

Welcome to AP Language and Composition 2023-2024!

Dear Student,

Welcome to AP Language and Composition! This course is intended for students who enjoy reading/writing and who would like to improve their skills in analysis, writing, and speaking. The class will also prepare you for the AP English Language Exam. **The following assignment will be due on Friday, September 1st, 2023.**

PART 1: Read and annotate the following texts:

1. *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain
2. *Black Boy* by Richard Wright (**There are two versions of this book; make sure you get the one that has two parts: "Southern Night" and "The Horror and the Glory".**)

Use the attached *Close Reading and Annotation* handout to guide you as you read. If you borrow a book (we have copies in the College Park IMC), please use sticky notes for your annotations. If needed, **see me ASAP for examples of annotated texts.**

PART 2: Vocabulary

Identify 50 vocabulary words that you believe are important to know and/or you could potentially use in your own writing and speech. At least 30 of the words should come from the literature listed above. The remaining words can come from either those works or something else you read over the summer. For each word, provide the part of speech, the correct definition based on context, the sentence the word is used in, and a citation showing which text the word is from. Number each word. Here is an example:

1) supercilious (adj.) behaving or looking as though one thinks one is superior to others

"Now he was a sturdy straw-haired man of thirty with a rather hard mouth and a **supercilious** manner" (*The Great Gatsby* 7).

Your vocabulary list should be typed using a readable 12-point font.

PART 3: "Book Reviews"

For each of the texts, type me a 500 word "book review" in which you explain your overall evaluation of the text. Use the attached *Book Reviews* handout to guide you as you read. This is your chance to showcase your abilities as a writer and demonstrate that you thoughtfully read each book.

In addition to earning a grade for this three-part assignment, a multiple choice test based on these texts as well as in-class writing assignments will figure heavily into your first semester grade. You will also be evaluated on your participation during class discussions centered on these works. If you feel intimidated by the requirements of this class, please consider withdrawing your application before the end of the school year since you may not be allowed to transfer out of this class when school begins in August.

Please contact Mr. Coito (in C-2) or your counselor if you have any questions. [Consider joining my informational Google Classroom](#) for more (Class code = 3xyl2lz). **Finally, enjoy the reading and your summer!**

Sincerely,

Mr. Coito

coitoj@mdusd.org

Close Reading and Annotation

To grasp the full meaning of a piece of literature, it is important to read closely – to interact with the text as you read and reread it. Close reading helps you get beneath the surface of the text to those bottom layers, where all the good stuff resides. As you read closely, it is helpful to **annotate** – to underline or highlight significant sentences, to circle and define unknown words, to make note of how the text reveals the author’s purpose, tone, themes, symbolism, and other literary/rhetorical devices. Annotating also helps prepare you for writing assignments and discussions based on the text.

Here are some tips for close reading and annotation:

Close Reading

- Pre-read the text to understand the basic plot, meaning, etc.
- As you pre-read, look for patterns and repetitions, recurring elements of the text including images, phrases, and situations. Why has the author used these repetitions? What is their significance?
- Identify passages that strike you as highly significant and explain why. How does the passage contribute to the characterization, themes, symbolism, etc.? How does the passage contribute to the overall meaning?
- Consider how the text relates to other texts you have read.
- Read the text in context. Take into account the time period in which it was written and/or set, the literary period (Romantic, Realist, Modern, etc.), and the social and/or political atmosphere. How does the author reveal these contextual elements in the literature? Does the author reveal a particular position on an issue? How does the author accomplish this?

Now that you have pre-read the text, it is time to annotate.

Annotation

- Circle phrases you find pithy, represent repetitive themes or images (motifs), and/or contain figurative language. Make a note in the margin explaining why they are important.
- Circle unfamiliar words, and define them in the margin.
- Bracket important sections of text, and make a note in the margin explaining their significance.
- Underline sentences that stand out or make some sort of point.
- Connect important ideas, phrases, or words with arrows.
- When you mark the text in any way, provide an explanatory note so that it makes sense when you come back to it.
- For the sake of finding particular passages during a class discussion, it is helpful to number the paragraphs of a short story.

Summer Annotations

This is the rubric that will be used to grade your summer annotations. See me ASAP in C-2 if you would like to see model annotated texts.

Excellent (90 – 100 points)

- Text is saturated with annotations that cover the entirety of the reading.
- Most recurring elements of the text are identified.
- Many highly significant passages are highlighted or bracketed.
- The majority of phrases or passages that include characterization, thematic elements, symbolism, and other literary elements etc. are highlighted.
- Margin notes show a depth of understanding and demonstrate analysis and interpretation that go beyond the surface of the text.
- Important ideas, phrases, and words are connected.
- The majority of unfamiliar words are circled and defined.

Proficient (80 – 89 points)

- Text has many annotations, but they are not thorough and/or the text is not covered with annotations.
- Some recurring elements of the text are identified.
- Several of the most significant passages are highlighted or bracketed.
- Many phrases or passages that include characterization, thematic elements, symbolism, and other literary elements etc. are highlighted.
- Margin notes show some depth of understanding and demonstrate an attempt at analysis and interpretation.
- Attempts at connecting important ideas, phrases, and words are evident.
- Several unfamiliar words are circled and defined.

Adequate (70 – 79 points)

- Text has some annotations, but they are sparse
- A few recurring elements of the text are identified.
- Some of the most significant passages are highlighted or bracketed.
- Some phrases or passages that include characterization, thematic elements, symbolism, and other literary elements etc. are highlighted.
- Margin notes show a superficial understanding of the text
- Few attempts at connecting important ideas, phrases, and words are evident are made
- Some unfamiliar words are circled and defined.

Inadequate (0 – 69 points)

- Text has very few annotations throughout the text.
- Margin notes are lacking.
- Few unfamiliar words are circled and defined.
- Overall there is little evidence of close interaction with the text.

Book Reviews

You are to write a book review for each of the summer texts (*Black Boy* and *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*). Book reviews can exist as school assignments, but they also appear in many professional works: magazines, newspapers, and academic journals. They typically range from 500-750 words, but may be longer or shorter. A book review gives readers a sneak peek at what a book is like and explains whether or not the reviewer enjoyed it.

Requirements: Your review for each book should be at least 500 words and should contain the following sections...

- **Section 1: Essential Book Information (1 paragraph)**
 - Start this section with a “hook.” As I’m sure you’ve learned in English class, a “hook” is a line that catches your audience’s attention and piques their interest so they’ll continue reading your review. Your hook could be a compelling or provocative statement (“Margaret Atwood’s subversive brilliance shines in new and unexpected ways with this masterpiece.”) or even a question (“Ever wondered what the lovechild of *Twilight* and *The Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy* would look like?”)
 - Share any general information about the book that is important for readers to know. Be sure to include the title, author, genre, and year of publication.
- **Section 2: Basic Plot Summary (1-2 paragraphs)**
 - Share a detailed synopsis of the plot so your audience gets the gist of what the story is about. I want to look at this section and feel like you actively read the whole book and you can sum up the major plot points. **DO NOT consult or paste from outside sources here.** Make this your own work/words.
- **Section 3: Your Praise and Critique (2-4 paragraphs)**
 - This section is the most important part of your review and should be the longest. Anyone can summarize a plot, but what is your unique take on this book? Simply saying a book was “good” or “bad”, or that you liked it or didn’t, isn’t helpful. Let your audience know *why* you think it’s a great read, or *why* you found it disappointing.
 - Some questions you might focus on in this section: *What themes or motifs stand out? How do they contribute to the work? Are they effective or not? How would you describe this author’s particular style? Is it accessible to all readers or just some?* Sharing these details will help your audience form their own opinion of whether they would enjoy reading the book. For example:
 - “The vivid language instantly transported me into the world, but there were several huge plot holes that didn’t make sense.”
 - “I personally didn’t care for the protagonist; the snarky anti-hero shtick got old after a while.”
 - “The writing was rough, with especially awkward dialogue, but I thought the premise of the story was brilliant.”
- **Section 4: Your Rating and Recommendation (1-2 paragraphs)**
 - Rate the book you are reviewing on a scale of A-F. Let your audience know your rationale for choosing a particular rating.
 - After sharing your praise and critique, let your audience know your conclusions. Regardless of your own opinions, who do you think would enjoy this book? Did you personally dislike it because of [x], but think that people who like [y] would enjoy it? Would you recommend it to a friend? Should I leave it on my reading list for next year?