

AP Language 2009: Summer Assignment

Class Overview

The emphasis of the AP English Language and Composition (APEL) course will be composition, reading and analysis of non-fiction writing, oral communication, and most importantly, critical thinking skills. The intent of this class is to give students those skills that will enable them to pass the Advanced Placement test given in May, and also to prepare them with those skills necessary to be successful when entering college.

While the focus in previous high school literature courses has been on the study of fiction writing, APEL will focus on non-fiction writing including the following: memoirs, editorial writing, historical non-fiction, letters, newspaper and periodical articles, and non-fiction books.

Contact Information

If you wish to contact an APEL teacher representative over the summer, you can e-mail Ms. Lowry at nlowry@powayusd.com, Mr. Wenger at jwenger@powayusd.com, or Mr. Jennings at jjennings@powayusd.com. You can e-mail just to say hello or to ask questions about your work.

Accountability

Your summer assignment will constitute the first grade you receive in the class. No, the summer assignment is not optional.

Textbook

Our primary textbook for the course:

50 Essays: A Portable Anthology – Samuel Cohen. You should be able to locate this text for under \$20. You are NOT required to purchase any textbook for the class, but if you like to write in your books, you'll want to purchase a copy over the summer.

Summer Assignment

Project #1: Personal Writing Introduce Yourself

Write an essay of introduction that shows the “you” everybody knows or the “you” nobody knows (except you). Make the text informative, but DO NOT give me “reflective statements” (I am chipper and I like chipmunks). Avoid modesty and timidity. This assignment will help you write your college application essay later in the year. **Choose one of the following prompts:**

1. Write about a personal event that made a significant impact on your life. **Show, don't tell**
2. Throughout your life you have heard about great minds, important and influential people, and people who have made a difference in the lives of others. Identify and analyze an individual (alive or dead) who has made a difference in your life. What difference did he or she make? Why and how did he or she do so? Allow readers to *sense* why this person is important to you. Avoid *telling* the relationship; instead *show* the relationship. If at all possible, avoid obvious people like Gandhi, Jesus, and your mother unless they have real, personal meaning to you. Even then, reconsider. Pick somebody, whether famous or obscure, for whom you have a genuine admiration. Support your essay with observations, reactions, opinions, perceptions, reflections, and experiences.
3. Write an essay that defines you by writing an essay about a trip. Provide as much sensory detail as possible. **Without telling the reader, show how this trip became a benchmark in your life.**
4. Use a term (or idea) from the physical world to explore you and your emotional world. You may choose any concept, principle, theory from physics or chemistry (etc), or perhaps an animal, microorganism, or a plant. Explain in nonscientific language (meaning *all* people can understand the scientific stuff) the relationship it has to an emotion or experience you've had. (For example, the Uncertainty Principle borrowed from quantum mechanics, a branch of physics, could be applied to the idea of personal identity and its uncertainty.) **Show and tell.**
5. Write about something worth paying attention to. It might be the person who works at the corner store, the way in which your grandmother answers questions or any other subject that you find fascinating. In your reflection on why this thing needs attention, you will explain to us your values and who you are as a person. **Show and tell.**

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Format: typed, 1-2 pages, double spaced. **Edit yourself** to make what you want to say fit in the space you are given. Do not write a boring five paragraph essay with a main thesis. This is narrative, descriptive, definition writing that is meant to engage readers. If you are bored writing it, readers are bored reading it. Break rules! Be bold! Show what you can do.

Due: The first day of school.

Project #2: The Book

Purpose: Begin to develop a mature academic perspective.

Over the course of your academic career, most of the reading you have completed in an English class has been fiction. This summer, you are going to begin your foray into the reading of non-fiction.

Your reading will help you have a more sophisticated perspective on history and culture (two things that will come in handy for the AP essays). Information you learn in these essays will be information you can use in essays throughout the course.

1. **Read** one (or more if you are ambitious, have time, or are a book nerd) of the following collections of non-fiction essays. You can purchase most of these at a local bookstore, or you can order them on-line:

- The Best American Nonrequired Reading 2008
- The Best American Essays 2008
- The Best American Science Writing 2008
- The Best American Magazine Writing 2008
- The Best American Comics 2008
- The Best American Science and Nature Writing 2008
- The Best American Travel Writing 2008
- The Best American Sports Writing 2008
- The Best American Spiritual Writing 2008
- *The Tipping Point* by Malcolm Gladwell
- *Freakonomics* by Steven D. Levitt & Stephen J. Dubner
- *The Zookeeper's Wife: A War Story* by Diane Ackerman
- *Nickle and Dimed: On (not) Getting By in America* by Barbara Ehrenreich

CAUTION: These collections are made for adult readers and may have controversial material and authors. Read a collection you feel comfortable with.

Be an active reader. You own the book, so write summaries and personal reactions. Highlight lines that strike you. Question lines you don't understand. Take note of interesting diction, author's tone, use of figurative language. Note the author's claims and your reactions to them.

Specific assignment based on your reading will be given out on the first day of school!

Due: First day of school .

Words of Wisdom

Work consists of whatever a body is obliged to do. Play consists of whatever a body is not obliged to do.

- *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*

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AP Language is NOT LIFE! Enjoy your summer!