

AP LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION

Dear AP Students,

I am excited about spending the year with you in AP Language. As you spend time frolicking in the sun, sleeping till noon, and binge-watching your favorite television series, please remember that you have reading to do in order to prepare for our academic adventure together.

Requirements:

- ***Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*** - This is an autobiography of an escaped slave who became a major figure in abolition. (The version I have is the Signet Classics edition with an introduction by Peter J. Gomes and Afterword by Gregory Stephens, ISBN 978-0-451-52994-7)
- **"The Confederate Cornerstone Speech" by Alexander H. Stephens** - Stephens, the Confederate vice president, surprised (and annoyed) some of his fellow powerful Confederates when he shared some of, what many now believe, were their true but unstated motives.
- **5 "op ed" columns of your choice** - These pieces—in the old days of paper news—appeared opposite the editorial page, hence "op ed." See more information about the assignment below.

You might be able to postpone *Narrative* for a while because it is short (though not too long—beware of excessive procrastination), but you should begin now regularly reading op ed pieces and work toward completing the assignment below. Reading this type of article regularly this year will help you as you approach the persuasive essays you will need to write.

Here are your instructions:

***Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* (Due first day of class in August)**

This work is an autobiography, not a novel. As you read, it's important that you thoroughly annotate your copy of the work. I know this may seem like a waste of time to you, but I promise that this habit will help you now and in future academic endeavors. In this case, you will get a grade on the quality of your annotation. Be sure to do more than just highlight passages. You should be writing words, drawing arrows, even drawing little symbols if that's your style. Annotating is really most useful if done as you read, not done later just to fulfill an assignment. Here are some suggestions about what you should be marking and writing about.

- If you see a particularly well-turned phrase, mark it and write diction in the margin (or your code for diction—maybe a D?). What effect does this diction have on the reader? on the ones who heard the person speaking?
- Notice what figures of speech occur in the text. How do they guide the reader's thinking?
- How can the narrative voice be characterized? Does it change during the course of the book, or does it stay the same? When does the tone change, and how does Douglass make us hear his tone of voice?
- What is the effect of the narrator's linguistic choices? For example, what effects do his adjectives have on the reader? How do his verbs give life to the narrative?
- If you see a memorable image, mark it and write imagery in the margin.
- Look for sentences that are out of the ordinary, sentences whose structure reflects or puts special emphasis on the speaker's meaning. This feature, of course, would be syntax.
- Sometimes you may notice that some image or phrase is repeated. You might mark those as motif.
- In addition, you might want to make comments about the people he mentions, their likenesses and differences, their misunderstandings, the causes of their problems, their humor, their strengths and weaknesses. Try to form an idea of each person's way of looking at life and relationships.
- If you have questions as you read, as surely you will, be sure to note those as well. Good questions are the mark of a thoughtful reader.
- Make a brief bullet list at the end of each chapter of important events.

We will jump into this work immediately when school starts, so it is important that you have finished your reading by the first day of school. If you have questions about the reading or about the course in general, feel free to email me at sbryant@fwc.org.

“Cornerstone of the Confederacy Speech” (Due first day of class in August)

Access the speech at this link:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0BwpJdmG4TcBjQ3RXckZtMTFiWUU/view?usp=sharing>

This version of the speech includes an introduction giving some background and some explanatory notes as you read. Read carefully. Please print the speech and annotate it as you read. Come ready to discuss this speech.

Op ed columns (Due first Monday after school starts)

AP Language is a study of rhetoric and argument. Instead of fiction that you are accustomed to reading in English, we will be looking at non-fiction works—autobiographies, memoirs, essays, and editorials. You will be delving into these works to discover how writers use language to persuade, argue, and draw you into their stories. Study of these writers will help you learn to craft your own arguments in writing.

As you begin this journey into the craft of language, a good preparation is the reading of op ed columns. Op ed journalists are not on the newspaper's editorial board, but their work may appear regularly in a particular newspaper. To find columnist(s), you can google the name of the newspaper along with "op ed" or "columnists."

Choose columns from major newspapers (or news sites) such as the following:

- *New York Times*
- *Wall Street Journal*
- *Washington Post*
- *Chicago Tribune*
- *Los Angeles Times*

Although you should not limit your reading to five pieces, you will be **turning in responses to five pieces** that particularly interest you. You may choose to address five columns by the same author, or you might like to choose from different authors.

Please follow these directions for each of the five columns:

- Reports should be typed with a standard MLA heading at the top. Other portions can be single spaced, but should be clearly labeled and divided.
- Writing should be of good quality appropriate for an AP assignment.
- You may either turn these in as printed copies, or you may submit them in a Google folder. If you choose to print, you should also print your articles. Printed copies should be placed in a folder to turn in. If you choose to submit to Google, you should save an electronic copy of each article in the folder with your reports.

A. At the top of the page please identify the title of the piece, the writer, the newspaper in which the column appeared, and the date of its publication.

B. Then write a short summary of the piece. This might be as short as two sentences or as long as maybe five sentences. This summary will give the main idea of the column and the principal supports for that idea. Your summary should be written entirely **in your own words**.

C. Finally, write a well-developed paragraph in which you analyze your journalist's general rhetorical style. For example, does the journalist

- appeal to logic?
- appeal to emotion?
- cite authorities on the subject she is discussing?
- offer personal anecdotes?
- use comparisons?
- include statistics?
- cite or allude to history? to literature? to the Bible?
- call for action or just for assent?

Your paragraph of analysis should probably discuss only the two or three most important features of the writer's style. Of course, you should give an example or two of the features you mention. If you like, you could include two or three short quotations, integrating them smoothly into your text.

Textbook Information:

We will be using *Everything's an Argument, with Readings* (5th edition). This is an older version, so you should be able to get it pretty inexpensively. The paperback is fine. Be sure that you have this book on the first day of school.

Supplies:

Please bring either a package of college-ruled notebook paper or a ream of printer paper.

Bring every day:

- A charged computer.
- A real copy of the book that we are currently reading.
- Black or blue pens--timed writings have to be written in black or blue ink.
- A brain and attitude ready to work.