

AP Language and Composition, Summer Reading Assignments 2025-2026

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**PLEASE PRINT THIS DOCUMENT AND TURN IN A PHYSICAL COPY ON THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL.
BRING ANNOTATED TEXTS WITH YOU ON THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL AS WELL.**

Welcome to AP Language and Composition, a course designed to be the equivalent in rigor of a college course in rhetoric, literature studies, and composition. Special attention will be devoted to preparing students for the AP Language and Composition examination. We will be working with these assignments from the very first day of school, so have your memoirs read and annotated and all assignments for *How to Argue with a Cat* completed ON YOUR FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL.

Your summer assignment involves the following:

1) **Select and read a memoir of your choice of no less than 250 pages.** The library has many different memoirs to choose from, in addition to Barnes and Noble, Borders, Half-Price Books, local shops, and they can be ordered from www.amazon.com or www.thriftbooks.com. They are also available from the public library (I suggest purchasing your book because you need to be doing annotations). It is up to parent/guardian discretion to determine whether the chosen text is appropriate for your student, as some texts may contain delicate/mature subject matter.

- Memoirs to consider: *Becoming* by Michelle Obama, *The Glass Castle* by Jennette Walls, *Hillbilly Elegy* by J.D. Vance, *Brain on Fire* by Susannah Cahalan, *On Writing* by Steven Spielberg, *Hunger* by Roxanne Gay, *Just Mercy* by Bryan Stevenson, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* by Maya Angelou, *In Cold Blood* by Truman Capote, *Dreams From My Father* by Barack Obama, *Beautiful Boy* by David Sheff, *Worth the Fighting For: A Memoir* by John McCain, *I'm Glad My Mom Died* by Jeannette McCurdy, and *I Am Malala* by Malala Yousafzai. This is a short list of memoirs which we think are great, and there are many additional amazing memoirs to choose from. **YOU DO NOT HAVE TO CHOOSE FROM THIS LIST.** You may NOT read *Born a Crime* by Trevor Noah or *Educated* by Tara Westover, as these will be read in class.
- You need to show an active reading strategy throughout the entire book and should have no less than 40 annotations (i.e. post-its, margin notes, etc...). Your annotations should focus on word choice (diction), tone, sentence structure, audience, context, speaker, purpose, appeals, and other things interesting to you.
- Complete a Nonfiction Data Sheet for the book (attached). Fill it out completely.

2). Read and annotate (in whatever way best suits you) *How to Argue With a Cat* by Jay Heinrichs. Complete the attached assignment.

Name:

Period:

AP Language and Composition Summer Reading, 2025-2026

Assignment #1: Memoir Nonfiction Data Sheet

Title: _____

Author: _____

Date of Publication: _____

Appeals (How does the author appeal to the reader's sense of emotion? Which emotions? Is it effective? How does the author appeal to the reader's sense of logic? How does the author use their credibility to appeal to the reader?) Be specific with your responses.

Tone (What is the overall tone (attitude) of the author about the subject? How do you know? Does the tone shift? If so, where?)

SPEAKER (Who is the writer? Why are they important? How are they credible?)

Purpose (What is the author's primary purpose of writing this memoir? To inform? To persuade? To entertain?
This is not something you will know completely until the end of your memoir)

AUDIENCE (Who is the intended audience? What about the unintended audience? How do you know?)

CONTEXT (What was going on in the world when the author wrote this? What were the biggest issues that might have been on their mind, prompting them to write their book?)

Diction: Select at least five quotes from the book which provide provocative or emotionally charged diction (word choice). Identify the words in the sentence which stand out to you and explain their impact on the reader. What is the expected emotional response of using the words? Is the diction effective? Why/why not?

***Quotes should come from a variety of places in the text**

Quotation with page number	Impact and Explanation
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

Assignment #2: *How to Argue With a Cat* by Jay Heinrichs

Below you will find several questions and tasks that will assess, and improve, your understanding of Jay Heinrichs' book, *How to Argue with a Cat*. You will work on these questions individually or with a partner. If the question asks for an individualized response, you must each answer the question individually. Label the response with your name.

For questions two and three, you can add a venn diagram on a separate sheet of paper.

Chapters 1 and 2 (Some words in question 1 are defined later in the book.)

1. Define the following terms and identify where in the text Heinrichs discusses the term and its role in regard to argument. Add the definition and quotation as you come across it in the text

Word	Definition	Passage (and page number) where Heinrich discusses the term and its role in regard to argument.
Deliberate argument		
Kairos		
Decorum		
Ingratiation		
Enthymeme		
Logical fallacy		
Facade word		

Trope		
Synecdoche		

2. Compare fighting and argument. How are they the same? How are they different? You can create a venn diagram here to help you answer this question.

3. Compare argumentation and persuasion. How are they the same? How are they different? You can create a venn diagram here to help you answer this question.

4. According to Heinrichs, what are the three goals of persuasion?

1.
2.
3.

5. According to Heinrichs, what are the three mediums, or "media," used to persuade? How do their purposes differ?

Media/Medium	Purpose

Chapter 3

6. According to Heinrichs, what are the three different topics for argument?

Topic	Explanation/quotation from the text

Chapter 4

7. What claims does Heinrichs make about grammar? Provide evidence from the text to support your answer.

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Chapter 5

8. According to Heinrichs, what are the three elements of ethos? Define and provide textual evidence for each of the three elements.

Element of ethos	Definition (this can be a quotation)	Example from the text

Chapter 6

9. According to Heinrichs, "rhetoric is not always true." Provide a contemporary example of false rhetoric. PROVIDE YOUR SOURCE (tell me where you got this information). Summarize and evaluate the situation surrounding the false rhetoric. In other words, why do you consider it to be false? Include the claim being made by the writer/speaker in your response.

Example of False Rhetoric	Explanation

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10. What is the basic structure of an enthymeme? What example does Heinrichs provide?

Basic structure	Example

a. Create four examples of enthymemes.

1.
2.
3.
4.

b. Find enthymemes from different sources and explain how each enthymeme works. Consider searching for "memes" online, which often have enthymemes. Please print and attach the examples. Explain each enthymeme's unsaid assumption. How are they being used to rhetorical advantage?

Enthymeme (provide image if possible)	Assumption	Rhetorical advantage

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Chapter 7

11. What words does Heinrichs suggest are facade words? Why? Provide as many examples from the text as possible?

Facade words	How the word functions as a facade

12. In *How to Argue with a Cat*, Heinrichs lists several logical fallacies. List and define each of these fallacies.

Logical Fallacy	Definition (can be a quotation)

Fallacies, continued.	
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Chapter 8

13. How do the rules of verbal argument support the rules of written argument? You can answer this question with a bulleted list, a graphic organizer, or with a well-developed paragraph. It is up to you.

Chapter 9

14. According to Heinrichs what is a "lure" and what is a "ramp"? What is the relationship between these two terms? What does Heinrichs say was/is Aristotle's "ramp"?

Chapter 10

15. Simplify Heinrichs "cat" persuasion checklist. In other words, what should humans do to persuade?