

AP Language & Composition Summer Reading Assignment 2023-2024

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The AP Language and Composition course goal is to help you learn to analyze rhetorical and argumentation strategies that writers employ to achieve their purposes through close reading techniques and to help you learn to apply those strategies in your own writing. In preparation for a rigorous semester of thinking, reading, and writing, students enrolling in AP English Language and Composition are expected to complete the following summer reading assignment which consists of reading, annotating, and analyzing one required text. Keep in mind that summer work is required and your efforts will set the tone for your experiences in this class. Remember, AP Language is a college level class. Therefore, expectations are high; I am confident that you can reach them. Therefore, you will need to spend time and effort when reading this book. Reading it quickly "just to get it done," or worse, reading only Sparknotes of your book, will not suffice! You will need to read this text closely, and you will need to be looking for not only what the author says, but also how she says it.

It is not required, but I highly suggest that you purchase a copy of the book. You can get it at a local bookstore or even buy it used on-line. You may be able to borrow the books from the high school or public library if you do not want to purchase them; however, keep in mind that this may mean you do not have access to the text at the beginning of school when we are working with it..

Please read the memoir *Educated* by Tara Westover over the summer.

Tara Westover was 17 the first time she set foot in a classroom. Born to survivalists in the mountains of Idaho, she prepared for the end of the world by stockpiling home-canned peaches and sleeping with her "head-for-the-hills bag." In the summer she stewed herbs for her mother, a midwife and healer, and in the winter she salvaged in her father's junkyard. Her father forbade hospitals, so Tara never saw a doctor or nurse. Gashes and concussions, even burns from explosions, were all treated at home with herbalism. The family was so isolated from mainstream society that there was no one to ensure the children received an education and no one to intervene when one of Tara's older brothers became violent. Then, lacking any formal education, Tara began to educate herself. She taught herself enough mathematics and grammar to be admitted to Brigham Young University, where she studied history, learning for the first time about important world events like the Holocaust and the civil rights movement. Her quest for knowledge transformed her, taking her over oceans and across continents, to Harvard and to Cambridge. Only then would she wonder if she'd traveled too far, if there was still a way home. *Educated* is an account of the struggle for self-invention. It is a tale of fierce family loyalty and of the grief that comes with severing the closest of ties. With the acute insight that distinguishes all great writers, Westover has crafted a universal coming-of-age story that gets to the heart of what an education is and what it offers: the perspective to see one's life through new eyes and the will to change it (Good Reads).

One mode of writing we will focus on in AP Lang is analysis. Analysis writing requires you to closely examine a text, with an awareness of the writer's purpose and the rhetorical tools the writer uses to achieve it. For the purpose of summer reading, you will focus on analysis of *Educated*. This will require you to read closely and carefully. Yes, you need to read for literal meaning (obviously, you must understand what is going on in the text), but you will also need to read "between the lines." To analyze is to break a complicated item into its component parts, examine those parts individually, and explain how they work together to create the larger, more complex entity you are studying.

Analytical Annotation

While reading this memoir, look for (and take notes on) any of the following things. You may choose to annotate directly in your book (the most effective, even if you're adding sticky notes for additional room), or maintain separate notes on paper or a google doc.

Some things you may want to look for as you read:

- Parts that will help you give a brief overview of your book
- Information on the author's purpose
- Quotes that you like or that help you make a point
- Parts that show the writer's style

Listen to the questions and observations you make as you read and capture your thoughts in the book margins. Some things to note in your book might be places in the text where you:

- are confused, puzzled, or surprised
- are struck by the language or an image
- can relate the text to something in your life, to another text, or to something happening locally or globally
- can predict what might happen
- react strongly (either positively or negatively)

Here are some literary and rhetorical devices to be mindful of:

- Irony (Situational, Verbal, Dramatic)
- Syntax
 - Sentence structure
 - Repetition
 - Length of sentences
 - Importance of ends of sections/chapters
- Diction
 - Repeated words or patterns
 - Especially positive or negative words
 - Big words, small words, technical or content-specific words

- **Literary/Rhetorical Elements**
 - Metaphors, Similes
 - Imagery
 - Anaphora, Personification, Hyperbole, Antithesis, etc.
- **Selection of Detail**
 - Specific details that serve a greater purpose than simply informing
 - The order in which information is presented to the reader - most is not given chronologically
- **Point of View**
 - Does it shift? Is it the result of an emotional or psychological change?
 - Is the perspective different from how the reader might expect it?
- **Author's purpose//technique/main meaning or ideas**
 - What is the author attempting to convey?
 - Who is she attempting to convey it to?

While not required, many strong, analytical readers create notes in addition to annotating/ highlighting their book. In fact, my suggestion is to always pair an annotation/highlight with a marginal note. If you choose to do so, you may want to use one or more of these to help you create your notes:

- a paraphrase of a complex segment of text
- possible explanation of confusing material
- a main idea from the text and why it is important
- a strong positive or negative reaction and an explanation of that reaction
- a reason for agreeing or disagreeing with the author
- a comparison and/or contrast of a passage with another text or with prior knowledge
- a prediction based on evidence from the resource
- a question generated as a result of reading
- a description of a personal experience that relates to the resource

At the start of the school year, you will be given assignments to demonstrate your understanding of the book. Try to take notes on a variety of elements so you have choices when it comes time to answer specific questions on analysis, participate in discussions, and write an essay upon our return to school.