

Eleventh Grade AP Language & Composition Summer Reading Assignment 2026-20267

* * Supplies Needed for Summer Assignments * *

1. Personal copy of *Ava's Man*, by Rick Bragg
2. Print your own copy of "Writing in Color with Bestselling Southern Author Rick Bragg" at <https://landiswade.com/writing-in-color-with-bestselling-southern-author-rick-bragg/>.
3. Post-it notes (3"x3")
4. Highlighters
5. One **paper** (*not plastic*) pocket folder – one pocket on each side (middle clasps not required)

Due on DAY 1:

- Your copy of *Ava's Man*, thoroughly and completely annotated using the guidelines outlined below
- Your printed copy of "Writing in Color with Bestselling Southern Author Rick Bragg"
- You will be spending the first few days of the new school year writing in class in response to prompts about *Ava's Man*. Having your annotations completed and your own copy of the article will be crucial on Day 1.

Welcome to the Study of Rhetoric

A definition: AP Lang is all about rhetoric -- the power of speaking and writing, the power of persuasion, the power of words. Much of what we read in AP Language is nonfiction; your summer reading is considered nonfiction: a memoir written by award-winning Southern Author Rick Bragg.

A compliment: As an AP student, you have been identified as a close reader, one who is able to delve deeply into a text. This is a gift, really, but it is also a skill that can be developed and refined. Reading "between the lines," grasping symbolism, recognizing an author's choices within a narrative, making connections between your reading and your life – all of these contribute to close reading.

A caution: You are living in the dawn of a new time as we all begin to recognize the power – and the dangers – of AI. You must make your own choice as to whether you will become its slave and let it think for you or whether you will allow it to help you understand and think more clearly. This class is designed to help you think and clarify and debate and decide for yourself – relying on the Truth found in Scripture – what you will believe and ultimately act upon. Understand that consequences are severe when you are discovered using AI to think and write for you.

YOUR ASSIGNMENT THIS SUMMER

I. Read *Ava's Man* by Rick Bragg

Purchase your own copy since you will be making notes in and annotating its pages.

II. Annotate

Annotating simply means marking the text as you read with comments and notes.

When important passages occur, mark them so that they can be easily located when it comes time to write, discuss, and respond to the piece of literature. Marking key ideas will enable you to discuss the reading with more support and evidence than if you rely solely on memory.

If you don't have much experience with annotation, read this:

HOW TO ANNOTATE

- **Highlight/Underline:** Highlighting stands out from the page and allows you to scan a page quickly for information. Be careful not to mark too much; if everything is highlighted, nothing becomes important. NOTE: *Highlighting WITHOUT providing further explanation, reasoning, or clarity for your markings is not enough information for the teacher to evaluate your work adequately. To receive credit, these types of annotation must include explanation in the margins.*
- **Writing Post-it notes:** Use Post-it notes to respond to ideas in the book. Ask questions, label literary elements, summarize critical events, explain ideas, make a comment, identify characters, draw conclusions.

IMPORTANT: **For this assignment, I require you to use Post-it notes.** Please use the "Annotation Guidelines" handout as your model. This handout is linked to the assignment on the Summer Reading page of the school's website.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR & ANNOTATE in a TEXT:

- **Rhetorical strategies:**
 - Characters upon first reference
 - Insight into characters' personalities & relationships with other characters
 - Important details about characters
 - Images, objects or ideas that occur frequently
 - Tone words/passages that indicate the author's attitude toward the subject
 - Figurative language (simile, metaphor, personification, etc.)
 - Setting details & effects of setting on characters and/or plot
 - Symbols (There are several prominent ones in this novel!)
 - New vocabulary (Keep these to a minimum, despite the fact Hawthorne is verbose!)
 - Diction (effective or unusual word choice)
 - Possible foreshadowing
 - Theme development
 - Elements of style: humor, tone, sarcasm, irony, etc.

EVALUATION:

As previously noted, as an AP student, you have been identified as a close reader, one who is able to delve deeply into a text. A close reader will find material worthy of annotation on every page; however, **you will be required to produce a minimum of 50 annotations for this assignment.**

The list above was included to simply give you an idea of elements to look for when annotating any text. **For this assignment, the list below provides you with rhetorical strategies to focus on for this text, specifically.** Annotate for the following rhetorical strategies within *Ava's Man*:

1. **Humor:** Bragg is a master at this rhetorical strategy. You'll find examples of it on every page.
2. **Irony:** Bragg often uses irony to explore how societal changes can create a sense of loss and displacement.
3. **Characterization:** Look for vivid pictures of Bragg's family and their associations in the Depression-era South.
4. **Anecdote:** Bragg weaves in personal stories to deepen the reader's connection to the characters
5. **Imagery:** Watch for the way Braggs employs vivid descriptions to create a strong sense of place and atmosphere, immersing readers in the rural South.
6. **Symbolism:** What objects symbolize the very nature of his characters as well as the culture of the Depression-era South where his people lived and worked?

The student who notices a variety of the elements listed above will receive a higher grade than the student who notices many of the same elements throughout the novel. You will also be using your annotations to help you contribute to class discussion and respond to writing prompts during the first two weeks of school.

If you have any questions throughout the summer, don't hesitate to email Mrs. Mann at kmann@strong-rock.com.