

**Martha Ellen Stilwell School of the Arts**  
**2025 AP Language and Composition Summer Reading Assignments**

AP Language and Composition is a college-level course that focuses on analytical examination of mostly non-fiction materials. The readings include a number of essays, speeches, and political documents. Some fiction and drama will be read and examined in light of the historical context during which the pieces were composed. AP Lang students examine rhetorical strategies and argumentative/persuasive techniques in writing, speech-making, political cartoons, commercials, and other media. Students apply what they have learned to their own writings while avoiding logical fallacies and propaganda.

With that being said, Welcome to AP Language and Composition!

In devising the following assignments for you to do this summer, I wanted to select readings and create assignments that would give you the flavor of what this course will be about—rhetoric and argument. (Don't worry if you don't know what "rhetoric" means; you are about to find out!) Your time is valuable, so I wanted to ask you to do things that we will build upon throughout the course of the school year, and I wanted to make these assignments personal and meaningful for you. The purpose of these assignments is to introduce you to the art of rhetoric—to get you to not only understand the fundamentals but also apply them to your own writing. These are your first assignments for the year and will count for a total of 100 points. All work should be in MLA format, typed, in 12-point font, Times New Roman, Ariel, or Calibri, double-spaced, with one-inch margins. Work for all assignments should be submitted on CANVAS by the end of the first day of class—Monday, August 4th by 3:15 P.M. Be prepared to discuss the book and your responses when you return to school.

Enjoy!

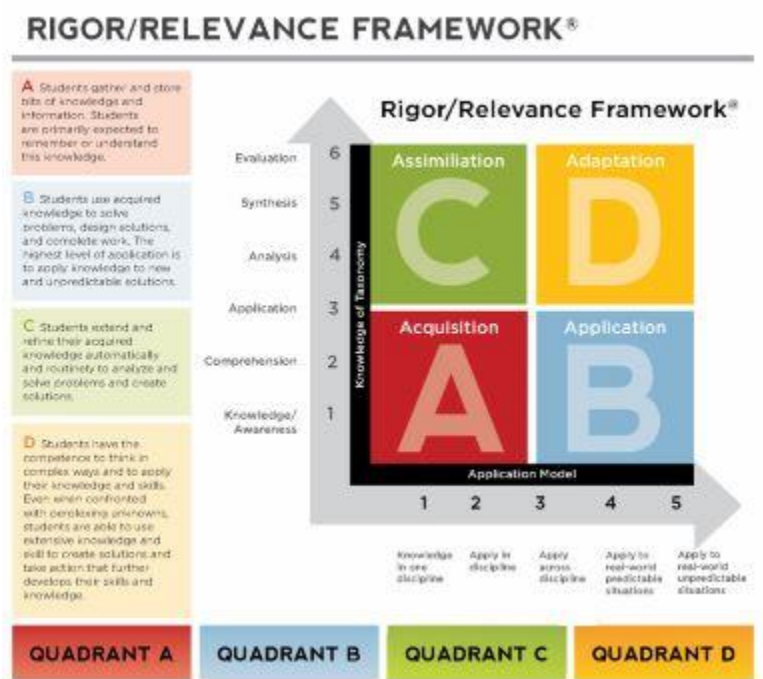
*Mrs. Pamela L. White, Ed.S.*

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**AP Language and Composition Summer Reading Assignment 2025 Goals:**

- Demonstrate your understanding of rhetorical texts, specifically TYFA and Op-Eds (Assignments #1 and 2).
- Demonstrate your ability to select and embed evidence in a sentence to support your analysis (Assignments #1 and 2).
- Demonstrate your ability to apply the strategies of TYFA to your life and analyze the effects (Assignment #1).
- Demonstrate your MLA in-text citation and works cited formatting knowledge and application (Assignment #1).
- Demonstrate your ability to analyze an Op-Ed, evaluating the argument's strategies and connecting them to yourself, other texts, and/or the world, and create your own argument applying the rhetorical strategies you learned from TYFA (Assignment #2).
- Familiarize yourself with the types of assignments, content, and skills covered in AP Language & Composition.

All assignments are created to line up with one of the four quadrants on the Rigor and Relevance Framework; this is similar to the Bloom's Taxonomy Triangle.



## **Assignment #1: *Thank You for Arguing*: Application (50 points)**

What makes an argument work? Jay Heinrichs' book provides you with insights into the nuts and bolts of persuasion by building on a foundation of classical rhetoric but then linking it to the tricks of the great speakers of history as well as to pop culture. You will be using *Thank You for Arguing* throughout the year as a reference text for your own argument writing and analyzing others' argument strategies.

1. Obtain a copy of *Thank You for Arguing: What Aristotle, Lincoln, and Homer Simpson Can Teach Us About the Art of Persuasion*. While the Fourth Edition by Jay Heinrichs (ISBN-13: 978-0593237380) is preferable, a used copy of the Third Edition (ISBN-13: 978-0804189934) is also acceptable. If you have difficulty obtaining the book, please email me right away.

2. You will read the introduction and chapters 1-13 (in 4th Ed. pgs. 1-150). I suggest that you use an active reading strategy to understand what you are reading (e.g., annotate the book or answer the study guide questions).

3. Once you have finished the reading, pick a one- to three-day time span when you are around other people. (This can be members of your own family, your friends, co-workers, etc. It can also encompass any conversations or texting that you do through any social media site.) In this time, make informal notes about all the persuading you DO plus all the persuading that is done TO you.

4. Create a table or spreadsheet of these acts of persuasion. If you are lost, use the appendices of *Thank You for Arguing* to assist you in the proper terminology for the persuasion technique. You should pick a time span that affords many examples. I will not give you a minimum number of chart entries because I do not want to encourage you to do the bare minimum. I will say that you should be very thorough and detailed. If you only have one page with a few entries, you are not paying enough attention to the language in your life.

5. At the end, after the chart, include a works cited with bibliographic citation for *Thank You for Arguing* by Jay Heinrichs. Any time that you have in-text citations, a works cited page should follow.

6. Turn in this chart, with the works cited page, to your teacher at the end of the first day of school. Stilwell's Late Submission Policy will apply to this and all assignments. You will be tested over the material in Chapters 1-13 during the second week of school. We will review the book in the first semester.

### **Chart Requirements:**

- I. The specific situation (who, what, where, when, and why).
- II. The type of persuasion—use the correct terms from *Thank You for Arguing*.
- III. Explain the rhetoric using evidence from *Thank You for Arguing*. If you paraphrase *Thank You for Arguing*, you should include an in-text citation. If you directly quote a piece of *Thank You for Arguing*, you should introduce the quote (I in ICE) and also add an in-text citation at the end.
- IV. At the end, include a complete 9th edition MLA bibliographic citation for *Thank You for Arguing*. Use a hanging indent. Please see the OWL at Purdue for examples: [MLA Formatting and Style Guide - Purdue OWL](#)

**Example Chart Entry:**

Situation	Type of Persuasion	Explanation and Analysis of Persuasive Technique
While I was at Smith's in LA, the cashier asked me, "Would you like to donate a dollar to starving children?"	Pathos—guilt; Commonplace; Deduction	The idea of donating to a specific organization depends on the person donating having beliefs and values relating to personal responsibility to help starving kids, which is a commonplace (Heinrichs 107). This cashier used deductive logic to reach the conclusion that I should help feed children because I share common beliefs and values about the well-being of children in our community (Heinrichs 140). The cashier was appealing to my sense of pathos by subtly making me feel guilty if I did not recognize our shared values and beliefs and act on them (Heinrichs 40).

Some parts of these assignments are edited/revised and borrowed from some **amazing AP Language teachers** who have my gratitude (Ms. Howell, Ms. Englebrecht, Ms. Batha, and Dr. Smith).

**\*\*\*\*Assignment #2: Study Guide Questions for *Thank You for Arguing*—Make sure that you consider the why and the how of the strategies. Be prepared to discuss/answer these questions in class during the first couple of weeks.**

**Introduction**

What does the quotation before the introduction mean?

**Chapter 1: Open Your Eyes**

Define "rhetoric."

Know the history of rhetorical study on pages 4-5.

**Chapter 2: Set Your Goals**

What is the difference between fighting and arguing?

What does persuasion try to do?

What is a deliberative argument? (Hint: You'll have to use context clues to build your definition.)

Why should you only "concede a point that will not damage your case/argument irreparably?"

What are Cicero's three goals for persuading people?

How does "changing the mood" help your argument?

**Chapter 3: Control the Tense** What are the three types of issues established by Aristotle?

Why is knowing these issues important?

Why is it important to establish what core issue you are arguing about?

How can changing the tense (past, present, future) help you be more successful?

What is the purpose of forensic, demonstrative, and deliberative rhetoric?

What type of rhetoric is "the rhetoric of choice"? Why?

**Chapter 4: Soften Them Up**

What is an argument by logic (logos), character (ethos), and emotion (pathos)?

Why is concession the most powerful tool of logos?

How does “align[ing] yourself with your listener’s pathos” help you in an argument?

**Chapter 5: Get Them to Like You**

What components make up decorum?

Why must you change your decorum based on your audience’s expectations?

**Chapter 6: Make Them Listen**

Identify and define the “Three essential qualities of persuasive ethos.”

**Chapter 7: Use Your Craft**

What is practical wisdom?

Why is practical wisdom important to building one’s ethos?

**Chapter 8: Show You Care**

Why is ethos more important than any other aspect of rhetoric?

**Chapter 9: Control the Mood**

According to Aristotle, where do emotions come from?

Is this an accurate statement? Why?

Why is a “detailed narrative” the best way to change the mood of your audience?

Understand the statement: “When you argue emotionally, speak simply.”

What is the problem with humor?

What is an unannounced emotion?

**Chapter 10: Turn the Volume Down**

Why is the passive voice so useful?

How might you use the backfire technique in an argument?

**Chapter 11: Gain the High Ground**

Why must you keep the motivation of your audience in mind when trying to persuade them?

What is “rhetorical commonplace?” Explain.

**Chapter 12: Persuade on Your Terms**

Understand definition/redefinition.

Why must you as a “persuader” identify commonplace words?

What tense is best when addressing values? Why?

**Chapter 13: Control the Argument**

What is a syllogism?

What is an enthymeme?

Know the difference between inductive and deductive logic.

What key word easily identifies the proof in an argument?

**\*\*\*\*Assignment #3: Writing a Précis (25 points) This will be done during the first week of school.**

Choose **ONE** of the AP recommended nonfiction books LISTED BELOW and **read this summer**:

1. *AMAZING GRACE* by Jonathon Kazol
2. *THE PERKS OF BEING A WALLFLOWER* by Stephen Chbosky
3. *THE RIGHT STUFF* by Tom Wolfe
4. *FAST FOOD NATION* by Eric Schlosser
5. *NICKEL AND DIMED: ON (NOT) GETTING BY IN AMERICA* by Barbara Ehrenreich
6. *OVERACHIEVERS: THE SECRET LIVES OF DRIVEN KIDS* by Alexandra Robbins
7. *THERE ARE NO CHILDREN HERE* by Alex Kotlowitz
8. *KABUL BEAUTY SCHOOL: AN AMERICAN WOMAN GOES BEHIND THE VEIL* by Deborah Rodriguez
9. *BLACK HAWK DOWN* by Mark Bowden
10. *SHE SAID YES: THE UNLIKELY MARTYRDOM OF CASSIE BERNALL* by Misty Bernal
11. *CATCH ME IF YOU CAN* by Frank Abagnale
12. *THE ZOOKEEPER'S WIFE: A WAR STORY* by Diane Ackerman
13. *DRESS YOUR FAMILY IN CORDUROY AND DENIM* by David Sedaris
14. *HOW STARBUCKS SAVED MY LIFE: A SON OF PRIVILEGE LEARNS TO LIVE LIKE EVERYONE ELSE* by Michael Gates Gill
15. *ESCAPE* by Carolyn Jessop
16. *THE GLASS CASTLE* by Jeannette Walls
17. *BEAUTIFUL BOY: A FATHER'S JOURNEY THROUGH HIS SON'S ADDICTION* by David Sheff
18. *THE INNOCENT MAN* by John Grisham
19. *OUTLIERS* by Malcolm Gladwell
20. *THE PERFECT STORM* by Sebastian Junger

**Create a reading log and address your reading in a précis format.**

A *précis* is a brief summary of a book, article, speech, or other text.

The basic characteristics of an effective précis are conciseness, clarity, completeness, unity, and coherence. According to Barun K. Mitra, Ph.D., in "Effective Technical Communication: A Guide for Scientists and Engineers," "The most important task is to ensure that the original sequence of events and the flow of ideas remain unchanged."

Pronunciation: PRAY-see

Also known as: abstract, summary, executive summary, synopsis

Plural: *précis*

Alternate spelling: *precis*

**Etymology: From the Old French, "condensed"//**

**\*\*Précis\*:** The purpose of writing a *précis* is to accurately represent what the author claims, including the key evidence and structure of her or his argument.\*\*\*

## How to Write a Précis

Writing a good précis shows that you clearly understand a text and can communicate what is most important in an argument to your readers. A précis can be tricky to write at first: it's tempting to include too much or too little information. But if you consider the step-by-step method below, you can readily learn how to summarize a chapter or article into précis form in short order.

- 1) Divide and conquer. First off, skim the text you are going to summarize; divide it into sections. Pay special attention to headings and subheadings, or places where the author moves into a new area of discussion. Also look at any important terms and make sure you understand them before you read.
- 2) (Re)read. Now that you've prepared, go ahead and re-skim the selection. You should already have taken good notes on the chapter as part of your earlier reading. Use them. Be sure to get a feel for the author's tone, style, and main idea. Also label areas that should be avoided because the details—while perhaps interesting—are too specific. Also, identify areas that you do not understand and try to clarify those points.
- 3) A sentence at a time. You should now have a firm grasp on the text you will be summarizing. In steps 1 and 2, you divided the piece into sections and located the author's main ideas and points. Now, write down the main idea of each section in one well-developed sentence. Make sure that what you include in your sentences are key points and evidence, not minor details.
- 4) Craft a thesis statement. This is the key to any well-written summary. Review the sentences you wrote in step 3. From them, you should be able to create an overall thesis statement that clearly communicates what the entire text was trying to achieve. If you find that you are not able to do this step, then you should go back and make sure your sentences actually address key points.
- 5) You are ready to write. At this point, your outline-draft is virtually done. You can use the thesis statement as the introductory sentence of your summary, and your other sentences, with adjustment, can make up the body. Make sure that they are in order. Consider the use of transition words (then, however, also, moreover) that help with the overall structure and flow of the summary. Once you are actually putting pen to paper (or fingers to keys!), remember these tips when responding in your précis format: **Write in the present tense when discussing the author's stance ("Breisach argues," etc.), but use past tense when relating evidence sustaining the author's argument ("Ranke's works exhibited both a new 'scientific' approach, and a metaphysical perspective.)** Make sure to include the author and title of the work. **Be concise:** a précis radically shortens the original text, no more than 10 words per chapter/section. Your entire précis should not be any more than about three (3) double-spaced pages. **Do not** quote the author unless you are using a specialized term that warrants quoting. You should be putting material into your own words. **Don't** put your own opinions, ideas, or interpretations into the summary. The purpose of writing a précis is to accurately represent what the **author** claims, including the key evidence and structure of her or his argument. The purpose of a précis is **not** to provide a critique of the text. (We will engage in this learning to critique text as your course progresses.)
- 6) **Check for precision.** Reread your summary and make certain that you have accurately represented the author's ideas and key points. If you did quote something, make sure that you have correctly cited it. Also, check to make sure that your text **does not** contain your own commentary on the piece.

## Sample Précis

**Original passage from Aristotle's "Rhetoric" (199 words):**"It is evident that those in the prime of life will be between the young and the old in character, subtracting the excess of either, and neither exceedingly confident (rashness is such) nor too fearful but having the right amount of both, neither trusting nor distrusting everybody but rather making realistic judgments and not directing their lives only to what is fine or what is advantageous but to both and neither to frugality nor to extravagance but to what is fitting. Similarly in regard to impulse and desire. And they combine prudence with courage and courage with prudence, while among the young and the old these things are separated; for the young are brave and lack self-restraint, the older prudent and cowardly. To speak in general terms, whatever advantages youth and old age have separately, [those in their prime] combine, and whatever the former have to excess or in deficiency, the latter have in due measure and in a fitting way. The body is in its prime from the age of thirty to thirty-five, the mind about age forty-nine. Let this much be said about the kinds of character of youth and old age and the prime of life."

**Précis from "A Synoptic History of Classical Rhetoric" (68 words):**"The character of those in the prime of life lies midway between that of youth and of age. Neither rash nor timid, neither skeptical nor overtrusting, they usually make choices on a true basis. They are not given to excess in desire, nor to lack of feeling or parsimony. They live respecting both honor and expediency. In short, the most useful traits of youth and age are theirs."

## **Methods and Purpose**

"A précis is not an outline, but a summary or digest. It is useful as an exercise in grasping the essential ideas of an already completed composition and in stating these ideas in concentrated form. The précis shears away all elaborations of the thought and gives only what is left, in such a way as to make the summary a complete composition. It does not, therefore, skeletonize the original composition so much as it reduces its scale. Many of the articles in *The Reader's Digest* are only précis, so skillfully done that the average reader does not know that he is reading a summary. Since the précis says a great deal within a brief space, it is of great service in taking notes on library assignments and general reading," says Donald Davidson in "American Composition and Rhetoric."

## Sources

Aristotle. *Rhetoric*, book 2, chapter 14. *Aristotle, On Rhetoric: A Theory of Civic Discourse*. Translated by George A. Kennedy, Oxford University Press, 1991.

Davidson, Donald. *American Composition and Rhetoric*. Scribner's, 1968.

Koneru, Aruna. *Professional Communication*. Tata McGraw-Hill, 2008.

Mitra, Barun K., PhD. *Effective Technical Communication: A Guide for Scientists and Engineers*. Oxford Publishing, 2006.

Murphy, James J. and Richard A. Katula. *A Synoptic History of Classical Rhetoric*. 3rd ed, Hermagoras Press, 2003.

Palmer, Richard. *Write in Style: A Guide to Good English*. 2nd ed, Routledge, 2002.

#### Assignment #4: Analysis & Response (25 points)

Read one of the following essays that are free on the internet. Web addresses follow titles. If you find that the link is no longer working, you can Google the title and find the essay in another location. These essays can also be found in a great anthology entitled *40 Model Essays: A Portable Anthology* by Jane E. Aaron... [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1AjieNEmCocGd\\_LGVBjAsOoZO4gjMoFla/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1AjieNEmCocGd_LGVBjAsOoZO4gjMoFla/view?usp=sharing)

Using no less than three sentences to address the reading for your chosen article listed below:

- Raise questions about the beliefs and values implied in the text.
- Give your personal reactions to the passage.
- Discuss the words, ideas, or actions of the author or a character.
- Tell what it reminds you of from your own experiences.
- Write about what it makes you think or feel.
- Argue with or speak to the character or author.

#### List of articles from which to choose

(Description) Once More to the Lake – E.B. White

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/119H2lj0RJPYE-41jq4YyEsCzesHRF\\_Wn/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/119H2lj0RJPYE-41jq4YyEsCzesHRF_Wn/view?usp=sharing)

(Narrative) Shooting an Elephant - George Orwell

<http://www.online-literature.com/orwell/887/>

(Example) Black Men and Public Space - Brent Staples

<https://www.ohlone.edu/sites/default/files/documents/imported/justwalkonbyblackmenandpublicspace.pdf>

(Classification) The Plot Against People- Russell Baker

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/19PPRqUOsy59TQifRRkUEY63KF5xjcekD/view?usp=sharing>

(Process Analysis) On Dumpster Diving - Lars Eigner

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1RNsHNnx6xxxymGbQS\\_V771cwksHnfl2\\_/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1RNsHNnx6xxxymGbQS_V771cwksHnfl2_/view?usp=sharing)

(Comparison and Contrast) Neat People vs. Sloppy People -Suzanne Britt

<http://officeinstructor.com/EssayWriting/EssayPDFs/Neat%20vs%20Sloppy.pdf>

(Definition) I Want A Wife -Judy Brady

<http://www.columbia.edu/~sss31/rainbow/wife.html>

(Cause and Effect Analysis) Cultural Baggage- Barbara Ehrenreich

<http://www.nytimes.com/1992/04/05/magazine/hers-cultural-baggage.html>

(Argument and Persuasion) A Modest Proposal -Jonathan Swift

[http://emotionalliteracyeducation.com/classic\\_books\\_online/mdprp10.htm](http://emotionalliteracyeducation.com/classic_books_online/mdprp10.htm)

Dear 2025-2026 College Board Advanced Placement Language & Composition Students and Parents:

Welcome to the Advanced Placement Program! I look forward to meeting you and your parents at Open House and I know the year will be both challenging and rewarding for you. The Advanced Placement course includes an entire year of reading informational texts, speeches, essays, literature as well as a thorough preparation for the Advanced Placement Exam.

As you are aware, AP students receive college credit for passing the Advanced Placement Exam. Hence, passing the AP Exam affords you a unique opportunity. You will automatically earn credit at most colleges and universities, meaning you will not have to take the standard first-year English 101 course, which will save you both time and money. (Please be aware, that in some cases, universities require a higher passing rate than a three (3) for credit, and in others cases, some universities do not allow credit for AP courses. Please check with the College Board: [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com) for clarification.)

Since Advanced Placement is taught on the college level, understand that both the complexity and frequency of assignments is far more rigorous than in a Honors or Regular English course. To ensure your success in this class, your daily attendance is mandatory. Furthermore, class discussions are frequent, and require a level of maturity and sophistication commensurate with a college level class. (See AP Summer 2025-2026 Assignments above.) Meeting deadlines and completing assignments with fidelity is a must for success.

(Please be advised that it is the student's responsibility to keep abreast of all homework/class assignments posted both in class and on CANVAS for the year. Failure to comply will impact your grades.)

Please return the completed bottom portion of this acknowledgment letter, along with your parent or guardian's signature.

This acknowledgment is due directly to Mrs. White, on or before May 21st, 2025. (Once you submit this form (on time), as requested, please make sure you alert Mrs. White with your intention, by email, at [pamela.white@clayton.k12.ga.us](mailto:pamela.white@clayton.k12.ga.us), and outline your understanding and acceptance of the above conditions. If you cannot get to room 316 to deliver this form in person, please drop it off in the front office and ask the staff to place it in my mailbox.

Attached is your AP Summer Reading Assignment. Please review it carefully, and make sure to submit it as directed above.

I look forward to working with you next year!

Mrs. Pamela White

AP English Language & Composition Teacher & Reader

(RETURN THIS COMPLETED FORM DIRECTLY TO MRS. WHITE, ON OR BEFORE MAY 21ST, 2025. )

College Board AP Language & Composition Class

I acknowledge and understand that AP Language & Composition is a college-level class and that the complexity and frequency of assignments is far more rigorous than Honors or Regular 10th Grade English. Furthermore, I understand and agree that I will be required to submit quality work on time. All deadlines will be firm. I also acknowledge that daily class attendance is mandatory.

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Student name (please print)

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Student Email

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Parent/Guardian name (please print)

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Parent/Guardian signature

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Parent/Guardian Email (please print)

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Parent/Guardian Tel. Home/Cell