

Advanced Placement English Language and Composition Summer Reading Assignment

Next school year, you will be taking AP English Language and Composition. This course, unlike the English courses you have taken so far, does not focus on literature or fiction. We don't talk about character development or symbolism. Instead, we *examine nonfiction*: letters, speeches, essays, and so forth. We examine authors' use of *rhetoric*—the ways in which authors use language to influence their audiences. We also construct our own arguments, employing the tools of rhetoric in order to persuade our audiences. This summer assignment is designed to jump-start your understanding of argument and to provide a foundation for the beginning weeks of the course.

Task #1: The Reading Assignment

You will be reading *Thank You for Arguing* by Jay Heinrichs (ISBN: 978-0385347754). This book can be found on Amazon or any local bookstore. However, you will not be reading the entire book for this assignment; for the summer assignment, you are responsible for reading **Chapters 1 to 13 (pages 1-141)**. While reading keep a journal of notes and reflections on each of these chapters. Each entry should be at least a half page of coherent notes to help you with your writing in AP Composition and Language.

Task #2: Building Your Rhetorical Toolbox

As you read *Thank You for Arguing*, you will also begin collecting argumentative tips, tricks, terms, and techniques (like alliteration!). The notebook which you start here will be a resource for you to expand and add to throughout your year in AP English Language and Composition. As you read the assigned chapters of *Thank You for Arguing*, make a list of the tools and strategies discussed in the book (pay attention to terms and strategies introduced within the chapter and in the side-boxes). This should not be a simple vocab list; include any bits of wisdom or humor you find in Heinrichs's writing. *Complete this task in a college-ruled notebook; you may use any organizational strategy you find appropriate.*

Task #3: Argument Construction

You will write a short (250-300 word) argument, using the tools found in *Thank You for Arguing*, addressing **ONE** of the following 3 situations. The argument will be handwritten in blue or black ink on a separate sheet of paper. You will be graded on your use of the tools from *Thank You for Arguing* and on your ability to tailor your argument to the audience and situation provided in the scenario. Use of the *italicized tools* given in each scenario must be evident in your argument to receive full credit.

This assignment is an opportunity to play games with language. Take the assignment seriously and tailor your writing to the situation, but don't be afraid to try something new or interesting. These aren't essays. In *Thank You for Arguing*, Jay Heinrichs is clearly enjoying himself as he explores and explains the basics of argument. As you construct your arguments, try to enjoy yourself. You'll probably be more persuasive.

1. Your parents forbade you from attending a party. They then saw photos on Instagram proving that you lied to them and attended the party anyway. Using the tools presented in Chapters 2 and 3, minimize your culpability and the punishment which you receive (in other words, make it less your fault and try for as small a punishment as possible). You will need to consider the *mood*, *mind*, and *willingness* of your audience, and will need to move the argument from *blame* to *choice*.
2. You wish to start a new club at BCHS (you may choose its focus), but are having trouble finding a faculty sponsor—nobody wants to put in the extra work sponsoring a club. Using the tools found in Chapters 7 and 8, construct an argument which will convince a teacher to sponsor you. Demonstrate your *practical wisdom*, and convince your audience of your *disinterest* in the matter.
3. A good friend lends you \$50, with the expectation that you will pay back the loan with money from your summer job. However, you never get the job and have no money to pay him back. Your friend completely refuses to budge and demands the money. Using the tools of Chapters 11 and 12, identify a *commonplace* shared with your friend, then *redefine* the issue and/or terms in such a way that your friend will be persuaded to no longer wish to be repaid. You **AREN'T** convincing your friend that you don't owe him money—you're convincing him that he doesn't want to be paid back.

Some teacher advice:

- Remember, the notes/reflection from Task 1, and the Rhetorical Toolbox of Task 2 may be completed in a notebook.
- The argument in Task 3 is to be **handwritten in blue or black ink on a separate sheet of paper**, and **must be 250-300 words**.
- **All assignments will be collected on SEPTEMBER 5th/6th** and is worth 10% of your first quarter grade. **NO LATE ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED.**
- Waiting until the last minute to do this assignment is not recommended; not only will it be difficult and stressful for you, but it will also drastically lower the quality of your work. We can always spot last-minute work. It lacks the quality and attention to detail that comes from spending time on the assignment.