



## Olathe West High School AP Language & Composition Summer Assignment 2026

**Part I:** Over the summer, **read one** of the books listed below. Be prepared to write about the book at the beginning of the school year.

*I Am Malala* - Malala Yousafzai

*The Glass Castle* - Jeannette Walls

*Unbroken* - Lauren Hillenbrand

*Amusing Ourselves to Death* - Neil Postman

*Devil in the White City* - Erik Larson

*The Devil in the Shape of a Woman: Witchcraft in Colonial New England* - Carol Karlsen

As part of your preparation for the in-class writing assignment, you will **keep a journal** that focuses on the *Big Ideas* of AP Language & Composition as you read and analyze the text: **Rhetorical Situation; Claims and Evidence; Reasoning and Organization; and Style.**

You may organize your journal either chronologically as you progress through the book or thematically by Big Idea. If you choose to organize it chronologically, we recommend that you label your entries with the Big Idea to which the entry relates.

Guiding questions for each Big Idea are provided below to support your analysis. You are not required to respond to every question; rather, use them as tools to help you determine what is most important to notice and record as you read.

**JOURNAL Due Date: August 14, 2026**

**Part II: Maintain a weekly log** in which you track one significant world, national, state, or local news story each week (12 entries total). You may engage with the news through a variety of sources, including televised news, news radio, daily or weekly news podcasts, or print or online newspapers; be sure to vary your sources over time. Include attention to the arts and sports as well. Developing a strong awareness of current events is essential to your ability to draw meaningful correlations, comparisons, and contrasts across topics and texts. A sample entry and required format for the log is provided later in this document.

## NEWS LOG DUE DATE: August 14, 2026.

### Rhetorical Situation

As you analyze the rhetorical situation, consider the writer as well as the context in which the text was produced. What do you know about the writer, and how might the writer's background, experiences, or historical moment shape the way the topic is approached? Identify the writer's purpose—whether to inform, persuade, entertain, or a combination of these—and consider what the writer ultimately hopes to achieve or elicit from the audience.

Additionally, examine the writer's *exigence*, or the motivating force behind the text. What issue, event, or problem prompted the writer to write? Finally, consider the intended audience. What beliefs, values, assumptions, or experiences does the writer seem to attribute to the audience, and what specific choices in the text suggest this?

### Claims and Evidence

As you read, identify the central claims the writer makes and consider how those claims develop throughout the text. What is the writer asserting, arguing, or proposing, either explicitly or implicitly? Pay attention to whether the claims are broad or nuanced, and note any shifts or refinements in the writer's position over time.

Next, examine the evidence the writer uses to support these claims. What types of evidence appear—such as facts, statistics, examples, anecdotes, expert testimony, or logical reasoning—and how effectively do they support the writer's assertions? Consider the quality, relevance, and sufficiency of the evidence, as well as what may be omitted or underdeveloped. Finally, reflect on how the writer integrates evidence into the text and whether the evidence strengthens the overall persuasiveness of the argument.

### Reasoning and Organization

As you analyze the text, focus on how the writer connects ideas and guides the reader through the argument. How does the writer's reasoning progress from one claim to the next? Identify the logical relationships between ideas—such as cause and effect, comparison and contrast, or problem and solution—and consider whether the reasoning is clear, consistent, and convincing.

Pay close attention to the organization of the text. How is the argument structured, and why might the writer have chosen this arrangement? Note how the introduction, body sections, and conclusion function within the overall piece. Consider the use of transitions, repetition, and emphasis to signal shifts or reinforce key points. Finally, evaluate how effectively the organization supports the writer's purpose and enhances the reader's understanding of the argument.

## Style

As you read, analyze how the writer's stylistic choices contribute to meaning and effectiveness. Pay close attention to diction, syntax, imagery, tone, and figurative language. What patterns in language stand out, and how do they shape the reader's understanding of the subject or argument? Consider why the writer may have chosen particular words, sentence structures, or rhetorical devices.

Additionally, examine how style supports the writer's purpose and appeals to the audience. How does the writer's tone influence the reader's response? Where do stylistic choices heighten emphasis, create contrast, or reveal the writer's attitude? Finally, reflect on how style works in conjunction with claims, evidence, and organization to strengthen the overall rhetorical impact of the text. *Do we want to also provide a rhetorical strategies/choices resource page and a list of tone words as well as a list of rhetorically accurate verbs for them to use to discuss WHAT the author is doing?*

### Rhetorical Elements

**1. Repetition & Emphasis:** To reinforce key ideas, create rhythm, and make arguments more memorable. Repetition emphasizes important points, making them stand out and resonate with the audience. ***A change in rhythm can also signal a change in tone or purpose.***

- **Anaphora** – Repetition of a word or phrase at the beginning of successive clauses.
  - *"We shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields."* (Churchill)
- **Epistrophe** – Repetition of a word or phrase at the end of successive clauses.
  - *"Government of the people, by the people, for the people."* (Lincoln)
- **Alliteration** – Repetition of initial consonant sounds in closely placed words.
  - *"Let us go forth to lead the land we love."* (JFK)
- **Parallelism** – Repetition of grammatical structure for balance and rhythm.
  - *"Like father, like son."*
- **Antithesis** – Contrasting ideas placed in parallel structure.
  - *"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times."* (Dickens)

**2. Syntax & Sentence Structure:** To control the pacing of ideas, emphasize certain points, or create stylistic effects that engage the reader. Variations in sentence structure can build suspense, enhance clarity, or highlight contrasts.

- **Asyndeton** – Omission of conjunctions for a rapid, concise effect.
  - *"I came, I saw, I conquered."* (Caesar)
- **Polysyndeton** – Excessive use of conjunctions for emphasis or rhythm.
  - *"We have ships and men and money and stores."*
- **Parenthesis** – The insertion of a word, phrase, or clause in a way that interrupts the main flow of the sentence, often set off by dashes or parentheses.
  - *"My brother—who never calls—just sent me a text."*
- **Periodic Sentence** – Main clause comes at the end for suspense.
  - *"Despite the heavy winds and nearly impenetrable fog, the plane landed safely."*
- **Imperative mood:** a sentence with an understood "you" as the subject; used for commands.
  - *"Floss."*

**3. Sound & Rhythm:** To make language more engaging, musical, and effective in persuasion. Sound devices help draw attention to words and phrases, making them more impactful or aesthetically pleasing.

- **Assonance** – Repetition of vowel sounds in close proximity.
  - *"The rain in Spain stays mainly in the plain."*
- **Consonance** – Repetition of consonant sounds, often at the end of words.
  - *"The pitter-patter of little feet."*
- **Euphony** – Use of harmonious, pleasing sounds- usually vowels and soft consonants, like the ones you make with your lips M, N, B, W, Y, L & R- *kind of like humming*.
  - *"Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness." (Keats)*
- **Cacophony** – Use of harsh, discordant sounds; these are more from the back of the mouth and throat-I usually think of hard swear words which have sharp T, K, or G.
  - *"With throats unslaked, with black lips baked, Agape they heard me call." (Coleridge)*
- **Chiasmus** – Reversal of grammatical structure in successive phrases.
  - *"Ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country." (JFK)*

**4. Figurative Language & Comparison:** To create vivid imagery, make abstract concepts more relatable, and **enhance emotional appeal**. Comparisons help readers understand complex ideas by linking them to familiar experiences. You must address why the author compared these specific things!

- **Metaphor** – Implied comparison between two unlike things.
  - *"Time is a thief."*
- **Simile** – Direct comparison using "like" or "as."
  - *"Her smile was as bright as the sun."*
- **Personification** – Giving human characteristics to nonhuman things.
  - *"The wind whispered through the trees."*
- **Hyperbole** – Extreme exaggeration for emphasis.
  - *"I'm so hungry I could eat a horse."*
- **Understatement (Litotes)** – Deliberate downplaying for effect.
  - *"It's just a scratch," (referring to a large wound).*

**5. Logical & Persuasive Devices:** To engage the audience in reasoning, provoke thought, and strengthen arguments. These devices help guide the audience's thinking and make the argument more compelling.

- **Rhetorical Question** – A question asked for effect, not meant to be answered.
  - *"Are we really expected to believe that?"*
- **Hypophora** – Raising a question and immediately answering it.
  - *"Why should we care? Because our future depends on it."*
- **Juxtaposition** – Placing two elements side by side for contrast.
  - *"It was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness."* (Dickens)
- **Deductive Reasoning (Syllogism)** – A logical argument that moves from a general premise to a specific conclusion making conclusions seem inevitable. Establishes a logical foundation for an argument.
  - *"All men are mortal. Socrates is a man. Therefore, Socrates is mortal."*
- **Inductive Reasoning** – A logical process that moves from specific examples to a general conclusion. Encourages the audience to infer a conclusion from observed patterns or examples.
  - *"Every swan I've seen is white; therefore, all swans must be white."*

**6. Irony & Word Play:** To challenge expectations, provoke critical thinking, & add depth to writing. Irony can create humor, highlight contradictions, or emphasize a deeper truth in a clever way.

- **Verbal Irony** – Saying the opposite of what is meant. Creates humor and conveys frustration without directly complaining.
  - *After spending hours preparing a big meal, someone burns the toast and says, "Well, I'm clearly a master chef!":* the speaker means the opposite of what they're saying, but it's not meant to be harsh or cutting—just humorous and self-deprecating.
  - *Sarcasm is a specific type of verbal irony that is intended to mock, ridicule, or be cutting. It often has a biting or contemptuous tone.*
- **Satire** – The use of humor, exaggeration, irony, or ridicule **to criticize human nature**, institutions, or societal issues.
  - **Satire** often employs verbal irony, but unlike verbal irony, its goal is societal critique rather than just sarcasm or humor.
  - *The Onion* publishes an article titled "New Study Finds That 90% Of Conversations Should End After First 'Cool'", mocking small talk and awkward social interactions.
- **Dramatic Irony** – Audience knows something the character does not.
  - *In Romeo and Juliet, the audience knows Juliet isn't dead, but Romeo doesn't.*
- **Situational Irony** – A contrast between expected and actual outcomes.
  - *A fire station burns down.*
- **Apostrophe** – (not the punctuation!) Addressing an absent or imaginary person.
  - *"O Death, where is thy sting?"* (Bible)

## NEWS LOG (Due Date: August 14, 2026)

| Week of          | Event & Explanation  | Source          |
|------------------|--|-----------------|
| January 3-9      | The U.S. military captured Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro and transferred him to the United States to face drug trafficking and weapons charges. President Trump subsequently announced that the United States would temporarily govern Venezuela until a transitional government could be established and that U.S. forces would assume control of the country's oil reserves. These actions sparked global debate regarding national sovereignty and potential violations of international law. | www.Reuters.com |
| May 24-30        |  |                 |
| May 31-June 6    |  |                 |
| June 7-13        |  |                 |
| June 14-20       |  |                 |
| June 21-27       |  |                 |
| June 28-July 4   |  |                 |
| July 5-11        |  |                 |
| July 12-18       |  |                 |
| July 19-25       |  |                 |
| July 26-August 1 |  |                 |
| August 2-9       |  |                 |
| August 10-14     |  |                 |