

Read, detach, sign, and then return this page to Ms. Ridinger in person (B217) by Wednesday, May 28, 2025 to kridinger@gasd-pa.org to confirm you understand your AP Lang. responsibilities.

Student's Name: _____

**AP ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION
PRE-COURSE ASSIGNMENT CONFIRMATION**

My signature below indicates that I understand that by enrolling in an AP course at Gettysburg Area High School, I am making a commitment to a specific academic community. Course plans are made based on my enrollment. As a student taking a college-level course, I am responsible for making sure I understand my pre-course assignment before the end of the 2024-2025 school year. If I have a concern about taking the course, I should first communicate with Ms. Ridinger to see whether there are resources or other forms of support that could ease my concerns. As such, course drops will not be approved without unforeseen, extenuating circumstances per school policy. If I do not complete the required summer reading and hand in the written assignments by the due dates described in the following letter, I will face a grade penalty for the first assignment of the course.

I understand that it is my responsibility to sign out and care for my copy of the assigned text, *Words Like Loaded Pistols*, before the end of the 2024-2025 school year and return it next school year. I understand that I am required to take the Advanced Placement exam in May 2026, and that if I do not take the exam, I will forfeit the added grade weight that accompanies this course. I also understand that I am required to pay the fee of approximately \$100 per course—although money is available through the Counseling Center if this is a financial hardship.

- 1. Please sign below and return this form to Ms. Ridinger in person to room B217 by Wednesday, May 28, 2025. Then Ms. R will give you your copy of the assigned reading.**
- 2. Early in the fall 2025 semester, Ms. R will offer an optional AP Lang. Info Session during ARC to answer your questions and support the work you're doing to prepare for the course. Watch your GASD Gmail for information. This session is optional but recommended.**

Student's Name (printed)

Signature of student

Student's Gettysburg Gmail address (legibly printed) @gasd-pa.org

Signature of parent or guardian

RETURN THIS PAGE – KEEP THE REST OF THE PACKET

Dear Future AP Lang Student,

You have indicated that you wish to be part of an **AP English Language and Composition class** for the 2025-2026 school year. Congratulations on choosing to make this investment in yourself as a learner, thinker, and writer. AP Lang is a rigorous course, and you will benefit from it if you invest along the way.

At its core, AP Lang is a class that focuses on nonfiction and rhetorical analysis, rather than fiction and literary analysis, which have been the focus of your previous English classes. As a result, I recommend approaching AP Lang as an entirely new area of English studies. Consider the circuitous relationship between biology and chemistry: each has its own principles, terminology, and academic processes, and although both are science classes, these courses are still different subjects. Similarly, rhetoric is its own subject within the study of English.

This course is designed to prepare you to take the Advanced Placement English Language and Composition exam next spring. In terms of course content, AP Lang. is primarily a writing course that involves numerous formal and informal writing assignments. However, perhaps even more importantly, AP Lang. is a course that demands unique, critical thought on everything from photography to the ethics of eating lobster. One of the best things you can do to prepare for AP Lang. is to think about your experience as a human being and about the prominent issues of your culture, time, and place. The course is organized through several elements of composition—author, audience, organization, and style—in connection with evaluative frameworks that motivate argument, including analysis of practical, ethical, structural, and aesthetic values.

As an introduction to rhetoric, attached is a list of required and suggested texts and assignments to prepare you for AP Lang. Read the instructions carefully and soon. Ideally, you should make sure you understand the assignment expectations before the end of the 2024-2025 school year. **Email Ms. Ridinger at kriding@gasd-pa.org with questions and/or sign up to speak with Ms. R during ARC.**

ASSIGNMENT TIMELINE AND PROCEDURE

The pre-course assignment is NOT due on the first day of the 2025-2026 school year. It is recommended that you complete the required reading over the summer, and then submit assignments on this schedule via hard copy to Ms. Ridinger in B217:

- **Article annotations and précis #1 = DUE Wednesday, September 10, 2025**
- **Article annotations and précis #2 = DUE Friday, October 10, 2025**
- **Article annotations and précis #3 = DUE Monday November 10, 2025**

After each due date, Ms. Ridinger will email feedback to your GASD Gmail account, and you will revise your pre-course assignment for increased credit. It is your responsibility to check your GASD Gmail during the fall semester. If you miss these deadlines, you waive your opportunity for feedback on that set of annotations and précis. This structure is intended to prepare you to begin the course well in January.

- **The final pre-course assignment including three revised article annotations and three rhetorical précis will be DUE Wednesday, December 10, 2025. Submit all assignments to B217 by each deadline—not the first day of the spring semester. Failure to submit your assignments by Wednesday, December 10, 2025 will result in an automatic 50% penalty to your initial course grades.** Copies of assigned and recommended texts will be distributed with confirmation for this assignment. Contact Ms. Ridinger directly if you did not receive required texts. All are also available online at www.amazon.com and the Adams County Library.

- The next two pages describe the assignment in detail. **For additional help or clarification, email Ms. Ridinger at kridinger@gasd-pa.org you can visit this folder on Google Drive: <https://tinyurl.com/y27ucfta>. This folder includes a rubric for both parts of the pre-course assignment as well as annotation directions and a sample annotated article.**

PRE-COURSE ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTION:

<p>REQUIRED READING</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Words Like Loaded Pistols: The Power of Rhetoric from the Iron Age to the Information Age</i> by Sam Leith, ISBN: 9781541603738 (nonfiction) *required <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → As you read, take notes; this work will be crucial in January 2026. There will be a test on the material in the book based on the provided study guide. You are expected to remember and understand the contents of the book. The material will not be reviewed in class. → Sign out with Ms. Ridinger or purchase your own copy to annotate Articles from your selected columnist from August to November 2025 (see below) *required Add textfrom.website/ to the beginning of the URL for articles behind a paywall (or watch the video in the Pre-Course Assignment Google folder). Let Ms. Ridinger know if you have trouble accessing these.
<p>RECOMMENDED LISTENING (OPTIONAL)</p>	<p>You should also learn about a variety of topics and current issues (of your choice). These podcasts would be especially useful for AP Lang:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hidden Brain is an <i>NPR</i> podcast in which host, Shankar Vedantam, uses science and storytelling to reveal the unconscious patterns that drive human behavior. • Scene on Radio comes from Duke University and covers current social issues through a researched, historical lens. • Revisionist History is Malcolm Gladwell’s journey through the overlooked and misunderstood.
<p>ARTICLE ANNOTATIONS</p>	<p>Adopt a columnist to acquaint yourself with the world of nonfiction and rhetorical analysis.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Choose one of the major editorial columnists on the list below. C indicates conservative- leaning; L indicates liberal-leaning. M indicates moderate. Read all of your author’s articles from August to November. Then print (or organize a virtual copy) and annotate THREE of the same columnist’s articles. Focus on WHAT+WHY+HOW (an approach described in the Understanding an Author’s Purpose handout linked below).
<p>RHETORICAL PRÉCIS</p>	<p>Write a rhetorical précis (prey-see) and clearly identify three of the rhetorical strategies discussed in <i>Words Like Loaded Pistols</i> that appear in each of the three articles you selected. Focus on the terms listed on the <i>WLLP</i> Test Study Guide included in the AP Lang. Pre-Course Assignment Google folder: https://tinyurl.com/y27ucfta. Précis directions are included in the Resources section.</p>

RECOMMENDED COLUMNISTS

Adopt one columnist from the list below, or suggest a different columnist to Ms. R for approval.

Charles Blow (<i>New York Times</i> , L)	Nicholas Kristof (<i>New York Times</i> , L)
Jamelle Bouie (<i>New York Times</i> , L)	Paul Krugman (<i>New York Times</i> , L)
David Brooks (<i>New York Times</i> , C)	Yuval Levin (<i>National Review</i> , C)
Frank Bruni (<i>New York Times</i> , L)	Andrew McCarthy (<i>Washington Post</i> , C)
Gail Collins (<i>New York Times</i> , L)	Dana Milbank (<i>Washington Post</i> , L)
E.J. Dionne Jr. (<i>Washington Post</i> , L)	Peggy Noonan (<i>Wall Street Journal</i> , C)
Maureen Dowd (<i>New York Times</i> , L)	Kathleen Parker (<i>Washington Post</i> , C)
Christine Emba (<i>The Atlantic</i> , L)	Ramesh Ponnuru (<i>Washington Post</i> , <i>Daily Wire</i> , C)
Thomas Friedman (<i>New York Times</i> , L)	Ben Shapiro (<i>The Daily Wire</i> , C)
David Frum (<i>The Atlantic</i> , C)	George Will (<i>Washington Post</i> , C)
Jonah Goldberg (<i>National Review</i> , C)	Fareed Zakaria (<i>Washington Post</i> , M)

RESOURCES:

Though you are welcomed and encouraged to contact Ms. Ridinger with any questions about the pre-course assignment, there are also several helpful resources in the AP English Language “AP Lang Pre-Course Assignment Folder” at <https://tinyurl.com/y27ucfta> on Google Drive:

- Accessing Articles: <https://tinyurl.com/bdz3jxvb>
- Understanding an Author’s Purpose: <https://tinyurl.com/ydf884hv>
- Pre-Course Assignment Rubric: <https://tinyurl.com/4cfzvn22>
- Notes on Annotation and Evaluation: <https://tinyurl.com/yabcs4bk>
- How to Write a Rhetorical Précis: <https://tinyurl.com/ybnxogd9>
- Sample Annotations + Précis: <https://tinyurl.com/ykmtmpz9>
- *Words Like Loaded Pistols* Test Study Guide: <https://tinyurl.com/yayzbogg>

A NOTE FROM MS. R

Keep in mind, these assignments are designed to help you prepare for a fulfilling learning experience that will set you up for future success in a variety of contexts, and the fall deadlines are designed to give you more opportunities to ask for help if needed.

Ms. Ridinger is willing to help you complete them successfully in any way she can. Early in the fall 2025 semester, Ms. R will offer an optional AP Lang Info Session during ARC to answer your questions and support the work you’re doing to prepare for the course. Watch your GASD Gmail for information. This session is optional but recommended.

It is your job to communicate if you would benefit from further assistance or clarification about the pre-course assignment before the spring 2026 semester.