

AP English Language and Composition Syllabus

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Course Overview:

The course overview and objectives for the course are taken from the *AP[®] English Course Description* published by the College Board. The choice of texts is based on the representative authors list found therein. Since the stated purpose of the course is to “emphasize the expository, analytical, and argumentative writing that forms the basis of academic and professional communication,” it is most appropriate that the reading selections provide models for such writing. The course textbooks, along with complete publication data, are listed in the Teacher Resources section at the end of this syllabus.

The course is organized according to the requirements and guidelines of the current *AP English Course Description*, and therefore by the end of the course students should be able to:

- ❖ **analyze and interpret** samples of good writing, identifying and explaining an author’s use of rhetorical strategies and techniques;
- ❖ **apply** effective strategies and techniques in their own writing;
- ❖ **create and sustain** arguments based on readings, research, and/or personal experience;
- ❖ **write** for a variety of purposes;
- ❖ **produce** expository, analytical, and argumentative compositions that introduce a complex central idea and develop it with appropriate evidence drawn from primary and/or secondary sources, cogent explanations, and clear transitions;
- ❖ **demonstrate** understanding and mastery of standard written English as well as stylistic maturity in their own writings;
- ❖ **demonstrate** understanding of the conventions of citing primary and secondary sources;
- ❖ **move** effectively through the stages of the writing process, with careful attention to inquiry and research, drafting, revising, editing, and review;
- ❖ **write** thoughtfully about their own process of composition;
- ❖ **revise** a work to make it suitable for a different audience;
- ❖ **analyze** image as text; and
- ❖ **evaluate** and incorporate reference documents into researched papers.

Grading System:

A note about the grading system: Quarter grades will be determined using “total points logic” or TPL. TPL means that the different categories listed below are given equal weight. At the end of the quarter, a student’s grade is determined by dividing the sum of the points earned in the four categories below by the total points that could have been earned.

Example: John earned a total of 1350 points this quarter. The possible value of all compositions, tests, quizzes and daily work is 2000 points. $1350/1800 = .75$ (75%) – C.

- ❖ **Composition:** This includes journals (entries written daily and every 8 days, students self-select entries to be graded); essays; DBQs and timed writings (1-2 per quarter).
- ❖ **Tests:** Tests will consist of multiple-choice questions based on rhetorical devices and their function in given passages. Some passages are from texts read and studied, but some are from new material that students analyze for the first time.
- ❖ **Quizzes:** Quizzes are used to check for reading comprehension and basic understanding of a text.
- ❖ **Daily work:** Daily assignments consist of class work and homework which reinforce grammar, diverse vocabulary, annotation of texts, and fluency in writing.

Course Organization:

The course is organized thematically. For each reading assignment students must identify the following:

- ❖ thesis or claim
- ❖ tone or attitude
- ❖ purpose
- ❖ audience and occasion
- ❖ evidence or data
- ❖ appeals: logos, ethos, pathos
- ❖ assumptions or warrants
- ❖ style
- ❖ organizational patterns in the text
- ❖ cause/effect, extended definition, problem/solution, etc.
- ❖ use of detail to develop a general idea

Course Planner

Introduction to Rhetoric: *AP English Course Description*, Rhetorical Terms, Rhetorical Devices

Reading:

- ❖ Edwards, Jonathan – “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God”
- ❖ Lunsford, Andrea – *Everything’s an Argument* (chapter 1)

Assessments:

- ❖ Test: rhetorical terms
- ❖ Aphorism quick write
- ❖ Composition: re-create your most successful moment as a student. In a well-written essay, re-create your most successful moment as a student and put it into perspective (what does it mean to you now?)
- ❖ Test: identifying appeals (ethos, pathos, logos)

Unit 1 - The Rhetoric of Religion and Liberty

(Students will not be required to complete independent reading during Unit 1 but will be encouraged to read selections from the autobiography of Benjamin Franklin as well as the complete series of war pamphlets authored by Thomas Paine. Students are responsible for identifying and understanding its elements: characterization, setting, initial incidents, conflicts, climaxes, resolutions, and conclusions, as well as identify and comment on the rhetorical and stylistic choices that the author makes.) **[C3]**

Reading:

- ❖ Edwards, Jonathan - “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God” (Includes a writing assignment in which students must attempt to rationalize or expose Edwards’s intentions for delivering the sermon.)
- ❖ Hitchens, Christopher – “Does Science Make Belief in God Obsolete” (Includes a writing assignment in which students write a critical reply to Hitchens.)
- ❖ Jefferson, Thomas – “The Declaration of Independence”
- ❖ Paine, Thomas – *Common Sense*
- ❖ Rushdie, Salman – “The Disappeared: How the fatwa changed a writer’s life”
- ❖ Lunsford, Andrea – *Everything’s an Argument* (chapters 2-4)
- ❖ Readings on Current Events: Theme-related articles, articles that reflect claims or central ideas made by the authors studied in this unit, submissions from students with teacher’s approval.

Viewing:

- ❖ Christopher Hitchens vs. Dinesh D’Souza: The God Debate (Univ. Notre Dame 2009)
- ❖ Patrick Henry reenactment: “Speech to the Virginia Convention”

Assessments:

- ❖ Quiz: Vocabulary from readings
- ❖ Quiz: Grammar (from syntax discussions, readings and/or warm-up exercises)
- ❖ Composition: Argumentative or persuasive essay on Hitchens vs. D'Souza [C4]
Prompt: Evaluate the rhetorical strategies used in Jonathan Edwards's *Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God*. To do this effectively, you should identify at least two rhetorical strategies used by Edwards and fully explain any examples. In addition be sure to fully analyze and explain AT LEAST TWO of the images put forth by Edwards in the sermon. These images should be explained in the context of the sermon. Finally, identify any appeals used by Edwards (hint: ethos, pathos, logos) and evaluate the effectiveness of the sermon given the author's purpose.
- ❖ Composition: Comparison/contrast [C4]

Unit 2 – Obligations within a Society: Documents and Speeches

Independent Reading: Thoreau, Henry David - *Walden*

Students will do an annotated reading *Walden*. They are responsible for identifying and understanding its elements: characterization, setting, conflicts, climaxes, resolutions, and conclusions, as well as identify and comment on the rhetorical and stylistic choices that Thoreau makes.

Reading:

- ❖ Paine, Thomas, from "The Crisis, Number 1"
- ❖ Lincoln, Abraham, "The Perpetuation of Our Political Institutions" (1838)
- ❖ Lincoln, Abraham, "The First Inaugural Address" (1861)
- ❖ Lincoln, Abraham, "The Gettysburg Address" (1864)
- ❖ King Jr., Martin Luther, *I Have a Dream*
- ❖ Lunsford, Andrea, *Everything's an Argument* Part 3 [C5]
- ❖ Readings on Current Events: Theme-related articles, articles that reflect claims or central ideas made by the authors studied in this unit, submissions from students with teacher's approval.

Viewing:

- ❖ Trumbull, John, *The Declaration of Independence* (Mural in the Capitol Building, Washington, D.C.)
- ❖ *Patrick Henry Arguing "the Parson's Cause"* (c. 1830, oil painting thought to be the work of George Cooke; the Virginia Historical Society, Richmond)
- ❖ *"The Horse America Throwing his Master"* (1779; political cartoon of King George; Library of Congress)
- ❖ King Jr., Martin Luther, *I Have a Dream* (Video clip; AmericanRhetoric.com)

- ❖ *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* (1939; video clip “Mr. Jefferson Smith takes the constitutional oath of office”; AmericanRhetoric.com)
- ❖ Theme-related photos, video clips, and/or cartoons from current periodicals will be discussed as these become available. Students may contribute selections for viewing with teacher’s approval. [C6]

Assessments:

- ❖ Quiz: Vocabulary from readings
- ❖ Quiz: Grammar (from warm-up exercises, syntax discussions, and/or reading annotations)
- ❖ Test: American documents and speeches
- ❖ Composition: Compare/Contrast
Prompt: Compare Paine’s paper with Henry’s speech as persuasive works. In your composition, consider claim, occasion, audience, data or evidence, assumptions, and conclusions.
- ❖ Composition: Compare/Contrast
Prompt: Compare *I Have a Dream* to *The Gettysburg Address* and *The Declaration of Independence*. [C4]
- ❖ Composition: Compare/Contrast
Prompt: Compare Jefferson’s *Declaration of Independence* to Stanton’s *Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions*. As you write this comparison, note how each author states his or her main idea and then develops that idea with detailed evidence. [C4] Note: Students complete this assignment in class and then edit each other’s work to evaluate the essays on same component, use of detail to develop a general idea. [C2, C12]
- ❖ Composition: Synthesis Essay
Prompt: What is the individual’s duty to his government? What is the government’s duty to the individual? In an essay that synthesizes and uses for support at least four of the readings from this unit, discuss the obligations of individuals within a society. Remember to attribute both direct and indirect citations. Refer to the sources by authors’ last names or by titles. Avoid mere paraphrase or summary.

Unit 3 – Nature of Man

Independent reading: **Hemingway, Ernest, *The Sun Also Rises***

Students do an annotated reading of this novel. [C3] They are responsible for identifying and understanding the elements about the plot chapters: characterization, setting, initial incidents, conflicts, climaxes, resolutions, and conclusions, as well as identifying and commenting on the stylistic and rhetorical choices made by the author.

Reading:

- ❖ O'Brien, Tim "How to Tell a True War Story"
- ❖ Halberstam, David "Hell and High Water: Hurricane Katrina's toll on New Orleans—and on America's tattered self-image"
- ❖ Sinclair, Upton from *The Jungle*
- ❖ O'Connor, Flannery – "A Good Man is Hard to Find"
- ❖ Mailer, Norman – "The White Negro: Superficial Reflections on the Hipster"
- ❖ Lunsford, Andrea, *Everything's an Argument* Part 4
- ❖ Readings on Current Events: Theme-related articles that reflect claims or central ideas made by the authors studied in this unit, submissions from students with teacher's approval.

Assessments:

- ❖ Quiz: Vocabulary from readings
- ❖ Quiz: Grammar (from warm-up exercises, syntax discussions, and/or reading annotations)
- ❖ Test: *The Sun Also Rises*
- ❖ Composition: Letter to the editor of a local newspaper **[C1]**
Prompt: Write a letter to the school or city newspaper expressing your views on the treatment of homeless people in our city. Offer a suggestion or solution to this situation.
- ❖ Composition: Analysis **[C4]**
Prompt: Read Chapters 1 and 2 from *The Sun Also Rises*. In a well-developed essay, identify the themes of these chapters, and explain how Hemingway supports his main idea. Use short embedded quotations (or paraphrase) from the chapters as evidence for your thesis.
- ❖ Composition: Analysis **[C4]**
Prompt: Review Chapters 1-5 from *The Sun Also Rises*. Identify Hemingway's attitude toward the city of Paris. Explain how Hemingway uses the setting, Paris, as a character in *The Sun Also Rises*. What role does Paris play (if any) in fulfilling Gertrude Stein's epigraph?
- ❖ Composition: Synthesis
Prompt: How does an individual judge right from wrong? What is the role of the individual in confronting injustice? In an essay that synthesizes and uses for support *The Sun Also Rises* as well as three other selections from this unit's readings, discuss the role of the individual in confronting injustice. Remember to attribute both direct and indirect citations. Refer to the sources by authors' last names or by titles. Avoid mere paraphrase or summary. **[C7]**

Unit 4 – Man vs. Society

Independent Reading: **Hawthorne, Nathaniel, *The Scarlet Letter*.**

Students do an annotated reading of this novel. They are responsible for identifying and understanding its elements: characterization, setting, initial incidents, conflicts, climaxes, resolutions, and conclusions, as well as identify and comment on the rhetorical and stylistic choices that the author makes. **[C3]**

Reading:

- ❖ *The Scarlet Letter*, Chapter 1, “The Prison Door”
- ❖ *The Scarlet Letter*, Chapter 2, “The Market-Place”
- ❖ Staples, Brent, “Just Walk On By: Black Men and Public Space”
- ❖ Goodman, Ellen, “Putting in a Good Word for Guilt”
- ❖ Davidson, James West, and Mark Hamilton Lytle, “The Visible and Invisible Worlds of Salem”
- ❖ Gelsey, Zara, “The FBI is Reading Over Your Shoulder”
- ❖ Swift, Jonathan, “A Modest Proposal” **[C5]**
- ❖ Readings on Current Events: Theme-related articles, articles that reflect claims or central ideas made by the authors studied in this unit, submissions from students with teacher’s approval

Viewing:

- ❖ Miller, Arthur, *The Crucible*, starring Daniel Day-Lewis and Winona Ryder
- ❖ Senator Joseph McCarthy attacks Edward R. Murrow on CBS, video clip, AmericanRhetoric.com
- ❖ *Good Night and Good Luck*, video clip, AmericanRhetoric.com
- ❖ Theme-related photos and/or cartoons from current periodicals will be discussed as these become available. Students may contribute selections for viewing with teacher’s approval. **[C6]**

Assessments:

- ❖ Quizzes: Students are given a quiz on most readings. These check for understanding of meaning and strategies.
- ❖ Quiz: Vocabulary from readings
- ❖ Quiz: Grammar (from warm-up exercises, syntax discussions, and/or reading annotations)
- ❖ Test: *The Scarlet Letter*
- ❖ Composition: Analysis **[C4]**
Prompt 1: Read the following passage (paragraph 3, “I might be, ... martyrdom.”) from *The Scarlet Letter*, Chapter 5, “Hester at Her Needle.” Then write an essay showing how Hawthorne depicts Hester’s inner turmoil. Consider such rhetorical devices as diction, figurative language, syntax, irony, and tone.
OR
Prompt 2: Read the following passage (paragraph 7, “Hester sought not, ...wrong, beneath.”) from *The Scarlet Letter*, Chapter 5, “Hester at Her Needle.” Then write an

essay analyzing the author's use of clothing to reveal Hester's self-perception, the attitude of Hester's neighbors, and the nature of her daughter's conception. Consider such rhetorical devices as diction, imagery, syntax, irony, and tone.

- ❖ **Composition: Comparison/Contrast [C4]**
Prompt: Read the following passages from *The Scarlet Letter*. Passage 1 is from Chapter 2, "The Market-Place" (paragraph 11, "The young woman ... by herself"). Passage 2 is from Chapter 3, "The Recognition" (paragraphs 1 and 2, "From this intense... his lips"). Then write a carefully reasoned and fully elaborated analysis of Hawthorne's attitude toward these two characters. Consider allusion, irony, imagery, syntax, organization of details, and other rhetorical devices.
- ❖ **Composition: Analysis [C4]**
Prompt: Read Chapter 9, "The Leech," from *The Scarlet Letter*. Then write an essay analyzing how Hawthorne uses setting, allusion, metaphor, irony, diction, and tone to reveal character.
- ❖ **Composition: Analysis [C4]**
Prompt: Read Chapter 22, "The Procession," from *The Scarlet Letter*. Then write an essay analyzing how Hawthorne uses rhetorical devices, including irony and extended metaphor, to reveal the conclusion.
- ❖ **Composition: Argumentation letter to the editor. [C1]**
Prompt: Using Jonathan Edward's sermon as a model, write a letter to the editor of our school newspaper, using fear tactics to deter your audience from doing something.
- ❖ **Composition: Comparison/Contrast [C4]**
Prompt: Both Jonathan Edwards and Ellen Goodman deal with the idea of guilt in their writings. In an essay, define guilt. Then compare and contrast the rhetorical strategies each author uses to deliver his or her message about guilt. You will need to review your notes on Edwards from Unit 1 in order to respond to this prompt.
- ❖ **Composition: Journal entry [C1]**
Prompt 1: Write a journal or diary entry reflecting on a time when you felt isolated from society.
OR
Prompt 2: What does guilt imply about free will and choice? If we had no free will and choice, how would guilt likely affect us?
- ❖ **Composition: Letter to the editor [C1]**
Prompt: Write a letter to the local newspaper expressing your views on the treatment of a minority group or outsider in your community. What suggestions or solutions do you have to offer?
- ❖ **Composition: Synthesis [C7]**
Prompt: Who are considered outsiders in our society? Why are they in this position? How does society treat them? Should society be more tolerant of them? Using at least five sources from this unit, including *The Scarlet Letter*, write an essay that discusses the position of the outsider in society. Remember to attribute both direct and indirect citations. Refer to the sources by authors' last names or by titles. Avoid mere paraphrase or summary.

Unit 5 – The Rhetoric of Terrorism (following AP Exam)

Independent Reading: **Wright, Lawrence, *The Looming Tower***

Students do an annotated reading of this novel. They are responsible for identifying and understanding its elements: characterization, setting, initial incidents, conflicts, climaxes, resolutions, and conclusions, as well as identify and comment on the rhetorical and stylistic choices that the author makes. **[C3]**

Reading:

- ❖ Hitchens, Christopher “Terrorism: Notes toward a definition”
- ❖ Rashid, Ahmed “The Mess in Afghanistan”
- ❖ Bearden, Milton “Afghanistan, Graveyard of Empires”
- ❖ Vidal, Gore “Black Tuesday”

Viewing:

- ❖ Rose, Charlie “Interview with David Halberstam”
- ❖ Youtube.com “September 11, 2001 Channel Surfing”
- ❖ Archive.org “9/11”

Assessments:

- ❖ Quizzes: Check for understanding

- ❖ Test: *The Looming Tower*

- ❖ Composition: Analysis
Prompt: Evaluate the information presented in *The Looming Tower*. Given the information provided by the author, do you feel the terrorist attacks on September 11th, 2001 could have been prevented? What does the death of John O’Neil symbolize?

Semester Exams:

Students have 90 minutes to take their semester exam; it is worth 20 percent of the semester average.

Part 1: Multiple Choice

This section is interpretation of new material. Students read four passages and answer 45 to 55 questions. Reading selections and questions are similar to those on the AP Released English Language Exam.

Part 2: Free Response

Students have one hour to write an in-class essay. The prompt asks for rhetorical analysis, comparison/contrast, or argumentation. This essay is graded on the AP rubric, or nine-point scale.

