

## **AP English Language and Composition Course Overview**

This AP English Language and Composition course cultivates the reading and writing skills that students need for college success and for intellectually responsible civic engagement. The course guides students in becoming curious, critical, and responsive readers of diverse texts, and becoming flexible, reflective writers of texts addressed to diverse audiences for diverse purposes...The course cultivates rhetorical understanding and use of written language...

Reading and writing activities in the course also deepen students' knowledge and control of formal conventions of written language (e.g. vocabulary, diction, syntax, spelling, punctuation, paragraphing, genre). The course helps students understand that formal conventions of the English language in its many written and spoken dialects are historically, culturally, and socially produced; that the use of these conventions may intentionally or unintentionally contribute to the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of a piece of writing in a particular rhetorical context; and that a particular set of language conventions defines Standard Written English, the preferred dialect for academic discourse.

Students choosing AP English Language and Composition (AP Lang) should be interested in studying and writing various kinds of analytic, persuasive, or argumentative essays.

### **Course Goals**

- Developing critical literacy
- Facilitating informed citizenship

An AP English Lang course requires students to become skilled readers of prose written in a variety of rhetorical contexts and skilled writers who compose for a variety of purposes.

At the heart of an AP Lang course is the reading of various texts. Reading facilitates informed citizenship and thus increases students' capacity to enter into consequential conversations with others about meaningful issues.

While writing represents a significant component of this course, the core skill required is the ability to read well. In reading another writer's work, students must be able to address four fundamental questions about composition:

- ✓ What is being said?
- ✓ To whom is it being said?
- ✓ How is it being said?
- ✓ Why is it being said?

The answers to these questions inform students' own composition processes as they learn to read like writers and write like readers.

Dear Students:

Welcome to AP English Language and Composition (AP Lang)!

Ostensibly, the goal of this course is to prepare you for success with university-level reading and writing, while having the opportunity to ace the AP Language and Composition test. But on a larger scale, this course is here to empower you-to invite your engagement.

Do the work, and when you exit the class, you will have become skilled technicians in the domain of language, using it to great effect in whatever circumstance life chooses to throw at you. You will, in essence, see the man behind the curtain of the great and terrible Oz of writing, and in seeing how he does it, know how to do it yourself.

We have much to do, so it behooves us to hit the ground running. To that end, I will ask you to complete three summer reading assignments.

1. Read *Travels with Charley* by John Steinbeck. This text will be an integral part of our initial exploration of rhetorical devices, dominant impression, and descriptive/narrative writing. I would like you to keep a double-entry journal (attachment A) in which you track both your response to the author's work and how you see the author using language, organization, and rhetorical devices to create the overall effect. I have attached a list of some of the rhetorical devices/grammatical terms that we will study in class (attachment B).
2. Please use an online rhetorical glossary and/or a grammar usage dictionary to look up the term on attachment B prior to the start of class.
3. Once you have read *Travels with Charley*, Steinbeck's memoir, you will choose a scene from the text and analyze it for the dominant impression Steinbeck creates. (See attachment C on *dominant impression* if this term is new to you.) You will then pair that scene with your own written reflection on a similar object or event. As you describe you event, be aware of the language that you use. Can you convey without direct statement the emotion, the atmosphere of the moment?

**NOTE re Summer Reading:** There is no length requirement for neither the double entry journals nor the written responses. This is a college level course. I have high expectations, but a 'good' writer only writes for length when s/he's being paid by the word-otherwise, a good writer explores within the space necessary to articulate, develop, and defend a rich and succulent idea. It is an excellent litmus test for you: if your idea of "necessary space" involves "as little effort as possible," then this may not be the course for you. But if you are intrigued by the prospect of both following an idea where an idea takes you and learning how to shape that path to greatest rhetorical effect, then welcome to AP Lang! ☺

If you need to contact me this summer, I might or might not be checking my school email, but it is worth a shot ([modell@newberry.k12.sc.us](mailto:modell@newberry.k12.sc.us)). I will have these assignments posted on my school webpage under AP Lang and Comp link, should you have further questions.

Enjoy your summer!

Cordially,

Ms. O'Dell

In a double-entry journal (or dialectical journal), you will both collect “essential passages” from the book and comment on the significance of those passages. A passage is a section of the text that you record verbatim, with the page number. What you choose for your “essential passage” is up to you, but note the word “essential.” This should be a section of the text (a description, a comment by a character or the author) that meets any of the following criteria:

1. Describes a crucial plot point
2. Gives key information about a character or change in a character
3. Sums up the main idea of the event/chapter
4. Reveals insight into a theme of the novel
5. Highlights a symbol in the novel
6. Connects to the history of the culture producing the novel
7. Employs figurative language or imagery in a particularly engaging/evocative manner
8. (NF) Summarizes the author’s argument
9. (NF) Connects to a key technique or topic of study
10. You just really, REALLY like it.

On the right side, explain why you chose that passage. You can:

1. Interpret what the passage means to you
2. Explain why is it important to the text
3. Point out a technique the author is using
4. Connect the passage to a real-life event – either in general history, or in your own life
5. Connect the passage to another piece of literature.
6. Ask a question that you want answered
7. Connect the passage back to an essential question

Another way to look at the “connect” side is the connections you make between the text and other sources

– a comment on the text, a text-other text connection, a text-self connection, a text-world connection, and a text-technique connection.

Collect (essential passage)	Connect/Comment
“I like to work alone, in my own clean, silent, well-lit laboratory....” (3)	Established Hanna as something of a loner, also a character who perhaps likes control, order. It’s interesting that she will be working in post-war Bosnia, then...nothing orderly about that. A possible internal conflict?

Please use the T-chart format (as modeled above) to record your collections and your comments. You may type or hand-write as you wish, but please choose a format that will be legible.

**AP Language and Composition – Rhetorical Vocabulary-- An extensive, but not a comprehensive list.**

**As you define these words, make sure you use the rhetorical/grammatical definition – for example, an absolute is a part of speech, not an adjective meaning “complete”.**

Absolute	diction (formal,	parallelism
aesthetic	informal,	parody
effect/purpose	jargon,	pathos
allegory	slang)	pedantic
alliteration	didactic	periodic
allusion	dominant	sentence
analogy	impression	point of
anadiplosis	elliptical	view/vantage
anaphora	construction	point
antithesis	emphatic order	qualifier
anticipated	epithet	repetition
objection	ethos	rhetorical triangle
aphorism	euphemism	rhetorical question
anecdote	figurative	sarcasm
appeal	language	satire
asyndeton	framing	scheme
cause and	imagery	semantics
effect	incongruity	syllogism
chiasmus	inductive	synesthetic
claim	reasoning	image
classification	invective	sensory
	irony (inc. 3	language
cliché	types)	syntax
colloquialism	isocolon	tautology tone
comparison/contrast	juxtaposition	Toulmin
conceit	litotes	argument
connotation	logical	Tricolon
controlling idea	fallacy logos	trope
cumulative	loose sentence	warrant
sentence	metaphor	understatement
deductive	metonymy	voice
reasoning	narrative	zeugma
definition	onomatopoeia	
denotation	oxymoron	
descriptive	paradox	

## dominant impression

A dominant impression is a quality, mood, or atmosphere that reinforces the writer's purpose. It is primarily a feature of narrative and description-based writing. The dominant impression is sometimes called the controlling idea. In this sense, the writer must be consistent. For example, the dominant impression of one snowfall could be "gentle, crystalline, and romantic." Another snowfall could be "blinding, whipping, and suffocating." However the writing would be inconsistent if the author described the second snowfall further with words like "soft," "whispering" or "magical."

A dominant impression is created by the unified effects of the six strategies of descriptive writing:

1. sensory language
2. energetic action verbs
3. vivid adjectives
4. specific, concrete details
5. figurative comparisons
6. position of the narrator

Two writers can naturally experience the same topic and have different impressions. The dominant impressions of their respective pieces of writing will differ because the details and images they choose to draw out will differ

In the following paragraph from "Knoxville Summer 1915" by James Agee, the dominant impression captures the pleasant, easy pace of a summer day through its reference to the orchestrated sounds of men watering their lawns on a summer evening. Part of the strength of this dominant impression is the uniformity of the scene: every father is carrying out the same action, creating a euphonious melody like a thousand crickets. The other aspect of the dominant impression is one of relief, as the cool water breaks the heat of the day and then fills the evening with wet, whispering "bells."

*It is not of games children play in the evening that I want to speak now, it is of a contemporaneous atmosphere that has little to do with them; that of fathers and families, each in his space of lawn, his shirt fishlike pale in the unnatural light and his face nearly anonymous, hosing their lawns. The hoses were attached to spigots that stood out of the brick foundations of the houses. The nozzles were variously set but usually so that there was a long sweet stream of spray, the nozzle wet in the hand, the water trickling down the right forearm and the peeled-back cuff, and the water whishing out of a long loose and low-curved cone, and so gentle a sound. First an insane noise of violence in the nozzle, then the still-irregular sound of adjustment, then the smoothing into steadiness and a pitch as accurately tuned to the size and style of stream as any violin. So many qualities of sound out of one hose; so many choral differences out of those several hoses that were in earshot. Out of any one hose, the almost dead silence of the release, and the short still arch of the separate big drops, silent as a held breath, and the only noise the flattering noise on leaves and the slapped grass at the fall of each big drop. That, and the intense hiss with the intense stream; that, and the same intensity not growing less but growing more quiet and delicate with the turn of the nozzle, up to that extreme tender whisper when the water was just a wide bell of film.*