



AP English Language and Composition

Course Description

Welcome to AP English Language and Composition with Mr. Benton! In this course, you will learn about the elements of argument and composition as you develop your critical-reading and writing skills. You'll read and analyze nonfiction works from various periods and write essays with different aims: for example, to explain an idea, argue a point, or persuade your reader of something. You'll also engage in composition and journal work directly linked to the study of some literary fiction. Here are some skills you'll learn this year:

- Reading closely, analyzing, and interpreting a piece of writing
- Evaluating a source of information
- Gathering and consolidating information from different sources
- Writing an evidence-based argument
- Drafting and revising a piece of writing
- Exploring universal themes in literature

Throughout the course of the year you'll also ...

1. learn to identify and analyze the claims in a text and determine whether the writer backs up their assertions with reasoning and evidence;
2. learn about how writers organize information and evidence to support a specific argument and appeal to a particular audience;
3. explore the range of perspectives around a topic and how various arguments can relate and respond to one another;
4. examine how a writer makes choices about methods of developing arguments, introductions, and conclusions;
5. focus on the very specific and minute choices a writer makes to bring all the parts of an argument together;
6. work to understand the difference between position and perspective, how to consider bias, and how to integrate and address multiple perspectives in an argument;
7. consider the breadth and complexity of arguments around a topic and what makes each successful or unsuccessful;
8. explore the stylistic choices a writer can make and how those choices affect an argument; and
9. consider a wide range of perspectives as you develop a complex argument of your own.

The Exam

The AP Lang exam which you'll take in May is 3 hours and 15 minutes long and will test your understanding of the literary concepts listed above, as well as your ability to analyze texts and develop written arguments based on your own interpretations. It consists of:

- 45 multiple choice questions, for which you'll have one hour ... and
- 3 free response (essay) questions for which you'll have 2 hours and 15 minutes!

Classroom Policies

Expectations

Please bring completed assignments and all necessary materials to every class meeting. You'll also want to be mentally prepared; this means you're demonstrating knowledge about assigned readings, contributing to class activities, actively listening to others, and taking intellectual risks on the daily.

Always treat all members of the class with respect: listen fully to opinions that conflict with your own and do what you can to look out for each other.

It's my aim to always show you respect as well. Please communicate honestly with me about your needs, both physical/emotional and academic. For example, do we need to review a tricky concept? Do you have too many assignments scheduled on one day? Do we need to adjust our pace? Maybe we should have class outside today? I'll do my best to help.

Approach

Teaching in this course is driven by critical concepts and fueled by inquiry. Classroom activities are focused on effective teamwork, collaboration, and experimentation. Instruction is informed by diagnostic, formative, and summative assessment while also allowing for adaptations to meet the needs of all learners. See also "Grades & Measurement".

Absences

In the case of a student's absence, it is your (the student's) responsibility to obtain any and all materials and information delivered in class during the period of the absence; all class materials will be available on the course's class website (bentonenglish.com) and Canvas. Please do not wait until the next day class meets to make contact; in the case of a missed assessment, I generally expect you to make up the assignment the day you return. You must take the initiative to arrange a make-up quiz or assignment. If the work is not made up when scheduled or is not rescheduled after 36 hours, a zero will be given for the missed assignment.

Late Work

Assignments that are turned in one school day late will receive a 50%-off penalty; work that is turned in over one school day late will not receive a grade. The exceptions to this rule are some long-term assignments for which 10–40% (with the percentage increasing throughout the year) will be deducted for each late day. In the case of an emergency, please keep me in the loop by proactively communicating so that I can be fair and flexible. I'm ready to extend grace at a moment's notice.

Academic Honesty

Students are expected to complete all assignments without the assistance of others unless I explicitly provide written permission for collaboration on a specific assignment. Your writing about texts should involve your own independent insight and thoughts. Sharing work with another student; discussing assessment questions; using another person's work for reference; including un-cited evidence; making use of un-cited analyses, claims, evidence, or commentary from generative AI; or using any other human's or AI's words or ideas without accurately citing the source will result in a grade of 0% on the assignment and a referral to administration for cheating. Students should report to office hours instead of resorting to academic dishonesty. I reserve the right to challenge the authenticity of any student's submitted work; inconsistencies in style, voice, editing/revision history, and structure will require investigation to determine whether or not plagiarism occurred.

Necessary Supplies

- plenty of college-ruled notebook paper
 - several blue or black pens (not pencils)
 - a green, red, and purple pen
 - the currently assigned reading
 - 4 colors of Post-it notes
 - 8 colors of highlighters or colored pencils
 - a college-ruled composition book
 - a way to reliably store handouts, notes, etc.
 - an academic planner
 - PCS-issued laptop computer
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Texts

- *English Language and Composition*, AMSCO / Perfection Learning (an AP Lang textbook)
- selected short stories, poems, excerpts, essays, novels*, plays*, etc. (PDFs provided/linked)

** Please refer to the "Curricular Materials" section for info on supplemental books*

Grades & Measurement

I've designed this course to reward effort, planning, and growth. For the most part, English is a skill-based course, so many assignments are scored not on mastery of content knowledge but on mastery of specific skills with the English language. As my student, I expect you to show thorough knowledge of assigned readings, to demonstrate critical thinking, to be a thoughtful listener; to express yourself clearly through written work and oral response; and to remain open to ideas that conflict with your own.

While the exact number and distribution of various tasks will vary from one grading period to the next, most graded work falls into the following four categories:

- **Classwork** includes in-class tasks such as daily bellwork, lecture notes, activities for skill development/practice, active participation in discussion, and individual or group presentations. These elements will often be listed with a green arrow on the class schedule but may also come up spontaneously as needed. Collected classwork and focused notes will be due periodically (and will be listed on the schedule board as such). Collaboration is allowed and encouraged for all classwork unless I specify otherwise.
- **Homework** encompasses any work that's meant to be completed (mostly) at home. Most homework should be approached over multiple days, not all at once; leaving close reading or analytical writing to the last minute puts students in a tough spot. Unlike classwork, collaboration is not permitted with homework; these tasks are designed to be completed independently ... with support: always take time during class each week to seek my help as needed.
- **Quizzes** are any in-class assessment, usually consisting of short response and/or multiple choice questions, that's designed to gauge your familiarity with a specific section of assigned reading or a particular body of content knowledge.
- **Tests** are an assessment of skill (not merely content knowledge) aligned to a particular standard or multiple standards; one example of a test in this class would be an in-class critical essay or commentary on a specific text (assessed with an IB, AP, or state rubric).

Good Communication

Regularly visit the course's Canvas page and the class website (bentonenglish.com) for the weekly class agenda, handouts, and assignments, digital audio and text versions of assigned reading, and other useful info and links. All general class announcements will run through Remind, which also offers convenient two-way communication for simple questions. If you'd prefer to email me (at bentonro@pcsb.org), please provide your name and period/block in the message so it's easier to quickly identify you and better address your specific needs.

Curricular Materials

This is an AP course with clearly defined standards and is designed to prepare students for the exam they will take in May, earning them both college credit as well as meeting high school graduation requirements. As such, materials and discussions for this course may reflect topics not typically included in standard-level courses. While some assigned readings may come from the state-issued "BEST" lists and county-adopted resources, I will supplement those materials with texts from outside those categories; when that is the case, I will follow the district's Controversial Materials policy (pcsb.org/Page/1530), communicating in triplicate a few weeks in advance about the supplementary text via a Remind message to my students, with a link on BentonEnglish.com and Canvas, and by a brief note home – either as a hardcopy or as a message through Focus – informing parents of any potentially controversial content with the option to opt for an alternative text.

Quarter 1: Rhetorical analysis & American identity, morality, abuses of power

- a selection of nonfiction texts: McCarthy speeches, HUAC testimony, Murrow broadcast
- a selection of American short stories including Faulkner, Hurston & Arthur Miller's play The Crucible

Quarter 2: Argument & the American dream, justice, dignity

- a selection of nonfiction texts including FDR speeches, Baldwin
- John Steinbeck's novel The Grapes of Wrath

Quarter 3: Synthesis & colonialism, narrative power

- a selection of texts including Achebe, Orwell, Kipling
- Joseph Conrad's novella Heart of Darkness

Quarter 4: Focused review & identity, reconciliation, rhetorical legacy

- a selection of texts including Kincaid, King, Lorde
- William Shakespeare's play The Tempest & Thi Bui's graphic memoir The Best We Could Do

Things We'll Be Practicing All Year:

- reading for the rhetorical situation (speaker, purpose, audience)
- following conventions of standard written English
- smoothly integrating and clearly citing evidence
- writing defensible thesis statements & building a strong line of reasoning
- practicing analysis & editing for the exam's multiple choice
- rhetorical analysis, argument, and synthesis essays

Student Name: _____

Class Name: _____ Class Period/Block: _____

After fully reading the syllabus, please sign, complete, detach, and return only this page by the due date or – if you’re entering the course later in the year– three school days after receiving this syllabus packet. Please keep the rest of the syllabus in your English folder until the end of the school year.

Syllabus Agreement

By signing below, I agree that I have read, understand, fully submit to, personally agree with, and shall willfully comply with all of the policies, rules, requirements, expectations, and consequences covered throughout this syllabus for Mr. Benton’s AP English Language course:

Student’s Signature: _____

Parent’s Signature: _____

Teacher’s Signature: _____

Parent/Guardian Info (please fill in all that apply)

name: _____

relationship to student: _____

phone: (____) - ____ - ____

email: _____

.....

name: _____

relationship to student: _____

phone: (____) - ____ - ____

email: _____

(If more space is needed for more family contacts, please attach additional sheets.)

Student Info

your phone: () - -

your email: _____

When it comes to the English language, what do you consider to be a strength of yours?

And do any specific weaknesses come to mind?

What's a topic about which you have a strong opinion?

Are there any clubs or teams at SPHS that you're currently part of or considering joining?

Why are you enrolled in an AP English course?

Aside from a good grade, what do you hope to get out of this class?

What's your biggest motivation to do well in high school?

AP Classroom email address:

AP Classroom password: