

## AP LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION

### Summer Reading Assignment

Most literature courses focus on “what does a work mean?” AP Language, however, focuses on the controlling idea of “how does a work come to mean?” Keeping this in mind, a major component of the AP Language and Composition curriculum is careful and critical analysis of literature. Through close reading, students will deepen their understanding of the way writers use language to create meaning. You (the reader) should be constantly asking yourself questions to analyze language and meaning.

Questions to consider while you read:

Why did the author choose this narrative format?

What do these characters represent on a larger scale? Think BIG PICTURE! Why did the author choose particular words and phrases?

Who is the speaker, and what is the author’s purpose in writing this text? What is the tone of the text?

In order to increase your reading and interpretive skills, you must complete the following three assignments:

#### 1. Read Nathaniel Hawthorne’s *The Scarlet Letter*

Actively read this novel by answering the questions above as well as paying particular attention to the timeless themes it explores—the nature of sin, guilt, and penitence, the clash between our private and public selves, and the spiritual and psychological cost of living outside society. You will be tested on this novel within the first two weeks of the semester. If you have already read this novel, please re-read with the focus on the questions above.

#### 2. Read Truman Capote’s *In Cold Blood*.

As you read, remember, this is a non-fiction book about a true event. (1) Take notes on the characters involved in the story. Who does Capote seem to focus on? What information does he provide about the characters? Does Capote appear to have a bias to any particular characters? Does he leave you with questions about others? Concentrate on Perry Smith, Richard (Dick) Hickock, Bobby Rupp, Alvin Dewey. Don’t ignore the other characters, though. (2) Part of your notes should include how you feel about the characters in the story and what event, actions, and descriptions you base these feelings on. Do you find that your feelings change one way or the other through the story? (3) Write down three specific passages (with page numbers), and explain how they shaped your opinion on the way Truman Capote treats the characters and the topic of the story.

Using Times New Roman, 12 point font, double spaced, type your responses to the questions listed above. These are due the first day of school.

#### 3. Create a reading journal and discussion journal about issues in our culture this summer.

These journals are to help you understand the ongoing discussion and argument in our nation. The reading journals and discussion activities will help you practice the close reading techniques and critical thinking skills you need to master AP (college level) English assessments. The AP Language curriculum requires you to comprehend much more than just what happens. Please note these documents will also serve as instructional tools for rhetorical analysis during the first weeks of school. Within the scope of this class this year, you must work to understand and provide oral and written commentary on HOW the author uses diction and style to convey meaning and WHY these conversations are important to our understanding of the world.

THE JOURNAL: Typed, 12 point font, double spaced Times New Roman word document

This assignment requires you to read three opinion columns by three different columnists over three different national (U.S) issues that are under current discussion (within the last two months). These must be opinions not news articles. You may use Internet sites such as the ones below to locate writing by your columnists, or go directly to prominent newspapers or weekly magazines. There are many Op/Ed websites to choose from, these are just two examples.

The Drudge Report: <http://www.drudgereport.com>

The Creators Syndicate: <http://www.creators.com/>

The focus of your reading should be the central argument that the author is making. Report on your three articles in the following manner:

### **5 POINTS PRE'CIS STATEMENT**

In your own words summarize the article. This includes identification of the subject, author, central argument and main appeal used in the column. (100-150 words)

- ethos—appeals to the audience's sense of ethics/character
- pathos—appeals to the feelings and emotions of the audience to change their attitudes
- logos—appeals to the audience's reason through use of facts, statistics etc.

### **5 POINTS - PERSONAL RESPONSE**

Write about your impression of the topic and the author's viewpoint. Consider your emotional reaction, positive and negative factors, connections to your own interests and experiences. DO NOT SIMPLY GIVE A THUMBS-UP, THUMBS-DOWN RECOMMENDATION! (100-150 words)

### **5 POINTS KEY PASSAGE**

Find a key interesting, memorable, or provocative quotation (phrase, sentence, paragraph) that you find significant. Copy the passage correctly (use quotation marks). Explain the significance of this quote and why you found it captivating. (100-150 words)

### **15 POINTS Each ENGAGE IN CONVERSATION**

Discuss the essay's main argument idea with three people in different age groups. Example: a peer (this does not have to be someone in your class but someone in your age group range (high school or college), a parent or person of the next generation, an older adult (a grandparent or similarly older perspective). Record the conversations in terms of when and with whom you discussed each idea. Report the other peoples' thoughts about the argument. Do these people agree with you, the author, or have an entirely different viewpoint about this issue? (limit your response to 300 words for each column you discuss)

### **TOTAL POINTS FOR JOURNAL: 90**

This assignment will be due the first day of class. TURN IN A PAPER COPY OF YOUR JOURNAL WITH EACH COLUMN ATTACHED TO THE RESPONSE.