

AP ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION

SUMMER READING 2021-2022

Welcome to the AP English Language and Composition course!

From the course syllabus: “Being equivalent to a first-year college writing course, AP English Language and Composition emphasizes the expository, analytical, and argumentative writing that forms the basis of academic and professional communication as well as the personal and reflective writing that fosters the development of writing facility in any context. As in the college course, the purpose of AP English Language and Composition 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.”

Thus, the purpose for summer reading in AP English Language and Composition is to prepare you for the level of reading, writing, and thinking that is the hallmark of this course. The readings selected for this year’s assignment are a collection of individual essays by a variety of authors that will provide you with a sense of non-fiction writing. The essays are as follows:

- “The Superstition of School” by G. K. Chesterton
- “A Talk to Teachers” by James Baldwin
- “Education” by Ralph Waldo Emerson
- “This Is Water” by David Foster Wallace

1. Read **all four (4)** of the essays carefully, annotating key ideas, but also noting passages that use especially powerful examples of word choice, detail, sentence structure, imagery, and/or figurative language to meet the writer’s purpose.
2. Use your annotations to prepare a set of **typed notes addressing each of the four texts**.
3. Your typed notes must address the following elements for EACH essay:
 - a) Briefly summarize or describe the **writer’s central topic** and **his/her purpose** in writing the essay. Purposes include the following:
 - **To convince** the reader to believe or to think
 - **To persuade** them to act (or to change their behavior)
 - **To inform** the reader and expand his/her fund of information
 - **To explore** an issue so that the writer (and the reader) better understand its complexity
 - b) Identify two (2) different quotes/passages (each **MUST** be from a different paragraph!) within the essay where the writer uses especially powerful examples of word choices, detail, sentence structure, imagery, and/or figurative language to meet his/her purpose which you identified in the prior step.
 - c) Explain the impact that each selected passage is supposed to have on the reader—consider these examples and explain how the passage does this.
 - Is the passage appealing to the audience’s **emotions** and/or interests, directly or indirectly, so that they will be sympathetically inclined to accept and buy into the writer’s central ideas and arguments?
 - Is the passage appealing to the reader’s **rationality** by presenting and developing ideas through specific examples and/or details so that the audience can see the logic, the reasonableness of comprehending and accepting these ideas?
 - Is the passage appealing to the audience by showing the writer to be a **credible** person, someone who is knowledgeable and trustworthy and who has the audience’s best interests in mind?
 - d) Discuss your position in relation to the writer’s message(s).
4. You will receive a total of 10 points per essay (**40 points total for the assignment**):
 - a) 2 points for accurately specifying the topic and the purpose
 - b) 6 points for identifying two passages and thoughtfully addressing each’s desired impact on the reader
 - c) 2 points for thoughtfully explaining your response/reaction to the writer’s message(s)
5. The example that follows uses Virginia Woolf’s “Professions for Women” for the sake of illustration. It well illustrates the kind of thinking that should be present in your notes.
6. Should you have any questions or concerns, please contact Mr. Cicoria at ccicoria@asparis.fr.

Sample Notes:

Briefly summarize the writer's topic and describe the author's purpose:	
<p>In "Professions for Women" Virginia Woolf recounts how she came to be a writer, and the challenges faced by women writers in her time period. Her purpose in the essay is to convince the reader that there is a great deal more to women taking on a profession than just doing the work—it also means making decisions about every aspect of her life.</p>	
Quote 1:	Desired impact on audience:
<p>"you may not know what I mean by the Angel in the House. I will describe her as shortly as I can. She was intensely sympathetic. She was immensely charming. She was utterly unselfish. She excelled in the difficult arts of family life. She sacrificed herself daily" (par. 3)</p>	<p>Woolf's sentences in the passage describing the "Angel" are powerful due to their being so short and to the point, making it seem like the angel is powerful due to these traits. Each trait is made more so due to her careful word choice like "intensely" and "immensely" and "utterly" to show how perfect this angel is, and thus makes Woolf's need to "kill" her seem like the rational decision since, as she describes the situation, it "was self-defense"--it was the angel or her own well-being, which makes the decision easier. (92 words)</p>
Quote 2:	Desired impact on audience:
<p>"Even when the path is nominally open — when there is nothing to prevent a woman from being a doctor, a lawyer, a civil servant — there are many phantoms and obstacles, as I believe, looming in her way. To discuss and define them is I think of great value and importance; for thus only can the labour be shared, the difficulties be solved" (par. 7).</p>	<p>Continuing to refer to the "obstacles" facing women with word choices such as "phantoms" that are "looming" creates an ominous image of something threatening in the near distance and evokes a negative emotional response to the seemingly clear path. This strengthens the need for discussing such issues, something that she demands in the following sentence since, without discussion, there might be fear or women might think that the obstacles are in their imaginations, like a ghost would be. Thus, it also strengthens her point that there is safety and support in numbers. (92 words)</p>
Briefly explain your position in relation to the writer's position? (to what degree do you agree, disagree?)	
<p>Woolf's point that women have opportunities but still face obstacles is still true today. Even though there is nothing actually stopping a woman from becoming a scientist or going into engineering, it seems like the default assumption when someone mentions that they want to be an engineer is that it's "a male job" (my aunt told me this—she does engineering research). It's definitely better now, but it seems like it can still be difficult for women and some feel like they must choose between a career and family. (89 words)</p>	