

2011-2012 Advanced Placement Language and Composition Syllabus

This course focuses primarily on critical analysis of rhetorical strategies employed in non-fiction European and American literature, although some fiction has been included. The course is designed to help students become skilled readers of formal and informal prose written in a variety of periods, disciplines, and rhetorical contexts, and to become skilled writers who can compose for a variety of purposes.

AP Language and Composition requires that students approach reading with an eye towards the perspective of the writer, entering into a dialogue with both literature and writer, and considering secondary materials as other voices entering into the conversation. Reading requirements vary, but average 150pp. per week.

While classroom discussions and focused analyses are integral, students are also provided ample opportunity to conference with both peers and instructor where writing is assessed and revised accordingly. Typically, students discover that their performance on the AP Exam and their sense of personal growth and accomplishment as both readers and writers corresponds directly to their willingness to engage fully in this dialogical process.

In preparation for the class, students complete a summer writing project, which consists of reading three full-length works as well as a number of essays by one in a list of writers provided.

Students must read: On Writing by Stephen King
Bird by Bird by Ann Lamott

In addition, students will read at least five essays by one (1) of the following essayists:

James Baldwin	Norman Mailer
Joan Didion	George Orwell
Annie Dillard	E.B. White
W.E.B. du Bois	Alice Walker
Ellen Goodman	Toni Morrison
Nadine Gordimer	James Thurber

Their works can all be found online through a Google search.

Students will prepare in writing answers to the following questions for each essay they read:

- What is the author's SUBJECT?
 - What is the OCCASION?
 - Who is the AUDIENCE?
 - What is the PURPOSE?
 - Who is the SPEAKER?
 - What is the TONE?
- (acronym SOAPStone, to which we will refer all year long.)

English 3 Advanced Placement Language and Composition

SOAPStone-

A strategy to help you focus on the interaction of speaker and audience:

Subject:

What is the subject of the text (the general topic, content, or ideas contained in the text)?

How do you know this? How does the author present the subject? Is it introduced immediately or delayed? Is the subject hidden? Is there more than one subject?

Occasion:

What is the rhetorical occasion (the time and place of the piece or the current situation)?

Is it a memory, a description, an observation, a valedictory, a diatribe, an elegy, a declaration, a critique, a journal entry or...?

Audience:

Who is the audience (the group) of readers to whom this piece is directed)? Does the speaker identify an audience? What assumptions exist about the intended audience?

Purpose:

What is the purpose for the passage (the reason for its composition)? What is the speaker's purpose (the reason behind the text)? How is this message conveyed? What is the message? How does the speaker try to spark a reaction in the audience? What techniques are used to achieve a purpose? How does the text make the audience feel? What is its intended effect?

Speaker:

Who is the speaker (the voice that tells the story? Is someone identified as the speaker? What assumptions can be made about the speaker? What age, gender, class, emotional state, education, or...?

Tone:

If the author were to read aloud the passage, describe the likely tone of voice. It is whatever clarifies the author's attitude toward the subject. What emotional sense pervades the piece? How does the diction point to tone? How do the author's diction, details, images, language, and sentence structure convey his or her feelings?

Each time you use this strategy, begin annotating by circling interesting or unfamiliar words, bracketing important ideas, connecting related concepts with lines, asterisking special ideas, indicating figurative language, questioning irony, and commenting in the margins.