

AP English 11
Language and Composition
Pre-Course Reading for 2023-24

The Summer Reading program for AP/GT 11 (Advanced Placement Language and Composition) has several purposes: First, it will familiarize you with an array of American writing in common modern nonfiction genres; second, the analyses you complete will help you hone vital skills to succeed in the course; and third, it will introduce the focus of the course for junior year—analyzing style, purpose, and structure, especially in nonfiction writing. The texts have been chosen for their diverse array of subjects as well as their resemblance to typical AP Exam passages.

Pre-Course Reading: Students will read (preferably in this order):

- The opening chapters, on close reading, journaling, and “Rhetorical Modes” from our class textbook, The Language of Composition. These will be provided to you before summer begins.

Use the opening chapters of The Language of Composition and annotate what the writers call “Patterns of Development.” (pages 17-25). Using stickynotes, marginalia, or a dialectical journal, use this opening chapter to help you develop notes for the next tasks, paying attention to the writers’ choices to narrate, compare, describe, etc.; and make notes about their purposes for those patterns.

Then read:

- Any SIX articles on any subjects from the list provided. Please respond to these 6 in journal entries (see page two).
- Any TWO articles from the list provided on the same subject (i.e. two articles about language, or two articles about food, or two articles about technology, etc...). These two articles will be the subject of an essay during the opening week of class. Compose a journal entry for each of these as well.

Writing tasks

1. Journaling: respond to each of the eight articles with a journal entry of about 300 words. To complete the journal, select one of the prompts from the next page. You can repeat prompts or ignore certain prompts, but please try to select a variety of responses—don’t complete the exact same response every single time. The Journaling is intended to help you start writing in a low-stakes way about rhetorical analysis.
2. Annotation/notes: For the two articles about the same subject, you should use notes from the opening of The Language of Composition and annotate the audience/speaker/purpose, and the major rhetorical strategies/patterns of organization/”modes” that you see. As you work, you may also annotate literary and rhetorical techniques that you have learned in the past. These notes can take the form of actual annotations on paper, or a separate page of notes and ideas, or some other strategy/design of your choice. Notes should indicate both technique and purpose/effect/intent.

Journals and notes will be due the SECOND CLASS we meet. There will be additional work and assessments using the summer readings, so be prepared—plan to bring your texts to the first three weeks of class.

Important note: We understand that the spring and summer have posed significant challenges to schedules and family lives. If you have a problem completing the summer reading as scheduled, please email ddaudelin@bcps.org AND chiggins@bcps.org or message us directly through Schoology.

Journal Prompts

For each journal you write (A total of 8)—select one of the prompts below to start your response. Each response should be about 300 words (1 page or so). Some of the responses are analytic, some are argumentative, and some are creative. While you can choose to omit a prompt or two if it does not interest you, and while you may repeat a prompt that you like a lot, please select a variety of responses throughout the journal. Journals will be submitted for an assessment grade. Responses should generally indicate intellectual engagement with the text and ideas, and, where relevant, use appropriate evidence and development. The Lang of Comp chapters about patterns of development and appeals should influence your writing choices.

1. Engage with the argument—extend, refute, or qualify the writer’s argument, by providing additional evidence and commentary that helps to prove the writer more right, more wrong, or more limited in their argument. Essentially, this prompt asks you—is this argument “correct?” How correct? Have things changed?
2. Another version of #1—compare the reality of this article to your own life: how are the ideas, evidence, appeals, and arguments of this article mirrored in your daily existence? Or, how does your daily experience run counter to the ideas? Have evidence or commentary to develop this, or tell a story about how you encounter these ideas.
3. “Good writers borrow. Great writers steal outright.” (Attributed, probably apocryphally, to T.S. Eliot). Nobody is quite certain if Eliot is the origin of this quote, but many writers get their starts by imitating the style of others. The *Twilight* books are rumored to be Harry Potter Fan fictions. For this journal, mimic the style and structure of one writer and article—write a short original response IN THAT STYLE but about a TOTALLY NEW SUBJECT. For example, if you read about food, you might mirror that style to write about your dad’s minivan.
4. Analysis of structure: “map” or “sketch” or “outline” the structure of the text: what comes first, what comes next, and why? Focus on both ideas and appeals or strategies—if the writer narrates a single story, then switches to a collection of facts and data—why? About what? What are the relationships of the parts?
5. Deep Dive: Find an interesting or cool quotation, maybe that the writer drops in there but doesn’t develop enough. Copy that quote. Then write a response in which you really deeply discuss or argue the importance, relevance, or truth of that quote, with your own new evidence and thinking.
6. “So What?” An important question in reading an analysis the “so what—” What is the significance or implication of this? How does this argument fit a larger context or debate? So for this journal, comment on the “so what” of the article—does it offer lessons for us? If the writer gets their way, how would that be a benefit or harm for society? If this argument is right, what does it tell us about how we are, or should, be living?
7. “Something I learned”—What new idea did you encounter? How did this reading change the way you look at the world? Or how did it deepen, complexify, or alter your way of seeing?
8. Big moves: Identify a big strategy or appeal the writer develops, and judge how effective it is. For example, if you notice a passage that is designed to arouse anger, or a passage that relies on the audience’s sense of fairness, or you see a long series of examples, to develop the argument—how well do those work to convince you? What successes or problems do you see?

Sports

NEW Jonathan R. Cole--[Why Sports and Elite Academics Do Not Mix.](#) A policy proposal to combat the growing professionalization of college athletics.

[William Langewiesche-- The Wave Maker.](#) On big-wave surfing; from Vanity Fair Magazine.

[Alice Gegory--Mavericks.](#) From N+1, a literary/nonfiction journal. Another exploration of big-wave surfing and competitions. Would be instructive to compare with Langewiesche's.

[Susan Orlean-- Life's Swell.](#) Ever seen the movie "Blue Crush"? Meet the magazine article. (Clearly, I enjoy surf articles.) This one's different, again, from the other two, it's a little more like a profile and less like a narrative.

[Ben McGrath--Good Game](#) From the New Yorker, a really excellent long profile of an elite competitive video game player, with lots of description of the games, the history of the gaming e-sports scene, and more.

[Burkhard Bilger--The Ride of Their Lives](#) From the New Yorker again, a long exploration of kids and competitive rodeo riding.

[Eric Hansen--Qoosiers: Inside the Quidditch World Cup:](#) Well, it's what it sounds like-- Outside writer Hansen visits the site of a real-life Quidditch championship. Turns out, Quidditch is pretty hard-core.

[John Branch--Deliverance from 27,000 feet:](#) When someone dies on Everest, it's really only the beginning.

Shopping and Consumer Culture

NEW Molly Young-- [Sweatpants in Paradise](#) Marketing and Mall life, courtesy of Hollister

NEW Marissa Meltzer-- [Patagonia and The North Face: Saving the World, One Puffy Jacket at a Time](#) An exploration into corporate ethos and the performance of conscience in outdoor merch.

[David Uberti--The Death of the American Mall](#)--an examination of the economic and cultural forces that led to the fading of what was once a widespread institution

[Nelson D Schwartz--The Economics \(And Nostalgia\) of Dead Malls](#)-- focusing mostly on Maryland, this opens with an examination of Owings Mills Mall

[Oliver Burkman--The Diabolical Genius of the Baby Advice Industry](#)-- How we commodify morality and child-rearing

Language

NEW From critic Wesley Morris, on bro. Wesley Morris -- [Bro-liferation.](#) What a noun might mean.

[Andre Spicer--From Inboxing to Thought Showers: How Business Bulls*** Took Over](#) -- An overview of useless language in the business world, though you might find much of this relevant to schools, too.

[Archie Bland--the Age of Banter.](#) Banter is a word, a concept, a relationship, that friends, writers, companies, all try to engage in. But it's not without problems.

Current Events and news

[Mark Bowden--The Hunt for Geronimo.](#) From Vanity Fair, on the decisions to hunt for Osama Bin Laden, and the raid on his compound in Pakistan.

[Amber Waves of Green--Jon Ronson](#) A good one for your Compare-Contrast journal. Ronson traces 6 people's lives through our recent economic turmoil.

[Sam Knight--The Bouvier Affair:](#) A look inside the storage, transport, and sale of rare and expensive art

[Kent Russell--The Disaster Tourist](#) -- the dark side of modern tourism

Education

[William Deresiewicz--Don't Send your Kids to an Ivy League School](#) A critique of "elite education" from The New Republic.

James Baldwin—[A Talk to Teachers](#)—a black American critic on what's wrong with schools

Priya Anand and Mark Bergen -- [Big Teacher Is Watching: How AI Spyware Took Over Schools](#)

Love and Relationships

[Kevin Poulsen--How a Math Genius Hacked OKCupid to Find True Love](#) Hey, someone finally found a real-world reason to use the maths: getting a date and finding true love.

Technology

[Mark Bowden--The Enemy Within](#). Bowden, writing for The Atlantic, on the Conficker worm's origins, and the fight to stop it.

[William Langewiesche--The Devil at 37,000 Feet](#): How a mid-air collision between two airliners happened. Process Analysis, narrative, technology.

[Ian Bogost- the App that Does Nothing](#). What's up with your smartphone these days?

[Franklin Foer--Facebook's War on Free Will--](#) an inquiry into the ethical dangers of technology

[Quinn Norton--Email Hackers are Winning--](#) part process analysis, part history lesson on why email is so hackable.

[Rebecca Jennings--The Not-So-Secret-Life of a Tik-Tok-famous teen](#) -- an anatomy of fame and technology

[Adam Alter--How technology Gets us Hooked](#) -- the intersections of psychology, biochemistry, and the feedback you get on your snapchats.

Simon Parkin—[FIFA: The Video Game that Changed Football](#)—the relationships between reality and the fantasy of the video game.

Food and Drink

[Paul Solotaroff--In the Belly of the Beast](#) Not for the faint of heart or stomach, this Rolling Stone investigation follows undercover "reporters" from the Humane Society as they reveal the terrible conditions that arise because we like -- and need-- food.

[Laura Reiley -- Farm to Fable](#): An expose of your organic, free-range, locally-sourced, ethically-farmed food that just isn't any of those things.

[Ruth Graham--Why Are Fast Food Restaurants Hiding Their Condiments Behind the Counter?](#): A Slate investigation into why you can never get enough Chik-Fil-A Sauce when you ask.

[Bee Wilson--Why We Fell for Clean Eating](#): the process analysis of an idea-- a short history of the clean eating movement, and why it's problematic

[Megan McCarron--The Myth of Authenticity is Killing Tex-Mex](#) -- On the dismissal of tex-mex as junk cuisine, and on the role of food in culture(s)

[Laura Shapiro--Eat Food. All The Time. Mostly Junk](#) -- an inquiry into the significance of our snack habits.

Gender

[Rebecca Solnit--Men Explain Lolita to Me](#): Adventures in mansplaining, and the importance of literary art in our lives. Why diversity of reading matters.

[Angela Watercutter--Bronies are Redefining Fandom--and American Manhood](#) An examination of grown dudes who dress as My Little Pony in public.

Reading and Writing

[Vinson Cunningham--How Chris Jackson is Building a Black Literary Movement](#) From The New York Times, a long piece on the editor behind Ta-Nahesi Coates and many other prominent black writers.

[Ben Blatt--A Textual Analysis of The Hunger Games](#) With comparisons to the *Harry Potter* series and the *Twilight* series, Blatt examines the words and syntax of popular novels.

[Christopher Myers - The Apartheid of Children's Literature](#) A great, well-written article to analyze for Free Choice journals. Myers discusses literary discrimination in children's books and why it needs to end.

Families

[Andrea Elliott-- Invisible Child](#) In this five-part story, a New York Times author follows the life of an 11-year old girl named Dasani. Growing up homeless in New York City, her and her family of seven other siblings and

a mother and father face many challenges; this article not only exposes those challenges but also overall problems surrounding homelessness in the Big Apple. Very Interesting.

[Max Borders--Civilized Children](#) The Freeman writer offers personal insight on the State's part in the life of its children. Do we, as children, belong to our parents, the State, or some sick mix of them both? (Kaitlin)

Science

[Ed Yong--Inside the Eye: Nature's Most Exquisite Creation](#): For science! The anatomy and evolution of eyes.

[John Branch--Snow Fall](#) The New York Times writer creates a multimedia account of an avalanche in the "out-of-bounds" area of a ski resort. Cool science, narrative, and some multimedia. This, arguably, is what good 21st Century online writing should look like.

[Lois Parschley--Faultlines, Black Holes, and Glaciers: Mapping Uncharted Territories](#)--It's OK to get lost. On mapp, terra incognita, and exploration.

Sarah Miller—[Heaven or High Water: Selling Miami's Last 50 Years](#)

Culture and Life

[Kevin Kosar--The Lost Genius of the Post Office](#). How a venerable American institution lost its way

[Laurence Scott--Whatever Happened to the Couch Potato?](#) How the American Ethos has changed

[Larissa MacFarquar-- Where the Small-Town American Dream Lives On](#) A study in coming home, or staying there. An attempt to repudiate the myth of small-town provincialism and decay

[Norimitsu Onishi--A Generation in Japan Faces a Lonely Death](#): A detailed examination of an aging population living and dying alone.

[Charlotte Higgins--the Hygge conspiracy](#)--A fascinating dive into the meanings of a particular word, and how the concept gets commodified.

[Ted Jackson--The Search for Jackie Wallace](#) -- On Homelessness, Addiction, and the many attempts at recovery

**** NEW!!!!***** [Keith Stuart--Fortnite is So Much More than a Game](#)

****NEW!!!!***** [Kate Wagner—Man-Writer Against Nature](#). In which the writer examines our relationships with cars and the romance of the open road.

***** NEW!!!!***** [David Remnick—The New Jersey Turnpike: A Love Story](#) Well, if you've ever been there, do you love the turnpike?

Work and Labor

Kiera Feldman -- [Trashed: Inside the Deadly World of Private Garbage Collection](#) Just what it sounds like-- a profile of a trash collector for a private company in NYC, and an investigation into the hours, labor, dangers, and history of the business.

[Oliver Burkeman--Why Time Management is Ruining Our Lives](#)--an exploration of all the ways we try to control our busy schedules, and why those methods fail us.

[Andy Beckett--Post-Work: the Radical Idea of a World Without Jobs](#) -- as our robot overlords threaten to take all our jobs, what will we do?

[David J Unger-- American Reams: Why a Paperless World Still Hasn't Happened](#)-- part history, part industry, all excellent tone, this one examines a convention of paper manufacturers in a changing digital marketplace.

[Tom Lamont--Where Oil Rigs go to Die](#)-- a chronology of the wreck and destruction of an oil rig. *cues up "The Circle Of Life"*

[Pablo S. Torre--How \(And Why\) Athletes Go Broke](#) -- on the economics of big money

Politics and Law

[Yascha Mounk--America is Not a Democracy](#)-- Part history lesson, part critique of the current operation of our government

[Troy Patterson--Robert Mueller, Style Icon](#) -- The significance of a simple suit

[Daniel Immerwahr-- How the US has Hidden its Empire](#). On the map.

Health and Medicine

[David M. Perry--Your Pills are Spying on You--](#) the intersection of health science and surveillance technology that we may or may not willingly sign up for. Who gets our medical info?

***NEW!!!!** [Tara Haelle—Why A Former Anti-Vax Influencer Got Her Covid-19 Shot](#) From *Texas Monthly*, an award winning magazine, a look into a very topical set of concerns.

NOTE: You may find a new-ish article that fits these broad categories. If you do so, please email us before you start reading. We will likely approve a new article if it meets the following criteria:

- Professionally written/edited/published—this means generally not a personal blog post; it should be published via a newspaper, magazine, or online website.
- Clearly operating as an argument, description, or narrative—this means that the article a) has a coherent tone, thesis, argument; and b) has a clear and meaningful organizational pattern. This will mean excluding listicles (“Ten Reasons You Should Take AP English”) and also news reports, which are factual recountings of events rather than arguments.
- Of substantial length, depth, and/or breadth.