

AP English Language and Composition

2020-2021 SUMMER READING ASSIGNMENT

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Welcome to AP English Language and Composition! In this class, we will focus on developing our nonfiction reading and writing skills to become better readers, writers, thinkers, and learners. To get there, you will need to complete this summer reading assignment by the end of the first week of class (September 11th at the latest).

Part I: *How to Argue with a Cat* by Jay Heinrichs

The Purpose:

AP Lang is focused on the understanding of rhetoric -- both examining it in the texts we read and using it ourselves in the texts we write. *How to Argue with a Cat* examines the art of rhetoric and persuasion by considering the most difficult individuals to persuade: cats. Heinrich's main argument throughout this introductory text is that if you can persuade a cat to what you want, you can persuade anyone.

Rieffler's note: This text is not a difficult read; it's actually kind of fun! It does an excellent job of introducing you to some of the language of the course in easily digestible language. Dig in and learn!

The Task:

- To get started, watch the short video [The Power of Sketchnotes](#) (1:30) and Graham Shaw's TED Talk [How to Draw to Remember More](#) (17 min) and complete the [Notice/Focus](#). WHY are visual and sketch notes a powerful learning tool? You will complete sketch notes of your reading.
 - *If you are going to do this by hand, make a copy and enlarge your text boxes.*
- Read and **annotate** a copy of Jay Heinrichs' *How to Argue with a Cat: A Human's Guide to the Art of Persuasion* (2018).
 - You can [purchase](#) your copy through local retailers or online.
 - If purchasing is not an option for you, you can find a copy through the local library and take notes on sticky notes, notecards, a notebook or journal (include page numbers).
 - Alternatively, if this book is either a difficult choice because you are not a fan of cats or you are not a fan of the writing style, you may read Jay Heinrichs' [Thank You for Arguing](#). It's more comprehensive, and I've hyperlinked a PDF version, so you have ready access to it. You would need to read through chapter 18.
- Create 1-2 pages of visual sketch notes to answer the question: **What is rhetoric?**
 - For reference, explore this [YouTube Playlist](#) of video examples and explanations of how to do sketch notes.

- Think of visual notes as the highlights of a text focused around an essential question. You have a lot of freedom in how you create it. Further expectations are listed at the top of the next page.

The Expectation: To get *at least a B* on the visual notes, you must:

1. Fill the page to the edges
2. Show evidence that you've read every chapter, whether that is in the form of sketches, concept maps, 1-sentence summaries, or stand-out quotes (citing pages for any quotes used)
3. Include 2+ pictures (sketches, printed, traced, etc.)
4. Include color. It needs to be both readable and aesthetically pleasing. *(I'm picky!)*

Your visual notes may be on hard-copy paper or created digitally.

BONUS: Find your top favorite cat video as case studies that demonstrate at least three {3} principles from *How to Argue with a Cat*. Brownie points if you actually have a cat to practice with and video!

Part II: Application of Rhetoric

The Purpose:

We will spend the first part of the year focusing on rhetorical analysis, which is the analysis of choices made by writers to persuade their intended audience. A vital skill for rhetorical analysis is to practice annotating texts. This assignment will allow me to see how you read and annotate text as we start to practice these skills.

The Task:

1. Choose TWO {2} texts (linked below) to either print or work with digitally. *They are posted in the Summer Reading Assignment in our Google Classroom.*
2. Annotate each text for what stands out to you about the text. *Annotating is more than highlighting or underlining; it's having a conversation with the text.*
 - Track and summarize the speaker's argument
 - Make note of "power moments" (AKA flashpoints) in the speech where the speaker is especially persuasive
 - Pay attention to language. Highlight and DEFINE any words that are either unfamiliar or are in need of clarification.

Remember this? It still applies! You cannot escape it. Haha!

Identify/Define	Clarify	Question	Connect
-Circle and define unfamiliar vocabulary -Underline key ideas/text to which you want to return	-Summarize or paraphrase key ideas -Comment to demonstrate understanding of ideas within text	-Pose questions about textual evidence that is confusing or needs more information - Question the author and the ideas they present	-Connect ideas in the text to universal ideas, moments in history, other texts and/or current events - Connect ideas you your own life experience

3. Identify at least THREE {3} rhetorical choices made by the writers to convey their message to their audience based on your reading of *How to Argue with a Cat*. This can be in the form of annotations throughout the text or numbered at the end, citing line numbers.

The Text Options:

Each text has been formatted with some background, line numbers, and additional space around the edges for annotating, if you select to annotate by hand.

- [“2004 Keynote Address”](#) - Barack Obama
- [“Farewell to Baseball”](#) - Lou Gehrig
- [“Shrinking Women”](#) - Lily Myers
- [“A Whisper of AIDS”](#) - Mary Fisher
- [“How It Feels To Be Colored Me”](#) - Zora Neale Hurston
- [“Address to the Nation”](#) - George W. Bush
- [“Commentary Following the Death of George Floyd”](#) - Condoleezza Rice

I need you to remember that AP Language is a college level class. In the selections above, and throughout the course, we are going to explore hard topics, controversial topics. Not to get you to think or do in any particular way, but to broaden your experience for you to grasp how rhetoric functions in our society. There will be times that we will have to get comfortable with being uncomfortable. Knowledge, and empathy, are perhaps the greatest tools in your mental toolbox. As Atticus Finch says, “You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view . . . until you climb into his skin and walk around in it.”

Failure to complete the summer assignments will lead to the removal from the course. As a reminder, taking AP Language and Composition means that you are required to sit for the AP Language test, which takes place in the spring. (The cost of the test is approximately 93.00 dollars.)

This assignment has been posted in Google Classroom and has been emailed to you. Make sure you have joined both the Classroom site and Remind. If you have any questions, feel free to email me at rrieffler@marcellusschools.org or send me a Remind message. You will get a faster response via Remind, which I will also be using to send out notices.

Happy reading and writing! Be safe and enjoy your summer.

Fondly,

Mrs. R