

## AP English Language and Composition Summer Work 2017

Dear students,

Welcome to AP Lang! Some of you are familiar with our AP programs, such as Human Geography or World History, while some of you may be taking on your first AP class; regardless of your background, however, through this course I invite you to sharpen your verbal reasoning, enhance your close reading, and refine your academic writing. These skills readily apply to any of your current and future classes, and reciprocally, if you are now enrolled in other AP programs in the humanities, especially U.S. History, those courses will ease your path in this one. Furthermore, this AP course will prepare you not only for the exam in May, but also for the PSAT, ACT, and SAT. Beyond adding to the foundation of your further academic success, this course should have a positive and memorable impact on your life as we discuss culture, politics, ethics, and the nuances of discourse itself. Please keep all of these benefits in mind as you work on the summer assignment.

Before getting into the details of the assignment, I would like to explain its importance and purpose. By completing this summer work, you will continue to hone your literacy skills while getting a taste for the level of reading and writing expected; study the style of each of these essayists, observing how they develop their craft within their historical situation. This exposure to high-level academic nonfiction is part of the assignment's importance, but another part of it lies in the work itself. Allow me to suggest that this word *work* has more of a positive connotation than a negative one. The wisdom of a girl named Anne Frank suggests the same: "Laziness may appear attractive, but work gives satisfaction." At this point in your academic career, you undoubtedly understand such satisfaction, so beware the siren song of summer! A third reason why the summer work is important is that we—PCHS, your family, and you, I presume—have high expectations for your performance next year. As a junior, you will have opportunities to gain a position of strength as you apply for colleges and competitive scholarships only if you commit to improving through study. To meet high expectations, we—you and I—must demonstrate some grit and focus in a world of media distractions. Working together, we can meet the goals for this year's tests but more importantly, and here I invoke Vince Lombardi, "Perfection is not attainable, but if we chase perfection, we can catch excellence." So, let us work, and chase, and catch excellence, and at the end of each day be satisfied with that effort.

Here are the details of the summer work, which I divide into what is mandatory and what is recommended. First, get a copy of *50 Essays: A Portable Anthology*, compiled by **Samuel Cohen**. You can find used copies for around \$10 at Amazon or E-bay or many other online booksellers. Any edition will do, but in class we will use the third edition. It is critical that you borrow or buy a copy as soon as possible, or at the very least visit <http://tinyurl.com/hzfhqpd> because the essays will serve as points of reference throughout the year. In fact, the first assignment in August requires a discussion of essays from this anthology. Please read and annotate every essay, including the introduction. I suggest reading in order of theme as indicated in the Table of Contents:

- Education
- Ethics
- Family
- Gender
- History and Politics
- Identity
- Media and Pop Culture
- Race and Culture
- Reading, Writing, and Speaking

- Science, Nature, and the Environment
- Work and Class

In this anthology, four questions follow each essay, and every third question asks you to make connections between essays. **The following assignment is worth up to 250 points:**

- Choose five connecting questions (so, five #3 questions).
- Type at least a page in response to each question (so, turn in at least five pages).
- Entitle each response creatively.
- Adhere to MLA format: 12-point Times New Roman font, double-spaced, 1" margins.
- Cite specific text evidence (important, short quotations) for each essay referenced.

**In summary, you should read and annotate 50 essays and bring at least five typed pages to class on Thursday, August 10<sup>th</sup>, 2017.** Your grade will be determined by how well you can follow these directions and by how insightfully and cogently your responses discuss these texts. This assignment is mandatory for every PCHS student enrolled in this course; if you have questions, contact me as soon as possible.

Now for the recommended summer work. If you are at all anxious about keeping up with the class, you need to read some of the following texts. At the same time, these texts would serve anyone who feels ready to excel at the class, so I recommend them to all. The first is Aristotle's *Rhetoric* at <http://www.bocc.ubi.pt/pag/Aristotle-rhetoric.pdf>. Much of our knowledge of rhetoric has grown from this text. Consider that for a moment—then go read his book. The next suggestion is to head to the forest of rhetoric: <http://rhetoric.byu.edu/>. While Aristotle provides the big picture, this website expertly breaks down the catalogue of rhetorical strategies; nobody needs to know them all or their Greek origins, but the point here is that you recognize that every expression entails choice, and that each choice produces effects upon an audience. Explore the site to better understand rhetorical devices. Here are more sites dedicated to rhetoric:

- [www.americanrhetoric.com](http://www.americanrhetoric.com) (read some of the speeches)
- <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/625/01/>
- <http://www2.powayusd.com/pusdwvhs/AP/2010-2011/Docs/Summer%20Assignments/RhetoricalTermsList.pdf>

And if these sites don't get the job done, use Google like anyone else would; explore everything you can related to **rhetoric**. Also, get any SAT or ACT test prep workbook and use it regularly. You can also read the works of prominent writers from the past and present to better understand historical and current events presented in a professional style—two examples of such texts include *The World Is Flat* by Thomas Friedman and *Freakonomics* by Levitt and Dubner (and see me if you would like to borrow a copy of either). In case you have any questions, you can always reach me at [ben.penwell@yourcharlotteschools.net](mailto:ben.penwell@yourcharlotteschools.net), and in case you have trouble acquiring a copy of the anthology *50 Essays*, a full list of its texts can be found on this site: <http://tinyurl.com/hzfhqpd>.

Have a great summer, and I look forward to working with you!

Benjamin Penwell