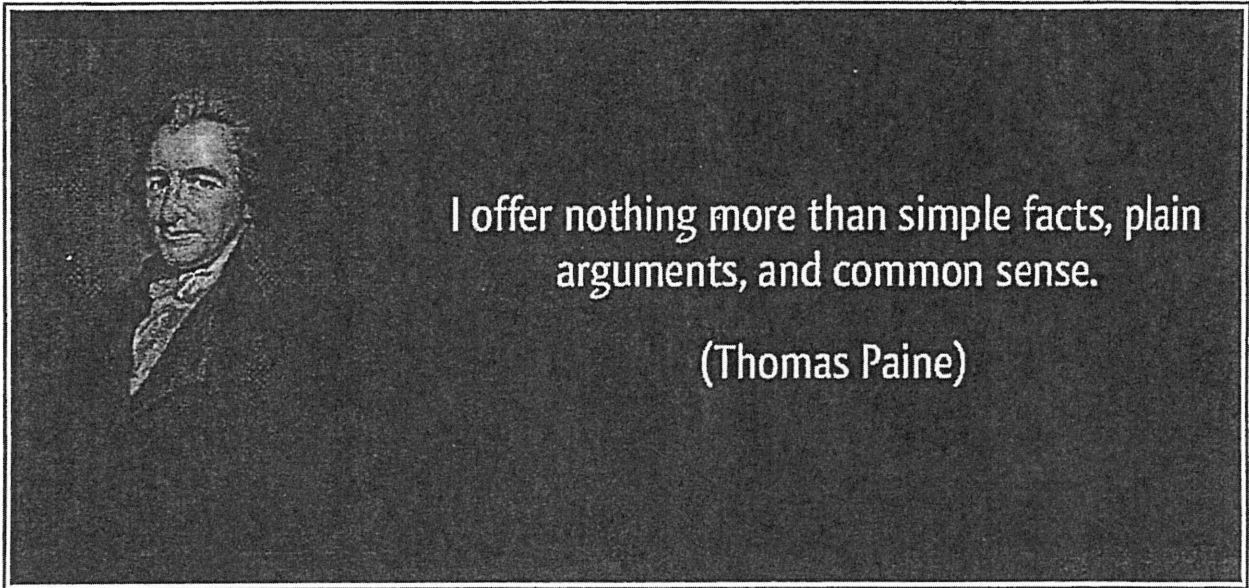


AP LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION

Summer Homework 2025-2026



Welcome to AP Language and Composition. Feel free to contact me via email if you have pressing questions/concerns with the summer homework. The following is expected to be completed on the first full day of school.

COURSE INFORMATION

AP Language and Composition is a year-long, college-level course designed to engage you in the study of language and rhetoric through the reading and analysis of rich and diverse texts written in a variety of periods, disciplines, and rhetorical contexts. Simultaneously you will be engaged in becoming skilled writers who effectively compose for a variety of purposes. Our study will be focused on making you aware of the interactions among a writer's purposes, audience expectations, and subjects as well as the way generic conventions contribute to effective writing.

PURPOSE FOR READING

The summer reading assignment is designed to familiarize you with the material covered on the AP English Language and Composition exam, as well as some of the authors we will be studying this year. As AP students studying language and composition, your purpose is not to study the novel as a work of fiction or the nonfiction, but as masterpieces of language. Your purpose for reading is to discover which elements of language these authors use and to what effect. You are ultimately studying style and the components that comprise it. Style involves the author's choice and arrangement of

words in sentences (diction and syntax), the use of sensory and/or figurative language, as well as the tone and the mood. Look for such things as length and complexity of the sentences; the use of words that are unusual, sophisticated or colloquial, and the use of elements such as allusion and irony.

It is highly recommended that you annotate the text as you read. Remember, a pencil is the BEST tool for annotation. Bring all texts with you to class on the first FULL day.

All assignments are due on the first full day of school — except Part 2. Be prepared for an exam during the first week of school which may include identification, quotations, discussion and analysis. This can only be accomplished by READING the books. Online plot summaries are a fine supplement but CANNOT be substituted for the book if you wish to be successful in this course. Failure to submit these assignments on the FIRST FULL DAY of class is probably not the way you want to start the year and/or introduce yourself to me.

Enjoy the summer - Dziuk

Summer Assignments:

- Read the attached passages on how to annotate a text correctly.
- Read Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*. You will need to read and annotate this novel carefully. Expect a test on this novel VERY soon upon your return.
- Read, annotate, and do attached journals for Jon Krakauer's *Into the Wild*.
- PART 2 — "TOP TEN" is due a few weeks into the school year.

Annotating Books

Why annotate a book?

From the looks of a lot of home libraries I've seen, it would be presumptuous of me to start right in with "how to annotate a book." I might as well start in with "how to destroy your garden." Most people would never mark a book. Most people teach their children not to color in books. (I think that coloring books are meant to wean us of this habit. They're a kind of nicotine patch for preschoolers.) Schoolchildren must lug around books all day and read them, but they must never mark in them. At the end of the school year, students are fined if the books have marks. So, we have a nation that equates marking in books with sin and shame.

To most adults, I think, books are rarefied or holy, perhaps too holy to write in. Books crouch on shelves like household gods, keeping ignorance at bay. But the presence of a book may have nothing to do with its impact on its owner. A lot of people never really get mad at a book. Few people ever throw a book, kiss a book, cry over a book, or reread a page in a book more than once or twice if that. Some people never use a dictionary to find out what a big word in a book means. As a species, people don't interact with books much.



I'm not suggesting that you mark every book you own, any more than I would suggest that my dog mark every tree he sniffs. But you should be free to mark up most books in the most worthwhile core of your collection. My dog has his favorites, and so should you.

Marking books (also known as annotating books) is one of the biggest skills you'll learn in AP Language this year, so you'll need to annotate the books and other texts you read for AP Language.

Why annotate a book? I annotate a book for four reasons. First, I annotate a book to create trails like the first person to hike through a particular forest. In AP Language, we'll read our texts more than once. During my second reading, my first reading's marginal comments and summaries quickly give me the gist of my first reading so I can take full benefit of my second. It's like I've blazed a trail for my future self.

Second, I annotate a book to interact with the writer -to hold up my end of the conversation. Without annotating, books are like lectures. I make reading a

conversation instead by jotting down my reactions as well as new thinking a passage

leads me to.

Third, I annotate a book to learn what the book teaches. (To return to my dog and the trees, you might say I annotate to establish territory.) By the time I break in certain books, I've gone beyond just the book's facts and opinions. I've learned more about subjects that interest me, and maybe I've learned more about myself. By annotating, the book becomes my territory. In fact, the book becomes part of me in some way.

Finally, I annotate my books to learn to write, or at least to learn how a book was written. My improvement in writing and in literary analysis involves close readings of writers I admire. There are patterns in the use of nouns, pronouns, verbs and other parts of speech; there are patterns in syntax and in sentence variation; and there are patterns in sound devices, such as alliteration and assonance. I mark these with different symbols or colors, and I connect these dots. Patterns emerge, and style emerges from patterns. To read like a writer, I have to annotate like one, too.

How to annotate a book

Speaking of style, you'll develop your own annotation style very quickly. But like a writing style, your annotating style can always be improved even if your style works for you. In AP Language, you'll be required to annotate in certain ways because those ways help everyone. Here are some ideas to improve your annotating.

First off, let's be clear: where does one annotate? In the book's text and in its margins. Interlineations are notes you insert between the text's lines (difficult to do in most books). Marginalia are notes you write in the text's margins.

Use marks. Use question marks to show what is unclear or confusing. Use exclamation marks or smiley faces to show your agreement or delight. Invent other marks with their own significance!

Marginal comments serve many purposes. Summarizing a passage's information in the margins can help you find information quickly and can help you go beyond a first-draft reading quickly the next time you read a passage. (Summarizing in the margins means you'll never accidentally separate your summaries from the book summarized, as you might if you wrote your summaries in a notebook or somewhere else.) Stating your agreements and disagreements with the text helps keep your reading more conversational and may give you material for use in later assignments -essays and class discussions, for instance. Reflecting on associations you're making with the text — associations such as other books and movies, personal memories, and current events the text reminds you of -makes the reading more personal and more valuable to you in the long run. Your book's margins may begin to resemble a shorthand journal or diary! Associations, such as a song, a dream, or a stray memory, may seem random, but they may carry more psychic weight than you may realize at first. When you connect the dots during a subsequent reading, those connections can be powerful!

Highlight, bracket, or underline text you think will be the most significant to you when you read those pages again later. Consider labeling the text that you highlighted, bracketed, or underlined: you'd be leaving a better trail for yourself for subsequent readings.

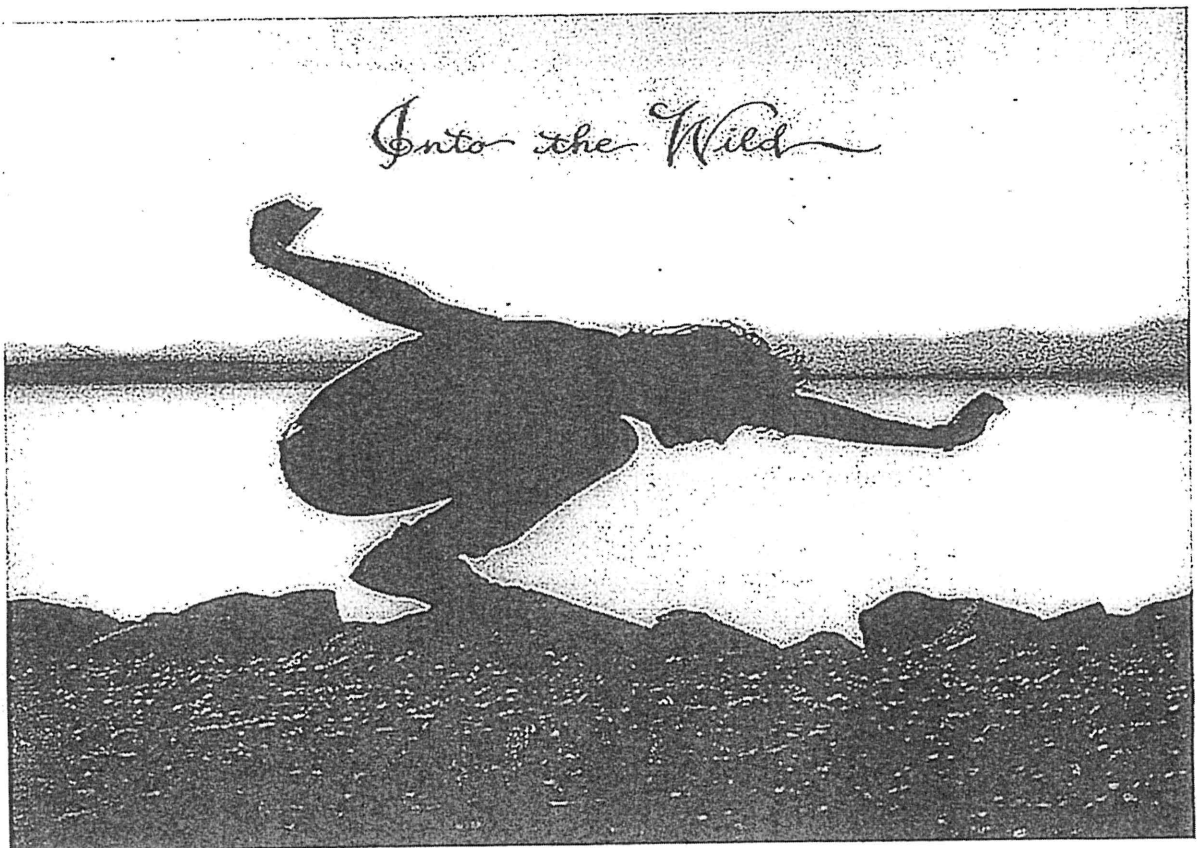
Circle words you're not familiar with, look them up, and write their definitions in the margins beside them. Consider creating on a blank page in the book's front or back matter a running glossary complete with the page numbers where the new words can be found in context.

Mark and label a work's literary and rhetorical devices. This will assist you in any assignment involving literary analysis by helping you to discover how the author gets across his material. It may also lead to an appreciation of the writer's craft that could improve your own writing style! You may wish to use different shapes (triangles, rectangles, ovals) or colors to mark different literary devices. Draw a quick legend to later remind yourself of what each shape or color stands for.

Make impromptu graphic organizers -tables, diagrams, and the like -in the margins to summarize your understanding of complicated passages. That way, you won't have to learn the material all over again in subsequent readings.

Cross-reference topics and ideas that recur in the text. If you're interested in references to tragedy in a book about the history of theater, for instance, write the page number of the most important text on tragedy in the margins beside the book's other references to tragedy. That most important reference to tragedy would also be a place to jot down the page numbers where all of the other references to tragedy you've discovered can be found. (You might even put letters such as T, M, or B after those page numbers to indicate that the information is at the top, middle or bottom of the page in question.) You'll be able to quickly find related material the next time you use the book!

Into the Wild



Journal Response Questions- Complete the following journal prompts —about a page each. THESE MUST BE HAND-WRITTEN!!
100% NO EXCEPTIONS

1. What do you think caused Chris to embark on his journey? (beginning of the novel)
2. What mistakes, if any, did Chris make before going to Alaska?
3. In a review of the book by Library Journal, one complaint about it was that Krakauer "never satisfactorily answers the question of whether McCandless was a noble, if misguided, idealist or a reckless narcissist who brought pain to his family." Which, in your opinion, was he? Was he both?
4. The author claims that Into the Wild is very much a story about a son's relationship with his father. What conclusions did you make regarding McCandless's response to his family? What did you learn about parental relationships from the narrative?
5. One Alaskan Park Ranger has made some comparisons between himself and Chris. He wrote:

"Essentially, Chris McCandless committed suicide while I apprenticed myself to a career and a life that I wanted more badly than I can possibly describe in so short an essay. In the end I believe that the difference between us was that I wanted to live and Chris McCandless wanted to die (whether he realized it or not). The fact that he died in a compelling way doesn't change that outcome. He might have made it work if he had respected the wilderness he was purported to have loved. But it is my belief that surviving in the wilderness is not what he had in mind.

I did not start this essay to trash poor Chris McCandless. Not intentionally. It is sad that the boy had to die. The tragedy is that McCandless more than likely was suffering from mental illness and didn't have to end his life the way he did. The fact that he chose Alaska's wild/ands to do it in speaks more to the fact that it makes a good story than to the fact that McCandless was heroic or somehow extraordinary. In the end, he was sadly ordinary in his disrespect for the land, the animals, the history, and the self-sufficiency ethos of Alaska, the Last Frontier. "

Do you feel that McCandless was either mentally ill or suicidal? Use evidence from the text.

AP Summer Reading - Dziuk

Top Ten Events of Summer 2025

PART TWO OF SUMMER HOMEWORK (This is due the SECOND or THIRD week of school)

The AP Language and Composition Exam does not require studying. It requires preparation. Your preparation for this exam did not begin with an honors English class or before, but whenever you first started to use rhetoric as a means to achieving your ends. It was probably something like pointing to your bottle or a toy accompanied by a powerful cry to emphasize to mom or dad (your audience) that you really wanted it.

You've grown since then. Perhaps now you even marshal proper English and an army of rhetorical strategies to ensure that you always get your way.

In AP Language and Composition, your ability to assess and employ rhetoric will be developed. Consider the AP Lang exam to be a marathon. Running a marathon—or taking this exam—does not just happen, at least not if you want to perform your best. You need to train. You need to log hundreds of miles. You need to prepare a body of work from which you can draw when the big day comes.

Reading and writing is essential training. Do both as often as possible. Read all different genres. Write poems, journals, essays, tweets, letters.

The training for this summer assignment concerns something with which you may not associate with English class. We'll call it being aware.

The readers of the AP Language and Composition Exam, when asked what message they would give to teachers to help students improve, wrote:

"Encourage students to read and learn about the world beyond their immediate sphere of action. Students who know more about the arts, history, science, politics, economics, law, and philosophy do better on the argument question because they have reserves of knowledge to draw from in formulating a response. Students should keep up with news developments around the world."

The book list for your summer reading has been developed to give you exposure to new knowledge and current ways of thinking. The goal of this assignment is to further generate these "reserves of knowledge" and to develop a habit: being aware.

Throughout the summer, read good newspapers, magazines, and/or websites and create a Top Ten Events of the Summer of 2024 list. Keep a log of citations, headlines, and storylines. You may pick one story from the world of sports and one story from the world of entertainment, but the rest should come from the issues of domestic, international, environmental, economic, etc. concern.

AP Summer Reading - Dziuk

For each of the ten stories you select, write a brief paragraph that demonstrates why you feel it is one of the top ten stories of summer. Make sure you do not merely summarize the event, but evaluate the implications of it.

Suggested Resources

Information has never been more accessible. Use whatever works for you. I suggest checking in daily with blogs, link aggregators, and standard news sites. An easy way to consolidate all of these would be to follow some of your favorites on Twitter, but do whatever works best for you. Be advised that the world (and the internet that reports on it) can be a big, unfamiliar, scary place. I don't endorse offensive world events or author opinions over which we have no control, nor do I wish to manipulate your beliefs other than, of course, you having beliefs and the ability to defend them. Be open-minded.

Here are some sources you may look to in your quest for knowledge:

The Browser — thebrowser.com — collects quality articles from reputable sources around the internet. There is a pay-wall after a certain number of views, but the location of the article is always listed in the description.

Medium — medium.com — also collects articles and publishes their own.

Drudge Report drudgereport.com — collects articles from around the internet.

Marginal Revolution — marginalrevolution.com — Economics blog, great for its daily links post (all topics, not just econ).

If you have a library card, you can access Zinio and get free, current downloads of hundreds of magazines.

*Your typed Top Ten Events of Summer 2025 list will be due by the end of the second or third week of school.

You can order them by importance or not—it's up to you. Title each event and write a paragraph that demonstrates its importance - these, obviously, should be thought-provoking and fairly detailed. You may wish to include quotes from articles that you have read that can speak powerfully for the event. I'm thinking somewhere around 10-15 sentences??

Be sure to properly cite the resources you use. Evidence directly pulled from sources must be cited in quotes with an in-text citation. **Additionally, please include a Works Cited page at the end of your document.** It would be to your benefit (for this assignment and beyond) to read a variety of articles on a given topic.