

AP Language and Composition
Summer Reading Instructions
2026-2027
Ms. Danielle Selah

Due Date: Friday, August 14, 2026

Be sure to **type and print** everything BY the due date-not ON the due date. I will not allow you to “run to the library” to print your work nor will I allow you to email it to me.

Assignment #1: Required Nonfiction

Part One: Read **Chapters 1-5, 8, and 11** of the following book:

Heinrichs, Jay. *Thank You for Arguing: What Aristotle, Lincoln, and Homer Simpson Can Teach Us about the Art of Persuasion*. New York: Three Rivers, 2017. Print.

Although the rest of the book is not required for your summer reading, you are encouraged to complete the reading in full. It is an excellent introduction to the foundations of this class.

You are encouraged to buy this book “used,” but it is not required. When you purchase the book, you must make sure that you are purchasing the **2nd, 3rd, or 4th edition**. Below you will find the ISBN for the book so that you can make sure you purchase the correct edition.

3rd ISBN-13: 978-014-198616-6
4th ISBN-ISBN 9780593237380

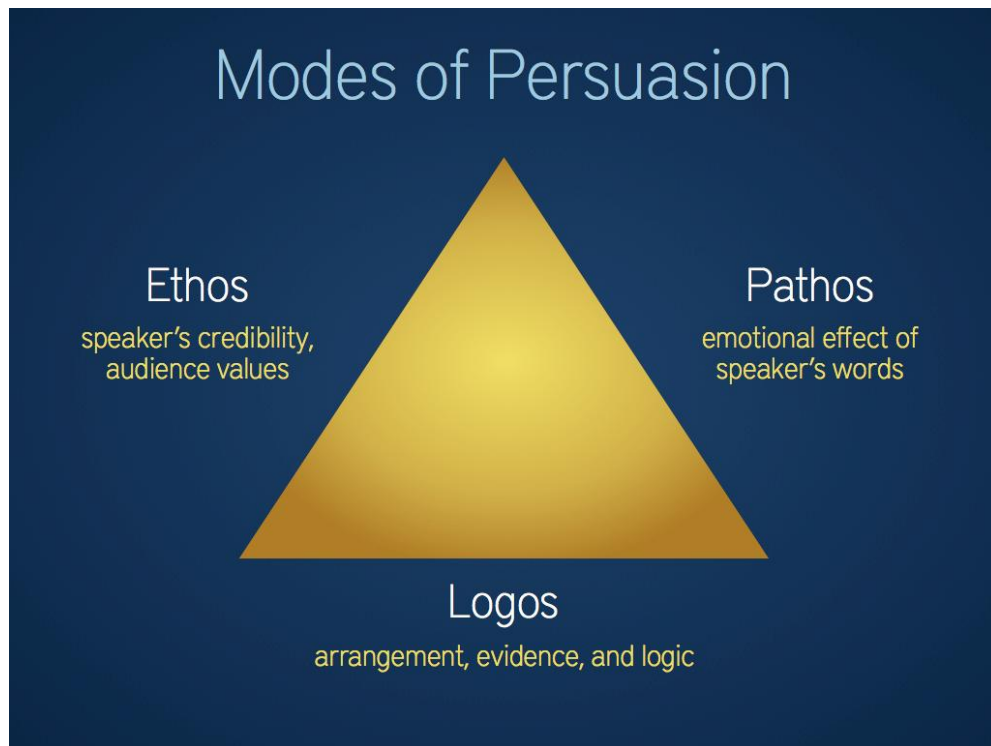
Part Two: Required Work for Heinrichs book

Overview

You must complete the following tasks for each chapter you are assigned to read (**Chapters 1-5, 8, and 11**). You need NOT do them for any other chapter you choose to read. Be sure to respond to each task thoroughly and completely. You should make sure your ideas are both organized and presented clearly and thoroughly. Please keep in mind that this is an AP class; therefore, I expect well-developed, original responses. Do not utilize any form of A.I. (ChatGPT, etc.).

Note: It is expected that you complete your summer reading assignments *individually*. Although you may struggle, put forth your best effort and make sure that you complete all of what is described below. Coming in with incomplete work and claiming, “I didn’t get it,” is unacceptable.

For this summer reading assignment, you will be relating what Heinrichs discusses throughout his text with real-life examples of rhetorical concepts. You may choose a rhetorical concept from each chapter, find a real-life example of the concept, and finish the assignment by explaining how the example exhibits the concept. Read instructions below carefully.



Assignment Instructions

Complete all of the tasks and look at the example that follows to help you:

1. Choose any rhetorical concept that Heinrichs explores in each of the assigned chapters of the book. You have free reign here. Identify the chapter and the concept on which you would like to focus. In the end, you will have gone through this process 7 times.

E.g. Chapter 3: Arguing with Past-Tense Verbs

2. Summarize—do not directly quote—the concept as presented in the text and follow that summary with a parenthetical citation. Follow this format: summary of concept in your OWN words (Heinrichs page #).

E.g. Forensic rhetoric relies on past-tense verbs. It usually places blame on an individual (Heinrichs 28-29).

NOTE: After the summary, I added the parenthetical citation BEFORE I added the period to the sentence. Additionally, his name is spelled correctly and there is no punctuation between his name and page numbers. If you make any of these simple mistakes (misspelled name, punctuation where it is not needed, or a period before the parentheses), you will lose credit.

3. Find a real-world example of the concept in action—please note, however, your example must be text-based; no pictures or visuals. (You may use speeches, but you must make sure they have transcripts so you can copy the text from it.) Copy the text that illustrates your concept of focus and follow it with an MLA Works Cited entry.

E.g.

“Good morning, everybody. At midnight last night, for the first time in 17 years, Republicans in Congress chose to shut down the federal government. Let me be more specific: One faction, of one party, in one house of Congress, in one branch of government, shut down major parts of the government -- all because they didn’t like one law. This Republican shutdown did not have to happen.

But I want every American to understand why it did happen. Republicans in the House of Representatives refused to fund the government unless we defunded or dismantled the Affordable Care Act. They’ve shut down the government over an ideological crusade to deny affordable health insurance to millions of Americans. In other words, they demanded ransom just for doing their job.”

Obama, Barack. "Statement on the U.S. Government Shutdown." Washington DC, Washington DC. 2 Oct. 2013. *AmericanRhetoric*. Web. 12 June 2016.

4. Last, for each chapter, you must explain how the example you find relates to the rhetorical concept of the chapter on which you are focusing. These explanations should be at least four (4) sentences, and better explanations will attempt to explain why and how the author uses the rhetorical concept of focus. **Don’t forget, one concept per assigned chapter = completing this task 7 times.**

E.g.

In the example from Obama’s address about the government shut down, he consistently presents past-tense verbs such as chose, refused, demanded, etc. The purpose of such is to vilify the republicans of the House in the presence of the public. Once the blame is placed on those individuals, it is the hope of Obama that the general public will demand social justice from those who represent them. In his blame, he paints those who instigated the shut down as individuals who are obstinate and unconcerned with the general healthcare of Americans. In fact, these representatives seem mostly apathetic towards those they represent. Furthermore, in blaming the republicans, Obama makes himself—and his party—seem more innocent in the escalation of events that led to a government shutdown.

On the following page you will find a complete example of what you need to do for each chapter.

For each chapter, your work should be formatted exactly like this!!!!!!

1. Chapter 3: Arguing with Past-Tense Verbs

2. Forensic rhetoric relies on past tense verbs. It usually places blame on an individual (Heinrichs 28-29).

3. “Good morning, everybody. At midnight last night, for the first time in 17 years, Republicans in Congress chose to shut down the federal government. Let me be more specific: One faction, of one party, in one house of Congress, in one branch of government, shut down major parts of the government -- all because they didn’t like one law. This Republican shutdown did not have to happen.

But I want every American to understand why it did happen. Republicans in the House of Representatives refused to fund the government unless we defunded or dismantled the Affordable Care Act. They’ve shut down the government over an ideological crusade to deny affordable health insurance to millions of Americans. In other words, they demanded ransom just for doing their job.”

Obama, Barack. "Statement on the U.S. Government Shutdown." Washington DC, Washington DC. 2 Oct. 2013. *AmericanRhetoric*. Web. 12 June 2016.

4. In the example from Obama’s address about the government shut down, he consistently presents past tense verbs such as chose, refused, demanded, etc. The purpose of such is to vilify the republicans of the House in the presence of the public. Once the blame is placed on those individuals, it is the hope of Obama that the general public will demand social justice from those who represent them. In his blame, he paints those who instigated the shut down as individuals who are obstinate and unconcerned with the general healthcare of all individuals. In fact, these representatives seem mostly apathetic towards those they represent. Furthermore, in blaming the republicans, Obama makes himself—and his party—seem more innocent in the escalation of events that have led to a government shutdown.

****If you need any help with citations or how to create the Works Cited entry, please reference the Purdue OWL website.**

**Adapted from Timm Freitas*

Continue to Assignment #2 on the next page

Assignment #2: Novel – *In Cold Blood* by Truman Capote

On November 15, 1959, in the small town of Holcomb, Kansas, four members of the Clutter family were savagely murdered by blasts from a shotgun held a few inches from their faces. There was no apparent motive for the crime, and there were almost no clues. In one of the first non-fiction novels ever written, Truman Capote reconstructs the murder and the investigation that led to the capture, trial, and execution of the killers, generating both mesmerizing suspense and astonishing empathy. *In Cold Blood* is a work that transcends its moment, yielding poignant insights into the nature of American violence.

WORK:

For this assignment, in 1 ½ - 2 pages, explain Capote's purpose for writing this book. Look at specific sections of the book that help support his purpose.

This book may have some material that may offend some. Therefore, please ask your parents'/guardians' permission BEFORE buying or checking the book out from the library. I will assign you an alternate title if your parents/guardians have issues with this book.

****Alternate Title****

The Johnstown Flood by David McCullough

At the end of the nineteenth century, Johnstown, Pennsylvania, was a booming coal-and-steel town filled with hardworking families striving for a piece of the nation's burgeoning industrial prosperity. In the mountains above Johnstown, an old earth dam had been hastily rebuilt to create a lake for an exclusive summer resort patronized by the tycoons of that same industrial prosperity, among them Andrew Carnegie, Henry Clay Frick, and Andrew Mellon. Despite repeated warnings of possible danger, nothing was done about the dam. Then came May 31, 1889, when the dam burst, sending a wall of water thundering down the mountain, smashing through Johnstown, and killing more than 2,000 people. It was a tragedy that became a national scandal.

WORK:

For this assignment, in 1 ½ - 2 pages, explain McCullough's purpose for writing this book. Look at specific sections of the book that help support his purpose.

These classics have been selected because they are often choices on the AP test; however, please do not read anything you find offensive. Should you feel offended, please feel free to see Ms. Selah for alternative titles. My email is danielle.selah@knoxschools.org