



Course Overview

Students in AP English Language and Composition study how writers use language to create meaning. Students will read a variety of nonfiction prose and will analyze many styles and genres including essays, journalism, political writing, science writing, nature writing, autobiographies/biographies, diaries, speeches, history writing, and criticism. They focus the majority of their practice on writing expository, analytical, and argumentative essays. Analysis is based on writers who are listed in the AP English Course Description. In addition to writing, students also study visual rhetoric such as photographs, advertisements, and political cartoons. As suggested in the AP English Course Description, students learn "to read primary and secondary sources carefully, to synthesize material from these texts in their own compositions, and to cite sources using conventions recommended by the Modern Language Association." The class is structured around teaching reading and writing skills honed by close reading of and writing original student essays, many of which are products of several revisions.

This content is presented in an online course through which students will view lectures from experienced highly qualified instructors, access nonfiction rhetoric (written and visual), and practice close reading and writing skills with continual feedback from instructors by means of various communication technologies, including phone, Instant Message, email, discussion thread, and live chat.

Assigned Text: "The Language of Composition" by Shea et. Al. (2008).

Unit 1: Introduction to Rhetoric

- **Topics:**
 - What is Rhetoric?
 - Close Reading Skills
 - Argument Appeals and Visual Analysis
 - Analyzing Narrative Writing
 - The Exam: Writing the Analysis Essay
 - The Exam: Close Reading and Preparing for Multiple Choice
- **Content/Skills:** Nonfiction writings from the text, *The Language of Composition* are the basis for the discussion of what is expected in the course, as well as an introduction to rhetoric. Students first study Aristotle's Rhetorical Triangle as an introduction to analysis. Student assignments based on basic rhetorical strategies accompany the readings. Students study a common strategy, such as diction, and select three passages from their text in which the author has employed specific words to create a specific tone. The words are highlighted in the passages, which the students must type. Citing the text, students write a short essay which explains why the diction is appropriate for the work. Students are also required to use specific vocabulary employed in the passages in their own essay. Since most students have had little practice in this type of analytical writing, they will revise their essays as they study rhetorical strategies. Students also learn to determine an author's purpose and succinctly summarize a writer's main argument through précis writing.

During this first unit, students are introduced to argument appeals and the strategies writers employ in their works to convey meaning and create the appeal. In this introductory period students will read representative essays that illustrate the appeal being studied. They read and discuss two essays for each appeal, with options for further reading if students would like more practice. Students use the graphic organizer PATTR to begin evaluating each of the strategies they study.

- **PATTR**
 - P-Purpose
 - A-Audience
 - T-Tone (the author's attitude)
 - T-Theme (in sentence form)
 - R- Rhetorical strategy--name the strategy, cite examples from the passage

This structured method introduces students to writing about ways a writer employs a particular device to achieve meaning. The following works help students identify tone and write about devices.

Here is the assignment list for the first unit:

- **Precis:**
 - From "If Black English Isn't a Language, Then Tell Me, What Is?" by James Baldwin (<http://www.nytimes.com/books/98/03/29/specials/baldwin-english.html> Paragraph 4)
 - From "Civil Disobedience" by Henry David Thoreau (*The Language of Composition* Paragraph 1)
 - Optional: "From Nature" by Ralph Waldo Emerson (*The Language of Composition* Paragraph 2)
- **Ethos:**
 - Alfred Green's speech to Northern slaves during the Civil War (AP English Language and Composition Exam, 2003, Question 2)
 - "Real Patriots Speak Their Minds" by Barbara Ehrenreich (*Time* <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,973352,00.html>)
 - Optional: "A Talk to Teachers" by James Baldwin (*The Language of Composition*)
- **Logos:**
 - "Transsexual Frogs" by Elizabeth Royte (*The Language of Composition*)
 - "Labour" by Thomas Carlyle (*The Language of Composition*)
 - Optional: "The Blank Slate" by Steven Pinker (*The Language of Composition*)
- **Pathos:**
 - "Mother Tongue" by Amy Tan (*The Language of Composition*)
 - "Me Talk Pretty One Day" by David Sedaris (<http://www.macobo.com/essays/epdf/Me%20Talk%20Pretty%20One%20Day%20by%20Sedaris.pdf>)
 - Optional: "The Clan of the One-Breasted Women" by Terry Tempest Williams (*The Language of Composition*)
- **Graphics:**
 - "The Politics of Fear" by Barry Blitt (http://www.newyorker.com/online/covers/slideshow_blittcovers#slide=1)
 - "Migrant Mother" by Dorothea Lange (<http://enticingthelight.files.wordpress.com/2009/03/dorothea-lange-migrant-mother.jpg>)
 - Optional: "Migrant Mother" by Dorothea Lange (<http://enticingthelight.files.wordpress.com/2009/03/dorothea-lange-migrant-mother.jpg>)
- **Rhetorical Analysis:** As the rhetorical skills are introduced, students graphically organize their analysis under the acronym PATTR. After discussion, teacher review, and practice writing, students revise one PATTR analytical paragraph per week. That revision is graded, discussed and the information derived will be incorporated into the next PATTR.

- **Novel:** Students read *Angela's Ashes* by Frank McCourt outside class and discuss the author's purpose in writing this personal memoir. The analysis of this larger piece will be discussed in conjunction with shorter narrative pieces, as students analyze the unique qualities of narrative writing.

- **Major Assignments/Assessments**

- **Imitation Exercises:** After reading several of the essays for Introduction to Rhetoric, students pick a passage with personal appeal, regarding content and style. They will copy the passage and then write a passage of their own which imitates the chosen passage and uses the vocabulary of the writer. Students practice imitation exercises with teacher feedback. Students also study peer samples of analytical writing.
- **Rhetorical Strategies Analysis:** Rhetorical strategies, the tools of the writer's trade, are introduced this unit. Students learn a device and practice analytic and expository writing which explains how a writer employs it to create meaning. These short writing assignments are used throughout the year to practice writing analysis. The purpose is to teach students how to make logical transitions, integrate quotations, balance generalization and specific illustrative detail, and vary sentence structure in a well organized paragraph.

The assignment includes a paragraph which incorporates the **TEAR** format (developed by College Board consultant, Linda Davey):

T-TAG (title, author, genre) and thematic statement

E-Evidence (incorporate the example from the passage into a sentence)

A-Analysis (explain how this strategy contributes to the meaning of the passage)

R-Response (student's response to the passage which could include a reference to another work, his observation or personal experience)

- **Essay:** Students will write in-class rhetorical analysis essays in this Unit. The prompts are taken from the AP English Language and Composition national exams. For the first practice essay, students write a first draft and receive instruction on proper revision strategies; the teacher reads and returns student essays with comments and suggestions for revisions. Students may revise an essay within for a second grade. Before writing an essay, students see several essay prompts from past AP national exams. After discussing the prompt and possibilities of organizing an essay, they also see examples of sample student responses before they attempt writing their own essay. For the remaining essays, students are guided through a process in which they read closely, annotate the passage based on the requirements of the prompt, organize their thoughts, and write a cohesive essay within a 40 minute time frame. Students see sample student responses from all levels, taken from past AP exams. The teacher grades these timed essays, supplying comments and helpful advice.
- **Novel:** Students read *Angela's Ashes* by Frank McCourt. Students study a rhetorical strategy McCourt uses to create meaning and fulfill a purpose. They must explain the author's technique and how it contributes to his meaning and tone. Students use a variety of ways to illustrate this assignment including graphic representations and power point presentations.
- **Multiple Choice Activities:** Students learn the basic annotation and close reading skills necessary for successful completion of the AP English Language and Composition multiple choice exam. Students practice annotating dense pre- and post-20th century prose to recognize the author's purpose, comprehend difficult language, analyze the author's use of rhetorical strategies to create meaning, and deconstructing common multiple choice stems. Eventually they apply these skills with a timed multiple choice exam that has been released by College Board.

Unit 2: Argument

- Topics:
 - Analyzing Argument
 - The Exam: Writing the Argument Essay
 - Analyzing Extended Argument
 - Creating Personal Arguments
- Content/Skills
 - PATTR: Students continue to practice writing analytical and expository paragraphs throughout this unit with PATTR assignments. The focus of the passages that the students read on which to base their PATTR is from a variety of subjects such as public policies, popular culture, narratives and science. The passages are taken from *The Language of Composition* and are assigned a week in advance of the due date.
 - **In-class essays:** Now that the students have been writing analytical and expository short assignments, they begin a new focus on writing timed argument essays. They are introduced to argumentative writing by reading essays from *The Language of Composition* and other sources. Because the subjects of this style of writing are usually relevant to the students, and because they have a good arsenal of tools, they generally are ready to ease into learning the basics of argumentation. We teach them the vocabulary associated with argumentative writing: identifying assertion, claims, concessions, fallacies and appeals. The research controversial topics and practice writing their own argumentative essays. Students write at least one imitative argument which is based on a selection such as the "Civil Disobedience" by Henry David Thoreau, which we read the first quarter. Besides learning to write an argument, students also learn how to effectively analyze an argument. The basic tenets of rhetoric students first analyzed assist them with structuring their own arguments.
 - **The Novel:** Students read *Nickel and Dimed* by Barbara Ehrenreich.
- Major Assignments/Assessments
 - Since students are beginning to study argumentation this unit, they use another graphic organizer for analysis, called PASAFE, which was created by a College Board Consultant, Linda Davey. After reading the essays, students analyze the argument with this format:
 - **PASAFE**
 - P-Purpose (the writer's intent)
 - A- Audience
 - S- Strategy (Cite one rhetorical strategy the author uses)
 - A- Appeals (Assess an example of either pathos or logos)
 - F- Fallacies (Assess a logical, emotional, or ethical fallacy)
 - E- Ethos (How does the author create ethos? Cite an example)

The assignment includes a paragraph which incorporates the **TARE** format:

T- TAG (title, author, genre) and thematic statement

A- Appeal noted and explained

R- Rhetorical device used in the passage

E- Evaluate why the argument was successful or not, including the author's use of fallacies if necessary

- Typical passages students analyze (taken from text *The Language of Composition*) are:
 - "Education" by Ralph Waldo Emerson
 - "Best in Class" by Margaret Talbot
 - "The Atlanta Exposition Address" by Booker T. Washington
 - "In Praise of a Snail's Pace" by Ellen Goodman
 - "The Singer Solution to World Poverty" by Peter Singer

- "The Case for Torture" by Michael Levine
- "I Know Why the Caged Bird Cannot Read" by Francine Prose
- "Letter from Birmingham Jail" by Martin Luther King

Like the PATTR, we use the PASAFE as our method to practice reading closely and analyzing argumentation. Argumentation is the emphasis for the rest of the unit.

- **Essays:** Students write four timed essays this unit: responding to a brief quote, and open-ended prompt, a longer passage, and recognition of a current debate. Prompts are taken from past AP English Language exams. We may use the Ruskin prompt to analyze argument and the Milan Kundera prompt to write an argumentative essay. After the students have considered the prompt and sample essays, and after reviewing their previous essays with teacher comments, they may revise two of the essays for a second grade. The semester exam is a mini synthesis essay. The students research political cartoons using an internet site such as Gocomics.com or any reputable newspaper and choose two cartoons by two different artists, but on the same subject. Then they research the topic using at least two reputable sources. Using these three sources, they then synthesize them into a one-page expository essay that concludes with their own opinion. They use the Modern Language Association as the source for citations and a Works Cited page.
- **Novel:** Students read *Nickel and Dime*. Through a series of lectures, students are asked to consider the source of Ehrenreich's ethos as well as her uses of pathos and logos to create her argument regarding the position of the working poor. Individually, students find other more recent editorials and essays by Ehrenreich to consider changes in this argument or other issues about which she has similarly passionate views. Students create a graphic representation of their findings in some sort of comparison form (T-Chart, etc.). In addition, students find editorials or opinionated essays that oppose Ehrenreich's view and find strengths and fallacies in those arguments and present their findings in journal form.
- **Multiple Choice:** Students continue using passages from released exams to practice the multiple choice skills. Students keep a journal of the vocabulary used in the exams. Knowing the format and the language used in multiple choice exams is a skill that will help them not only on the AP, but on the SAT and the ACT.
- **Personal Argument:** Students compose a narrative essay, which is based on childhood photographs. Students choose a personal photograph, or series of related photographs, and consider what argument they would like to make about themselves in reflecting on the photograph(s). They work through the process of creating a descriptive narrative to implicitly communicate a specific argument about themselves.

Unit 3: Synthesis

- **Topics:**
 - Analyzing Synthesis
 - The Exam: Writing the Synthesis Essay
 - Writing a Research Paper
- **Content/Skills:**
 - **Researched Argumentative Writing:** With the inclusion of the new synthesis essay on the national exam, students continue to practice research papers this quarter. They begin by analyzing synthesized arguments as a basis from which to write their own. Next, they create another synthesis essay like the one they wrote the second quarter, based on outside research. The second synthesis essay is from a released AP English Language and Composition Exam. Students consider this prompt via teacher lecture and read several sample student responses, noting especially how explicit and implicit citations are used. They practice writing the introduction and citing the three sources into paragraphs. After the teacher provides feedback on these practice exercises, students use the prompt and their notes to write

the essay on their own. These essays are reviewed by their teacher who makes suggestions, and then students revise. The teacher then reads the essays and makes comments, which will be incorporated into the next synthesis essay.

- **Argumentative, Expository and Analytical Practice:** Students continue practicing reading closely and writing about nonfiction and analyzing the passages using the PATTR and PASAFE formats. These assignments are done as homework, and are followed up by teacher discussion. Many of the writings we read are examples of political and science and nature writings taken from our text, *The Language of Composition*:
 - "A Modest Proposal" by Jonathan Swift
 - "Shooting an Elephant" by George Orwell
 - "The Bird and the Machine" by Loren Eiseley
 - "Silent Spring" by Rachel Carson
 - "Message to President Franklin Pierce" by Chief Seattle
 - "Against Nature" by Joyce Carol Oates
 - "On Seeing England for the First Time" by Jamaica Kincaid
 - "On the Rainy River" by Tim O'Brien
- **Essays:** We add the synthesis essay to timed analytical and argumentative essays. Students will write three timed synthesis essays. After discussion and peer review, students receive the comments of the teacher. They may revise two to turn in for a second grade.
- **The Novel:** Students read *Into the Wild* by Jon Krakauer during this unit.

- **Major Assignments/Assessments**

- **Essays:** Students will study typical synthesis essay prompts and practice creating thesis statements, analyzing sources, implicitly and explicitly synthesizing source material as part of their larger argument, and appropriate use of outside examples and experience within the timed essays.
- **Multiple Choice:** Students continue using passages from released exams to practice the multiple choice skills.
- **Mini Research Paper:** Students continue their understanding of how to write a synthesis essay by writing a second "mini research paper." Students research political cartoons or another piece of visual rhetoric, choose two on one subject and then research an article on the same subject. Using these documents, they synthesize them, with citations, into a cohesive one-page essay which explains each, and concludes with the student's own perspective on the subject. Students are required to use the MLA style of documentation and to write their Works Cited page. Graphics, including political cartoons, provide the basis for the subject and Internet research provides the text.

Unit 4: AP Exam Preparation

- **Topics:**
 - Essays
 - Multiple Choice
 - Narrative Synthesis
- **Content/Skills:**
 - Review: essay organization and timed essay strategies for annotation, précis, analysis, argument, source assessment, and synthesis writing.
 - Review: multiple choice strategies within time constraints.

- Narrative Synthesis: Students revisit their photo memoirs and incorporate sources to establish a more sophisticated and researched argument.

- **Major Assignments/Assessments**

- **Review:** This final unit is a review of the skills students have learned throughout the year. However, students continue to practice writing and reading nonfiction which focuses on autobiography, biography, diary and history. The PASAFE and PATTR passages (all from *The Language of Composition*) include:
 - "Where I Lived and What I Lived For" by Henry David Thoreau
 - "The Proper Place for Sports" by Theodore Roosevelt
 - "How I Learned to Ride the Bicycle" by Frances Willard
 - "Aria: Memoir of a Bilingual Childhood" by Richard Rodriguez
 - "On the Duty of Civil Disobedience" by Henry David Thoreau
 - "Every Dictator's Nightmare" by Wole Soyinka
 - "An Entrance to the Woods" by Wendell Berry
- **Multiple Choice:** We continue practicing passages from the AP English Language exams as well as the keeping of journals of vocabulary and rhetorical devices.
- **Essays:** In class timed essays taken from past AP English Language and Composition exams are written for all three genres: analysis, argument, and synthesis. With each of the essay, the instructor discusses student responses to these prompts sometimes before and sometimes after students write their essays. The teacher's comments are included when the essays are returned.
- **Narrative Synthesis Project:** This project is assigned to provide students enough time to research and write their papers. The assignment is to springboard off their photo memoir from unit 2. Students revisit their essays and research a historical event that occurred during the time period, or they select from primary sources, such as family letters or documents, information that will provide background for the paper. The students re-work their essays to incorporate the information into an essay that argues a point which is based on the graphic and textual sources, and cites the sources, implicitly and explicitly. This final essay is a culmination of the writing students have practiced throughout the year.
- **National AP Exam:** Students are expected to take the AP English and Composition exam which coincides with the end of the school year.

Textbook and Course Materials

Textbook

Authors: Shea, Renee H., Scanlon Lawrence, Aufses, Robin Dissin

Title: *The Language of Composition*

Publisher: Bedford/St. Martin's (2008)

Description: A college level compilation of nonfiction essays and graphics on a variety of topics.

Supplemental Websites

URL: <http://apcentral.collegeboard.com>

Description: A compilation of resources, criticisms, suggestions and texts which are helpful in teaching AP students.

Outside Novels:

Author: Frank McCourt

Title: *Angela's Ashes*

Publisher: Scribner (1996)

Author: Barbara Ehrenrich

Title: *Nickel and Dimed*

Publisher: Metropolitan Books (2001)

Author: Jon Krakauer

Title: *Into the Wild*

Publisher: Anchor (1996)