

Advanced Placement English Language and Composition

2025-2026

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Classroom: D306

Welcome to AP Language and Composition! This class is intended to be the equivalent of an introductory college composition class. The goal of this class is to prepare you for the College Board Advanced Placement Language and Composition test in May and/or to provide you with the skills to earn credit for English 101 through Everett Community College while also helping you become a more skilled reader, writer, and thinker overall. Taking this class, and any other AP or College in the High School class, is an excellent way to prepare yourself for college.

AP Language is a **rhetoric** class. Aristotle called rhetoric “the art of persuasion,” but he said it in Greek, which looks a bit like this: ΩΣΔα¥☺♥. Another way to think about rhetoric is to consider it the “art of crafting effective texts for specific audiences” (David Jolliffe said that – not Greek, but a professor in Arkansas).

In this class, you will learn to

- **read texts critically** to see how an author produces their desired effect on a particular audience.
- **write texts** in which you accomplish your purposes for a specific audience. (You will be writing a lot, but it won’t be too daunting.)
- **develop research skills** that allow you to evaluate sources, both primary and secondary, and synthesize key information from them to support your researched argument, with citations, in MLA format.

In order to practice these skills, you will

- **write often and reflect on your own writing** so you can grow into a mature writer who can enter any freshman or sophomore-level college writing class and succeed.
- **learn effective reading strategies** and apply them to short, mostly non-fiction selections, often arising spontaneously from current issues. (You’ll really need to know your current events in this class!)
- read fiction to analyze the author’s linguistic and rhetorical choices.

Texts we will read and/or work out of this year *may* include:

- *The Language of Composition* by Scanlon, Shea, & Aufses
- *Everything’s an Argument* by Lunsford, Ruskiewicz, and Walters
- *One Hundred Great Essays* (4th Ed.), ed. DiYanni
- Speech to the United Nations Climate Action Summit by Greta Thunberg
- Speech on Youth Education to the U.N. by Malala Yousafzai
- “On Civil Disobedience,” by Henry David Thoreau
- “A Modest Proposal,” by Jonathan Swift
- “Letter from Birmingham Jail” by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
- “The Allegory of the Cave,” by Plato (from *The Republic*)
- News columns, political cartoons, advertisements, film clips, artwork, websites, poems, articles, graphs, and charts
- Texts from the AP List of Books of Literary Merit and released items from previous AP Language tests
- *Nineteen Eighty Four*, by George Orwell
- *The Great Gatsby* F. Scott Fitzgerald
- *SO MUCH* more...

Note to families: Before approving each text, our staff carefully considers it for its literary merit and ability to engage students. Great literature addresses important ideas and sometimes contains situations or language some people may find disturbing. These texts have stood the test of time for what they offer in terms of what they can do to teach some of the deepest lessons about humanity and culture that can come out of your student’s education. Please peruse texts your student will be asked to read.

The class will follow the units and skill categories provided by the College Board as follows.

1. Rhetorical Situation: Reading – Explain how writers’ choices reflect the components of the rhetorical situation.
2. Rhetorical Situation: Writing – Make strategic choices in a text to address a rhetorical situation.
3. Claims and Evidence: Reading – Identify and describe the claims and evidence of an argument.
4. Claims and Evidence: Writing – Analyze and select evidence to develop and refine a claim.
5. Reasoning and Organization: Reading – Describe the reasoning, organization, and development of an argument.
6. Reasoning and Organization: Writing – Use organization and commentary to illuminate the line of reasoning in an argument.
7. Style: Reading – Explain how writers’ stylistic choices contribute to the purpose of an argument.
8. Style: Writing – Select words and use elements of composition to advance an argument.

Assignments in this class range from reading journals to note-taking checks, spontaneous free-writes to participation in group discussion. Students will write several essays (in-class and otherwise) each semester, and each major unit will be assessed via writing, interview, or presentation (among other means). Feedback will be as quick as possible, and student writing will often be shared with peers, as in a workshop setting.

We integrate the following throughout the year: vocabulary, public speaking, spelling, grammar, reading quizzes, discussions, free-writing, close-reading, and analysis of author’s craft. While this is a college-level course, we have plenty of fun, too.

Assessments (and Grading)

The work you do in this course will increase your abilities as writers, readers, and thinkers. As a result, most of your assignments are *formative* assessments — to assess your skill level and adjust our instruction to suit your needs. I encourage you to take risks with your writing, reading, and thinking, and I will never punish you with a bad grade for taking these risks, if you try each assignment on time, and give it your best effort. I will evaluate your skills when I think you have had enough practice with a skill or concept: this will be a *summative* assessment. You will have opportunity to continue working on formative assignments to achieve mastery, and re-do summative assignments or retake quizzes or tests, provided you met the original deadline.

Grades are weighted based on the following categories:

- Summative Assessments (50%): Major projects that take several days, longer written work (essays or other types of writing that is done for skills-based evaluation versus practice).
- Formative Assessments (50%): Quizzes, discussions, and other work and activities in class.

Late policy

Talking to me about extensions far ahead of a due date is similar to the real world, be it college or a job. Simply not showing up when something is due (i.e., an unexcused absence) is NOT okay in any context (think about the consequences of doing that in college or a job). Turning in assignments is easy: **Canvas**. Should Canvas not be working, an email attachment in the meantime will work just as well. Just coming back from an absence and saying “but I was gone” isn’t enough. **Speaking with me before work is due and explaining the need for an extension will make me much more willing to consider your request.** Without prior discussion, expect a 10% deduction per day late up to 50%.

- Assignments not turned in on time are automatically graded as 0. The 0 will be updated to the assignment’s score once it is turned in by you and graded by your teacher. If you don’t ever want to see a 0 in the gradebook, turn in your assignments on time.
- No late work will be accepted after the current grading period has ended.

Academic Integrity

This course is a reading and writing course, which means it's a thinking course. What you write and how you understand what you read is a direct result of how you think. ChatGPT and other AI systems are not your brain (neither is another student's brain). The process of reading and writing is the process of thinking. If you outsource reading and writing, you outsource your thinking. How are you going to develop your own thoughts, your own ideas, your own SELF if you outsource that? If you don't care about exploring your own thoughts and ideas and developing a stronger sense of yourself, then reconsider taking this class. While AI detection systems aren't perfect, we do use them. If work you submit in class is tagged as AI or suspected of being AI-generated, you will be asked to provide evidence of your work process (easy to do if you didn't use AI). If you cannot produce evidence of your process, the assignment will be handled the same as plagiarism, which means an admin referral, family contact, a zero on the assignment, and I will be unlikely to provide you a letter of recommendation (even if I really like you as a person, your academic character will always be in the back of my mind, and any recommendation would be tainted with that memory).

Cheating and Plagiarism

Using other's ideas (human or AI) and passing them off as your own is called **plagiarism**. Sharing ideas or answers on assignments and/or tests (or looking at another's work without them knowing and using it as your own) is called **cheating**. Any student caught cheating, plagiarizing, or assisting in the process will not earn credit for the assignment and have an automatic referral to an administrator and a call home. It is important to protect the work you have completed, as it is *your* intellectual property. It is never acceptable to give your work to a fellow student or friend for them to turn in as their own. In short, whether intentional or unintentional, plagiarism and cheating is unacceptable. Note, there is a major difference between working together and copying activities/assignments. Even if you are allowed to work together, you must put information in your own words. Please be sure you understand the difference. If you are unsure, ask!

Panther Period is the best time to receive more help or make up tests or quizzes. Students may be assigned attendance at Panther Period.

Tardy policy

Tardiness is unacceptable. School policy states that **students showing up late by 10 minutes or more are counted as absent for that day, the same goes for missing more than 10 minutes of class even if you have the hall pass.**

Hall Passes/Bathroom Use

It's simple: ask, sign out, take the pass, return promptly. Please refrain from leaving the class during discussions, readings, instruction, etc. **The time to go is during individual work time.** If you ask, and I say, "not right now" trust me that I have a good reason, be it that the lesson isn't over and I'm going to tell the class something you also really need to hear, or there's a giant grizzly in the hall next to the drinking fountain. (Yeah, that one is a bit of a stretch, but bears and cougars on school campuses do happen.)

Cell Phones and Personal Electronic Devices

Snohomish High School is committed to *establishing a culture for learning*. There is no doubt that smartphones have remarkable capabilities which could promote student learning. However, research shows that most students use their phones primarily to access digital amusements. This is a barrier to learning. **Cell phones and other personal connected electronic devices must be turned off and put away during class time.** Students may use their cell phones appropriately before school, during passing times, at lunch, and after school.

If you have any questions or concerns, please address them with me at the now, so any issues can be proactively resolved.

Please sign this page and return it to acknowledge having read and agreed to the policies in the syllabus.

Student name: _____

Student signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

College Credit

There are two ways in which you may earn college credit in this class.

1. **The AP Test.** Everything we do in this class has the AP Test in mind. This is a standardized test given in May to AP students across the country that identifies a student's mastery of the course. It is a 5-point test (5 being the highest score) that involves roughly 55 multiple choice questions and 3 essays. Any student receiving a 3 or higher can be eligible for college credit. Some schools, however, require a higher total score than others. See specific college websites for their cut-off scores. Last year, the test cost \$98. (if you're on free/reduced lunch, the cost is much lower -- \$10 last year) *and can be expunged from a transcript if the score is not to your liking.* This year's test will be administered digitally (with students proctored at the school). The deadline to register for the test is usually in November. More registration information will be available in the next couple of months.
2. **College in the High School (CHS)** via Everett Community College (EvCC) ... is **FREE FOR ALL STUDENTS.** This requires you to sign up as a student at EvCC and (if you didn't score high enough on the SBAC <-- last spring's state standardized test) to take an entry test at the Everett campus (not passing that test is extremely unlikely). If you choose to enroll in CHS, you would take my class and do all of the assignments your peers would do—nothing added. **If, at the end of the year, you have an average C- or higher for the two semesters, you receive college credit for English 101 via EvCC!** As far as I know, no school in Washington has refused the EvCC credit, and many schools outside of Washington have no problems with the credits transferring. Please check with potential colleges or call EvCC if you have any issues/questions.
 - The grade I submit to EvCC is the average of both semesters' grades. If you choose the EvCC option, your transcript will show "English 101" instead of "AP English Language and Composition." It will not affect admissions, except for possibly Ivy League schools. No matter what, if you took the test, the schools will clearly see that they were in an AP course.

If the cost of the AP test isn't an issue, I encourage you to register for it *and* the College in the High School. This gives you the highest chance of getting college credit for taking the course. College in the High School credits via EvCC are a pretty safe bet. (It's rare to have below a C- in my AP class.) However, some universities give more credence to AP tests when deciding whether to accept your student.

- Both the AP test and CHS English 101 provide 5 college-level English credits.
 - The credits from the AP test are nationally recognized, but schools don't always give college credit to scores considered "passing". However, some schools weigh the AP test more when considering admissions. Even if the student did not receive a score that granted credit.
 - As college credits and textbooks cost a lot of money when you pay for them in college, I urge you to go for one or the other. Some students graduate from high school (credits-wise) as college sophomores!