose and persuasive oration?

Texts discussed include excerpts from:

- Brian Klaas: "The Death of the Student Essay—and the Future of Cognition"
- Nick Hanauer: "Better Schools Won't Fix America"
- Greg Lukianoff and Jonathan Haidt: "The Coddling of the American Mind"
- Peter Singer: "The Singer Solution to World Poverty"
- Henry David Thoreau: *Civil Disobedience*
- Brigid Schulte: "The Case for Year-Round School"
- Bill Joy: "Why the Future Doesn't Need Us"
- Viktor Frankl: *Man's Search for Meaning*

AP Exam skills covered:

- **Writing an argumentative essay**
- Identifying logical fallacies
- Text revision
- Argumentation
- Types of claims (claims of fact, value, and policy)
- Thesis statements
- Types of evidence (first-hand, second-hand)
- Identifying the relationship between evidence and a claim
- Developing arguments
- Identifying and describing components of the rhetorical situation in context
- Write introductions and conclusions based on the rhetorical situation

(4) Synthesis

Essential questions:

- How do we synthesize multiple sources into a coherent argument?

Texts discussed:

- No specific texts, save for practice AP exams (multiple choice & essay sources)

AP Exam skills covered:

- **Writing a synthesis essay**
- Using sources to inform an argument
- Using sources to appeal to an audience

- Describe the line of reasoning and explain whether it supports the thesis or not
- Use transitional elements to guide the reader through an argument

(5) Exam Boot Camp

Essential questions:

- What skills do we need to review before exam day?
- What test-taking strategies can help us on exam day?
- How does the AP exam software work?
- How do we turn a written text into a spoken oration?

Texts discussed: **NOTE—in this specific unit, students pick only one of the following texts for analysis**

- Emmeline Pankhurst: “Freedom or Death”
- Eugene Debs: Final address to the Court
- Dwight Eisenhower: Farewell Address
- John F. Kennedy: Address at Rice University on the Nation’s Space Effort
- James Baldwin: “A Talk to Teachers”
- Ronald Reagan: “A Time for Choosing”
- Mary Fisher: 1992 RNC Address
- Elie Wiesel: “The Perils of Indifference”

AP Exam skills covered:

- Turning a written text into an orally-delivered speech
- Continuing biweekly practice multiple choice (PMC)
- Writing one more of each of the 3 essay types on the exam.
- Refamiliarize ourselves with rhetorical devices by analyzing song lyrics

(6) The Bigger Game

Essential questions:

- How do we learn the lessons learned/skills taught by the AP Lang exam in our daily lives?
- After the exam is over, then what?

Texts discussed:

- Plato: Allegory of the Cave

AP Exam skills covered:

- Let us put the skills we have already learned to good use

Grading Plan

In-class writing is graded holistically, often based on AP guidelines. Papers are graded for completion of the writing process, content, mechanics, and proper MLA format.

Pop quizzes may be given before discussion of any given text. These quizzes are meant to check completion of reading homework, and assess reading comprehension.

Homework is graded for completion and thoughtfulness. ALL parts of an assignment MUST be completed in order to earn full credit. Homework is due at the beginning of class. Anything turned in after I have already collected it from the class as a whole will be penalized. Keep in mind that you will only be penalized for insincere, half-hearted, plagiarized, or AI-generated effort on homework; I will not penalize you for well-reasoned but mistaken analysis.

Classwork varies from note-taking, reading, short-writings, timed essays, class discussion, and practice AP questions. Failure to remain on task throughout class will negatively affect the student’s ability to pass the AP exam.

- Grades include:
 1. Tests (literature/essays read for class, class discussion/notes, sample AP tests)
 2. Vocabulary quizzes
 3. Essays (formal writing over longer periods of time, and timed in-class essays based on AP prompts) and other projects (presentations)
 4. Reading responses (dialectical journals, guided notes)
 5. Class discussions (Socratic Seminars)
- Major grades (tests, essays, and projects) = 60%
- Minor grades: quizzes, classwork, homework = 40%
- Final project = 10% of final grade

Homework/Classwork Expectations

AP Lang is a reading-intensive college-level course. Students should expect a reading or writing assignment each day of class. As such, the course requires a high level of student responsibility and motivation. Even when no specific homework is given, students are always expected to keep up with vocabulary, reading, or revising prior essays. Every student is different, so it's impossible to predict how much time an assignment will take. Students are expected to be present, on time, in class every day, with all necessary materials and assignments, and to participate in discussion.

Late Work Policy

1. Any assignment not turned in on the due date must be turned in within 5 school days.
2. Major assignments will be given a 10 point per day late penalty. Ten points will be deducted for each day the assignment is late. Minor assignments turned in late will be given half credit if turned in within five days of the due date. Students will receive no higher than a 50 for a late minor assignment.
3. Students with 504/IEP/ESOL accommodations allowing extra time on assignments may exceed the 5 day window.

Materials to Bring to Class Each Day

1. Assigned text(s)
2. English notebook, or a part of a larger notebook, with loose-leaf or perforated paper
3. Completed assignments
4. Composition notebook for vocabulary & practice multiple choice (PMC)
5. Pens/pencils/highlighters
6. Chromebook

Extra assistance

It is incumbent on any student who needs extra help/time to talk to me and make an appointment before or after school. I reserve the right to affirm or deny requests for extra credit assignments.

Attendance and Tardy Policies

I follow the school-wide attendance and tardy policies as stated in the Student Handbook. Absences in excess of 5 will be excused only with a valid doctor's note. Any absence in excess of 5 that is not excused by a valid doctor's note may prevent a student from receiving course credit.

Exceptions may only be made for a valid medical reason or other extenuating circumstances discussed with me privately (preferably in advance). Keep in mind that EHS requires a doctor's note in order to count absences as excused.

Major assignments are expected to be turned in on the day they're due REGARDLESS of the student's presence in class, whether by email or on Google Classroom. Some assignments cannot be turned in electronically, and you will need to discuss an alternative assignment with me ASAP.

Plagiarism/AI policy

- 1st & 2nd offenses
 - a. The student will receive a zero for the assignment.
 - b. Parents will be contacted.
 - c. The student will be referred to administration for cheating.
- 3rd offense & beyond
 - a. The student will receive a zero for the assignment.
 - b. Parents will be contacted.
 - c. The student will be referred to administration for cheating, likely resulting in out-of-school suspension.

Students will be allowed to rewrite the plagiarized assignment for a maximum of half credit.

Cell Phone Policy

Students are not allowed to use cell phones in class.

- 1st Offense – Warning
- 2nd Offense & onward – Call home to parents + Referral to Administrator for “Refusal to Obey”

Classroom Behavior

Students are expected to follow all rules outlined in the Student Handbook. Students tend to run into trouble due to activities that disrupt class as a whole, such as inappropriate or irrelevant comments. Expectations for student behavior in my classroom include respect for the learning process, the teacher, and fellow students. Class discussion is a vital component of the course, and this cannot occur if students lack respect for each other.

AP Exam Fees

Eastside offers the AP exam free of charge on the morning of Wednesday, May 13th, 2026. If, however, a student fails to take the exam at this time, and is forced to make it up later, the exam will no longer be free per College Board requirements. **If the exam is not taken at the assigned time and date, it will cost the student \$98.00 per exam. Also, rescheduling the exam will cost a further \$40.**

Fees are applied for the following reasons:

- If the student decides not to take the exam after the exam order is submitted, and the November 15 final ordering deadline has passed.
 - If the student's college of choice does not award credit for the exam.
 - If a student who is performing poorly in the class decides after November 15 not to test.
 - If there are conflicts with regularly scheduled exam administration dates, and the student does not want to test on any other available scheduled testing dates.
- If an exam order is placed **after** November 15 due to an outstanding balance hold, a security hold, or an incomplete AP Participation Form.

Fees are waived for the following reasons:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Academic contest/event ● Athletic contest/event ● Conflict with IB or Cambridge exam ● Conflict with nationally, province-, or state-mandated test ● Delayed shipment ● Disabilities accommodations issue ● Emergency: bomb scare or fire alarm ● High school graduation ● Language lab scheduling conflict | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Makeup AP Exam due to an incident during the initial exam ● Religious/holiday observance ● School closing: election, national holiday, or natural disaster ● Serious injury, illness, or family tragedy ● Strike/labor conflict ● Student court appearance Two or more AP Exams on the same date at the same time |
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Communication with parents

I respond to parent correspondence within 24 hours. You can reach me at janastasio@greenville.k12.sc.us. Email is by far the most efficient way to reach me.

Class Website: <https://sites.google.com/greenvilleschools.us/mr-anastasios-digital-classroom/ap-lang>

Verification

I, (student) _____, have read and have understood this syllabus.

I, (parent/guardian) _____, have read and have understood this syllabus.

Parent/guardian contact information:

phone: _____

email: _____

Please contact me with any questions/concerns regarding this syllabus