

AP ENGLISH LANGUAGE & COMPOSITION SUMMER ASSIGNMENT

AP English Language and Composition emphasizes a mix of politics, history, social sciences, current events, and nonfiction prose, ranging from personal essays to satire and journalism. With that, we will only be studying poetry and fiction occasionally.

One of the concerns that separate this course from other English courses is the focus on argument and the quality of writing that makes that argument strong. This is what rhetoric is: the art of the argument.

1. Write two essays (500 words each) in which you reflect on the argument and style of each work. In other words, what is the writer saying and how is he saying it? It does not, by the way, matter which edition you use for each book. Both books are easily procured.

- ✓ *Narrative of the Autobiography of Frederick Douglass* by (who else?) Frederick Douglass
- ✓ *In Cold Blood* by Truman Capote

Optional: And...if you're up for it, may I suggest that you also read: *The Electric Kool Aid Acid Test* by Tom Wolfe. Several of my students from last year's class recommended that I include this as an option for this year's summer assignment. If you choose to read this book, write an essay in which you reflect on the argument and style of Wolfe's book.

2. To begin to create a foundation of examples and ideas to support the arguments you will be asked to make, you need to read five op-ed pieces from *The New York Times* or papers of similar quality and five full-length magazine articles.

Regular Op-Ed writers for *The New York Times* are: David Brooks, Maureen Dowd, Bob Herbert, Nicholas D. Kristof, Paul Krugman, Frank Rich, Charles Blow, and Gail Collins. For the magazine articles choose from publications such as: *The New Yorker*, *The New Republic*, *Harpers*, *New York Magazine*, *New York Review of Books*, *The Economist*, or weeklies of similar quality. Write a brief, paragraph-length response to each of the articles.

- ✓ Please include a copy of your article and MLA citation with your response.

3. Vocabulary and Turns of Phrase

For all readings write down unfamiliar words or turns of phrase. Learn what they mean. Each new word or phrase is like another color in your palette and will provide the vital connective tissue to your thoughts.

4. Buy the following two books in addition to your summer reading:

- ✓ ***They Say, I Say: The Moves that Matter in Academic Writing*, 2nd ed. by Gerald Graff and Cathy Berkenstein**
- ✓ ***The Elements of Style* by William Strunk, Jr. and E.B. White**

You will find both books highly useful in revising your writing throughout the year

Please bring all articles and responses in addition to your essays to the first full day of class.

The Summer Assignment at a glance:

- 1) Write 2 essays that reflect on the argument and style (500 words or more for each essay) of *Narrative of the Autobiography of Frederick Douglass* and *In Cold Blood*.
- 2) 5 Op-Ed articles and 5 weekly magazine articles with paragraph-length responses to each.
- 3) A list of unfamiliar words and phrases from all of your readings (books, Op-Ed pieces, and magazine articles, with their context (how were these words and phrases used) and their meanings.
- 4) Buy a copy of *They Say, I Say: The Moves that Matter in Academic Writing*, 2nd ed. and *The Elements of Style*

**SHOULD YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, FEEL FREE TO
E-MAIL ME AT noah718@gmail.com**