

AP Language and Composition

Revised Curriculum

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Units*

- How to Think**
- How to Write**
- How to Analyze**
- How to Argue**
- How to Synthesize**

*none are taught in isolation

Unit 1

How to Think

Big Ideas: Rhetorical Situation, Claims and Evidence, Reasoning and Organization

Skills: 1.A, 1.B, 3.A, 3.B, 3.C, 3.A, 3.B, 3.C, 4.A, 4.C, 5.A, 5.B, 5.C, 6.A, 7.A, 7.B, 7.C

In Unit 1, students explore the big ideas of philosophy and argumentation as a foundation for the rest of the course. Students use these concepts to examine, analyze, and interact with non-fiction texts ancient and modern. Students apply these concepts to their own arguments as they are presented with a variety of rhetorical situations.

Activities:

The class reads “A Modest Proposal” by Jonathan Swift. After instruction on historical context and irony, students analyze the stylistic and rhetorical choices made by Swift through detailed annotation of the text. Students then meet in Socratic seminar groups and apply their knowledge of ethics gleaned from classroom instruction and *How Philosophy Works* to examine both the ethical issues raised by the essay as well as the ethical responsibilities of the author of an argumentative text. **1.A, 1.B, 3.A, 3.B, 3.C, 5.A, 5.B, 7.A**

Students examine the article “The Singer Solution to World Poverty” to determine the validity of Singer’s inductive and deductive arguments through annotation of the text. Students are tasked with finding another rhetorical text that addresses the topic of poverty in order to create a venn diagram comparing the logic of the two arguments. The class then engages in a fishbowl discussion about the logic and ethics of Singers’ solution. **3.A, 3.B, 3.C, 5.A**

After an introduction to philosophy and ethics through teacher instruction and the text *How Philosophy Works*, students participate with their classmates in a series of philosophy experiments. Students track their own responses and write a reflection through which they evaluate their responses and their own logical and ethical consistency. **4.A, 4.C, 6.A**

Students create a rubric that incorporates the elements of rhetoric introduced in A Rulebook for Arguments in order to evaluate the success of a rhetorical text. Students select several non-fiction texts from either Lapham’s Quarterly or American Rhetoric on a single topic. Students analyze how each author approached the rhetorical situation stylistically in order to reach a specific audience. Students use the rubric they have created to evaluate the success of each text and determine the most rhetorically effective. **1.B, 3.C, 5.C, 7.B, 7.C**

Assessment:

Students pick a significant national or global issue that requires a solution. Students research the issue and use the arguments of the texts they’ve discovered to collect information as well as to shape and sharpen their own beliefs about the topic. Students then draft two essays: an essay entitled “(Student name’s) Solution to (Issue of

Student's Choice)” in which they present a clear and consistent argument that addresses the problem and a short essay describing how their study of philosophy, logic, ethics, and rhetoric impacted the structure and content of their argument.

Texts:

Books:

Shea, Renée H, Lawrence Scanlon, and Robin D. Aufses. *The Language of Composition: Reading, Writing, Rhetoric.* , 2013. Print.

Weeks, Marcus, et al. *How Philosophy Works: The Concepts Visually Explained.* DK/Penguin Random House, 2019.

Chapters: Platonic Realms, Allegory of the Cave, One World Only, Occam's Razor, Scientific Revolution, Doubting the World, Mind and Body, The Blank Slate, Shaping the World with the Mind, Kinds of Truth, Useful Truths, The Value of Truth, Freedom and Identity, The "Other", Aristotle's Virtue Ethics, Humean Ethics, Deontology, Utilitarianism, Recognizing Arguments, Analyzing Arguments, Evaluating Arguments, Deductive Arguments, Inductive Arguments, Fallacies, Formal Logic

Weston, Anthony. *A Rulebook for Arguments.* 5th ed., Hackett Publishing Company, 2017.

Journals:

Lapham's Quarterly: www.laphamsquarterly.org

Essays and Speeches:

“The Allegory of the Cave” by Plato

“A Modest Proposal” by Jonathan Swift

“The Singer Solution to World Poverty” by Peter Singer

Other non-fiction texts selected by both student and teacher

Websites:

Philosophy Experiments: www.philosophyexperiments.com

American Rhetoric: www.americanrhetoric.com

Unit 2

How to Write: Diction, Style, Mechanics, and Structure

Topic: Language

Big Ideas: Rhetorical Situation; Claims and Evidence; Style; Writing Process; Modes of Writing; Organizational patterns (exemplification, contrast/comparison, cause/effect, classification/division, process analysis, definition, description, narration, and argument); College Essay; Annotation; Peer-Editing

Skills: 1.A, 2.A, 3.C, 4.C, 7.B, 7.C, 8.B, 8.C

Activities:

1. Students create a lesson plan highlighting the chapters in *Writing with Style* and/or *They Say/I Say*. In pairs or trios, students will present the main concepts of each chapter in a presentation that should be between 5-10 minutes with specific Criteria for Success.
2. Students will identify and analyze the role of SPACE CAT (Speaker, Purpose, Audience, Context, Exigence, Choices, Appeals, Tone) in writing by reading and/or viewing various texts.
3. Students read “In Praise of the F Word” by Mary Sherry. Students will analyze the rhetorical situation and explain the manner in which the author qualifies the claims, using modifiers, counterarguments, and alternate perspectives. Additionally, students will focus on the power of titles and revise the title of their most recent essay. Students will identify components of *Writing with Style* and/or *They Say; I Say* in his TED Talk and their impact on his purpose.
4. Students will view Graham Hill’s “Why I Am a Weekday Vegetarian” TED Talk. Students will then analyze the rhetorical situation, claims and evidence, and how his diction impacts his purpose. Students will identify components of *Writing with Style* and/or *They Say/I Say* in his TED Talk and their impact on his purpose.
5. Students will choose a memoir writing of their choice and analyze the writing techniques employed.
6. Students review former AP Language and Composition written essays to identify strong writing vs. “not there yet” writing.
7. Students will review and employ various annotation techniques and strategies.
8. Students will complete “Reading with a Purpose” and “Writing with a Purpose” assignments to analyze SPACE CAT and counterargument as well as techniques explored in *Writing with Style* and/or *They Say/I Say*.
9. Students will compete to create the best “trimmed” sentence in order to practice effective diction and syntax.
10. Students will review the use of strong verbs vs. weak verbs in their writing.
11. Students will evaluate classmates’ writing through focused peer-editing.
12. Students will employ the personal narrative essay structure to write a college application essay using the Common Application prompts.
13. Students will compose an essay for a target audience. Students will identify a problem within the American educational school system, convince the audience it is truly a problem, address the counterargument, AND propose a workable solution.

14. Students will compose an essay for a target audience. Students will identify a positive educational experience that is replicable in other classrooms in America and persuade the audience why it's worth replications, and how other teachers/classrooms can adopt it.
15. Students will practice MLA and/or APA formatting.

AP Classroom Practice: Complete Personal Progress Check MCQ for Unit 7.

Practice: Complete Personal Progress Check FRQ for Unit 7.

Assessment: Education Essay (options 13 or 14 above)

Texts: *Writing with Style*; *They Say/ I Say*; *Kelly Gallagher's Article of the Week*; memoir of student's choice

Speeches: "The Danger of a Single Story" by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

Letters and Op-Eds: "In Praise of the F-Word" by Mary Sherry

Essays and Book Excerpts: "I Want a Wife" by Judy Brady

Other Texts: "Why I Am a Weekday Vegetarian" by Graham Hill; "Politics of the English Language" by Orwell

Other non-fiction texts selected by both student and teacher

Unit 3

How to Analyze

Topic: Language as Illumination and Liberation

Big Ideas: Rhetorical Situation, Claims and Evidence, Reasoning and Organization, Style

Curriculum Requirements: CR2, CR3, CR4, CR9, CR 10, CR12

Skills: 1, 2, 7, and 8

ACTIVITIES

1. Students read (or revisit) and annotate Chapters 1 and 2 of *The Language of Composition* (Second Edition). Chapter 1 introduces the rhetorical situation by applying the rhetorical triangle, the Aristoleian triangle, and SOAPStone to various texts while Chapter 2 illustrates how to analyze rhetoric and compose a rhetorical analysis essay. Students collaboratively complete a class copy of a graphic organizer that includes but is not limited to the definitions and examples of the rhetorical terms and style elements from the glossary sections of Chapters 1 and 2, respectively. Subsequent to teacher review, students refer to the graphic organizer as the glossary for rhetorical analysis in order to develop a foundational lexicon for the course.
2. Students begin to apply their knowledge of the lexicon by first revisiting and annotating texts with which they are already familiar (i.e. Jefferson's Declaration of Independence, Emerson's "Self-Reliance," Thoreau's "On the Duty of Civil Disobedience") in order to focus on the central relationship between what is said (purpose) and how it's said (delivery, execution). In groups, students identify and explain the components of the rhetorical situation, label the rhetorical and stylistic choices that enhance effectiveness, apply SOAPStone, and compose a rhetorical precis. After applying the analytical strategies, the students engage in a class discussion through which they identify the foundational ideologies and complexities that create the context and exigence for subsequent works.
3. After reading a "A Call for Unity," students read King's "Letter from Birmingham Jail," focusing first on how he addresses the clergymen's claims and counterarguments through a series of refutations. The teacher then models how the students are to conduct a rhetorical analysis of King's letter by performing a live annotation of the first page. Thereafter the class is divided into groups and each group is assigned a passage of the text. Each group re-reads, analyzes, discusses, and annotates their shared section in order to identify and explain the significance of the appeals and devices that King uses to compose his letter, especially as each contributes to the entirety of the piece and the execution of King's purpose. Each group presents their section to the class and again engages in a class discussion through which they identify the foundational ideologies and complexities that create the context and exigence for subsequent works..
4. Students choose a work from a variety of teacher-provided texts that either directly or indirectly parallel or relate to the aforementioned works in Activities 2 and 3. Students independently read and

rhetorically analyze their chosen work. They then compose a narrative essay that employs the stylistic and rhetorical devices extensively studied in previous works and particularly in the one individually studied.

AP Classroom:

Practice: Complete Personal Progress Check MCQ for Unit _____

Practice: Complete Personal Progress Check FRQ for Unit _____

Assessment

Compose a narrative essay emulating the style elements and rhetorical choices of the studied works.

Compose an in-class, timed rhetorical analysis essay on a work not previously read and discussed.

TEXTS

Speeches: Frederick Douglass’ “What to the slave is the Fourth of July?”; James Baldwin’s “A Talk to Teachers”

Letters and Op-Eds: “A Call for Unity” by the Alabama clergymen; “Letter from Birmingham Jail,” by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Essays and Book Excerpts: Ralph Waldo Emerson’s “Self-Reliance”; Henry David Thoreau’s “On the Duty of Civil Disobedience”; Toni Morrison’s “Cinderella’s Stepsisters”; Joyce Carol Oates’ “The Cruellest Sport”

Biography/Autobiography: Sherman Alexie’s “Superman and Me”; Amy Tan’s “Mother Tongue”; Brent Staples’ “Just Walk on By: A Black Man Ponders His Power to Alter Public Space”

Science and Technology: statistics and data presented in the documentary *13th*

Visuals: photojournalism of the marches in Birmingham, Alabama; images included in the documentary *13th*

Other Texts: Thomas Jefferson’s Declaration of Independence; Sandra Cisneros’ “Eleven”; Ava DuVernay’s documentary *13th*; Amanda Gorman’s inaugural poem “The Hill We Climb”

Unit 4

How to Argue

Big Ideas: Claims and Evidence, Reasoning and Organizing

Skills: 3.A, 3.B, 3.C, 4.A, 4.B, 4.C, 5.A, 5.B, 5.C, 6.A, 6.B, 6.C

In Unit 4, students will learn the craft and strategies of argumentation. Successful arguments require a logical line of reasoning, as well as thorough, diverse, and appropriate evidence. Students will examine line of reasoning and structure in mentor arguments, which they will then adapt to their own arguments. Students sometimes struggle to adequately support claims and make nuanced evidence choices, so this unit will also help to broaden their knowledge of history, culture, and world events. Students will continue to use the primary skills taught in previous units, especially logic and analysis of the rhetorical situation.

Activities:

1. Students will read and annotate a short and accessible argumentative essay (such as LeBron James' address to Cleveland). Annotation will include thesis, claims, evidence, and commentary. After clarifying discussion, students will outline the claims into a line of reasoning and explain how this line of reasoning effectively supports the thesis (3.A, 3.B). Students will then model this text by writing a single argumentative paragraph that includes claim, evidence, and commentary; this paragraph can be in response to the mentor text or about a topic of the teacher's choosing (4.A, 4.B). This process can be repeated with new texts, such as soliloquies from *Hamlet*.
2. Students will review logical fallacies (during this activity or while studying lines of reasoning) and then complete a project around finding logical fallacies in the media. They may use television or movie clips, commercials, television news reports, etc. Students will then present the clip to the class and explain the fallacy they have identified and the impact of the fallacy to the argument at hand. Teachers may choose to either assign a logical fallacy for the student/group to find or allow students choice, depending on the abilities of the students (3.A, 3.B, 5.A).
3. Students will study various models of argumentation (classical oration, Rogerian, deductive, etc.) as well as the Toulmin model and methods of development. Students will look for examples in mentor texts or other readings and discuss strengths and weaknesses of each model (5.A, 5.C). Then, students will look at an example argument prompt and create their own line of reasoning (6.A). Students will self- and peer-evaluate their lines of reasoning to determine if one or more models influenced their thinking and how successful the lines of reasoning appear to include all aspects of the Toulmin model. Students will also evaluate and resolve any logical fallacies within the line of reasoning. Using this feedback and self-evaluation, students will craft a full-length essay (4.B, 5.A, 6.A, 6.B, 6.C).
4. Students will complete a GO\$EEIT project; teachers may use another acronym of his or her choice. Students will self- and peer-evaluate their ability to develop effective commentary prior to beginning the project. With this in mind, students will then find a text that will apply to each category of GO\$EEIT (General, observation [no need to research], economy/education, ethics/environment, entertainment/pop

culture, international news, technology/social media). Teachers may provide a list of suggested texts or require the student to complete research or a mix of both; teachers will guide students to select reliable, academic research only. Students will read, annotate, and complete a rhetorical précis for each text (3.B). Students may complete written responses on each text, present each text, or participate in a socratic circle according to the teacher's preferences (3.A, 3.B, 3.C).

5. After or concurrent with activity #3, students will watch a documentary such as *The King of Ping Pong*, *Blackfish*, or *My Octopus Teacher*. Students will create an outline of the documentary's claims, evidence, and commentary (5.A, 5.B). Then students will participate in an oral argument/debate based on their practice with claims and evidence (6.A, 6.B).
6. Students will write a full, polished argument essay based on a prompt of the teacher's choosing (4.A, 4.B, 4.C, 6.A, 6.B, 6.C).

Assessment: Complete argument essay that incorporates line of reasoning and evidence skills.

Texts:

A Rulebook for Arguments, 5th Ed. by Anthony Weston

The Language of Composition, 2nd/3rd Ed. by Shea, Scanlon, Aufses, and Pankiewicz

Hamlet

Documentaries: *The King of Ping Pong*, *Blackfish*, *My Octopus Teacher*

Essays: "Me Talk Pretty One Day" by David Sedaris, "Turkeys in the Kitchen" by Dave Barry, "Once More to the Lake" by E.B. White, "The Ugly Tourist" by Jamaica Kincaid

Op-Eds: "Is Google Making Us Stupid?" by Nicholas Carr, "Best in Class" by Margaret Talbot, "Make Schools More Human" by Jal Mehta

Speeches/Addresses: LeBron James' Address to Cleveland, excerpt from "Education" by Ralph Waldo Emerson, "This is Water" Commencement Address by David Foster Wallace, "A Talk to Teachers" by James Baldwin, Steve Jobs' 2005 Commencement Address, Malala Yousafzai's Speech to the UN Youth Assembly, Greta Thunberg's Speech to the UN

Teacher to supplement current texts from reputable sources such as newspapers, magazines, speeches/debates, documentaries, or television news programs. Teacher to further supplement with AP prompts and multiple choice practice via AP Classroom.

Students to supplement their own research during the GO\$EEIT project.

Unit 5
How to Synthesize

Topic: Literal Literature

Big Ideas: Rhetorical Situation, Claims and Evidence, Reasoning and Organization, Style

Curriculum Requirements: CR2, CR5, CR6, CR8, CR10, CR11, CR13

Skills: 4A, 4B, 4C / 6A, 6B, 6C / 8B, 8C

ACTIVITIES

1. Students read and annotate Chapter 4 of *The Language of Composition* (Second Edition), which details how to synthesize sources by entering the conversation and support a thesis by using sources effectively.
2. Students read and annotate *1984* based on teacher-assigned topics to be discussed in class via Socratic circles (i.e. loyalty vs. indoctrination; appearance vs. reality; expression vs. repression). After a sequential analysis of the chapters in Book I, the class is divided into groups. Each group dissects Book II by gathering textual evidence on one of the teacher-assigned topics. Together, they analyze the evidence in order to determine Orwell's purpose (or theme) regarding their particular topic. Thereafter, each group finds at least three credible sources that relate to said topic or theme, either historically or contemporarily: one written source, one visual source, one audio source. Each group provides their textual evidence, commentary, and relative sources via a video presentation that reflects the synthesis process. The class enters the conversation as each group presents.
3. Following the presentations on Book II and their final discussion on Book III, students begin drafting their own synthesis paper by first determining and getting teacher approval for their topic. They use sources provided during the group presentations and/or conduct further research to compose a three to five page paper that cites *1984* and at least three other sources from our school district's subscription databases, credible websites, or scholarly journals. They read and annotate their sources to determine how each will be used to inform their paper's argument and appeal to an audience. They then draft a thesis statement that articulates the complexity of their topic and the research. Thereafter, students create an outline that illustrates the line of reasoning by including both evidence (quoted or paraphrased) and brief commentary. Finally, students draft the paper.
4. Throughout the research, planning, and drafting processes, students conference with their teacher upon request to discuss their topic, thesis, and line of reasoning. Once students complete the rough draft of their papers, they peer edit in stages: first reading for content and clarity; second for the framing, integrating and citing sources; third for style and effectiveness. All students have the opportunity to revise their papers and submit a finished product.

AP Classroom:

Practice: Complete Personal Progress Check MCQ for Unit _____

Practice: Complete Personal Progress Check FRQ for Unit _____

Assessment

Complete synthesis video projects in groups.

Complete synthesis research papers independently.

TEXTS

Speeches: Winston Churchill's "Fight Them on the Beaches"

Letters and Op-Eds: letters and op-eds topically and/or thematically connected to *1984* from The New York Times, The New Yorker, The Atlantic, The Washington Post, BBC, Literary Hub

Essays and Book Excerpts: *The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood; "On The Rainy River" from Tim O'Brien's *The Things They Carried*; "The Destruction of Culture" from Chris Hedges' *War is a Force that Gives us Meaning*; "Thoughts on Peace in an Air Raid" by Virginia Woolf

Biography/Autobiography: "Shooting an Elephant" by George Orwell

Science and Technology: Historical and current events as applicable

Visuals: Nazi propaganda posters; photojournalism of WWII and the Holocaust (published weekly in LIFE)

Other Texts: *1984* by George Orwell; The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum; relevant articles from EBSCOhost Web, Facts on File, and Gale / Cengage Learning databases