2017-2018

Dear future AP Language and Composition students,

It is hard to believe that summer is right around the corner. Before you know it you will be back at school for your senior year, well on your way to college and an exciting future.

The AP Language and Composition course will provide you with college level instruction in studying and writing various analytical and persuasive essays on literacy and nonliterary topics. Our area of focus will be in language, rhetoric and expository writing. We have chosen a variety of literature selections for you to read this summer in preparation for our class. All are fairly representative of the types of literature we will be experiencing in class. Please take note of the activities we would like for you to complete as you read.

- "Close Reading of a Literary Passage" (attached) - This is an essential skill for an AP English student. Use these strategies as you read your nonfiction texts and as you annotate the columns for the columnist assignment; underline focus on applying sections I, II, and III from the article. You will NOT turn in annotations, but you will find them useful in completing the assignments.
- *Thank You for Arguing* (Jay Heinrichs) – **you will read this book BEFORE completing the Summer Reading Columnist assignment.** This text will serve as the foundational text for our course, so be sure to annotate as you read (again focusing on sections I, II, and III from the "Close Reading" article). Your first application of what you have learned from the text will be in the Summer Reading Columnist assignment.
- Summer Reading Columnist Project – see the attached overview (last class of week 1)

  The components of your summer reading work will come together to make up your first formative assessment grade of the semester.

We should have an exciting class together. Once again, we are looking forward to working with all of you. Have a wonderful summer!

AP English Language and Composition teachers
River Bluff High School

Close Reading of a Literary Passage

When engaging in a close reading, you choose a specific passage and analyze it in fine detail, as if with a magnifying glass. You then comment on points of style and on your reactions as a reader. Close reading is important because it is the building block for larger analysis. Your thoughts evolve not from someone else's truth about the reading, but from your own observations. The more closely you can observe, the more original and exact your ideas will be. To begin your close reading, ask yourself several specific questions about the passage. The following questions are not a formula, but a starting point for your own thoughts. When you arrive at some answers, you are ready to organize and write. You should organize your close reading like any other kind of essay, paragraph by paragraph, but you can arrange it any way you like.

Note: For summer reading, apply this technique to the entire text by choosing significant passages as you read. During our class, we will continue to evaluate individual passages and entire works in this manner. Mark your text, take notes, and reflect as you read. ***THESE WILL NOT BE TURNED IN FOR A GRADE, BUT INSTEAD SHOULD BE APPLIED TO ALL READING YOU DO THROUGHOUT THE SEMESTER.***

I. First Impressions:

- What is the first thing you notice about the passage?
- What is the second thing?
- Do the two things you noticed complement each other? Or contradict each other?
- What mood does the passage create in you? Why?

II. Vocabulary and Diction:

- Which words do you notice first? Why? What is noteworthy about this diction?
- How do the important words relate to one another?
- Do any words seem oddly used to you? Why?
- Do any words have double meanings? Do they have extra connotations?
- Look up any unfamiliar words.

III. Discerning Patterns:

- Does an image here remind you of an image elsewhere in the book? Where? What's the connection?
- How might this image fit into the pattern of the book as a whole?
- Could this passage symbolize the entire work? Could this passage serve as a microcosm--a little picture--of what's taking place in the whole work?
- What is the sentence rhythm like? Short and choppy? Long and flowing? Does it build on itself or stay at an even pace? What is the style like?
- Look at the punctuation. Is there anything unusual about it?
- Is there any repetition within the passage? What is the effect of that repetition?

- How many types of writing are in the passage? (For example, narration, description, argument, dialogue, rhymed or alliterative poetry, etc.)
- Can you identify <u>paradoxes</u> in the author's thought or subject?
- What is left out or kept silent? What would you expect the author to talk about that the author avoided?

IV. Point of View and Characterization:

- How does the passage make us react or think about any characters or events within the narrative?
- Are there colors, sounds, physical description that appeals to the senses? Does this <u>imagery</u> form a pattern? Why might the author have chosen that color, sound or physical description?
- Who speaks in the passage? To whom does he or she speak? Does the narrator have a limited or partial <u>point of view</u>? Or does the narrator appear to be omniscient, and he knows things the characters couldn't possibly know? (For example, omniscient narrators might mention future historical events, events taking place "off stage," the thoughts and feelings of multiple characters, and so on).

V. Symbolism:

- Are there metaphors? What kinds?
- Is there one controlling metaphor? If not, how many different metaphors are there, and in what order do they occur? How might that be significant?
- How might objects represent something else?
- Do any of the objects, colors, animals, or plants appearing in the passage have traditional connotations or meaning? What about religious or biblical significance?
- If there are multiple symbols in the work, could we read the entire passage as having <u>allegorical meaning</u> beyond the literal level?

Summer Reading Columnist Project

Your assignment is to find **FIVE** columns that deal with **POWER**.

Below you will find a list of nationally syndicated columnists who would be appropriate subjects for a project of this nature. Their work is available on the internet through various newspaper web sites that can be accessed in school, the public library or at home. Archives can be searched on these sites, but many publications require payment for articles older than one or two weeks; therefore, do not put this off until the due date. The assignment has two parts: reading & annotating the columns, and writing a précis/response for **ONE** column.

- David Brooks
- Ann Coulter
- Maureen Dowd
- Thomas Friedman
- Maggie Gallagher
- Ellen Goodman
- Bob Herbert
- Joe Klein
- Naomi Klein

- Charles Krauthammer
- Nicholas D. Kristof
- Paul Krugman
- Peggy Noonan
- Kathleen Parker
- Leonard Pitts
- Anna Quindlen
- Thomas Sowell
- Cal Thomas
- George Will

Due: Last class meeting of first week of class

Assignment

I. **Read and ANNOTATE each of your five columns**. This means that you must include a copy of the column with your handwritten notations in the margins; these should be THOROUGH. Annotate for the following:
   - Speaker's tone and possible tone shifts
   - Rhetorical strategies (You should use the information you gleaned from ***Thank You for Arguing*** to help you spot the various rhetorical strategies writers use to meet their purpose.
   - Organization and arrangement of ideas
   - Appeals to logic or emotion

   Mark places in the text that evoke a reaction from you, be it laughter, anger, or confusion.

   Some questions to ask yourself as you read:
   - How does s/he open the column?
   - How does s/he close the column?
   - How soon does s/he announce the thesis?
   - How does s/he organize? What are the parts or sections of the column?
   - How much is based on observation? Personal experience? Interviews? Fact?
   - What sort of diction characterizes the columnist?
   - What sort of syntax characterized the columnist?
   - What audience does s/he assume? How do you know?
   - What unstated assumptions does the columnist make?

II. **After annotating, you will write a TWO paragraph response for ONE column.**
   - **For paragraph one**, you will write a one paragraph précis (see instructions below).

- **For paragraph two** you will write a subjective response that describes your reaction to the column. This subjective response would include your thoughts on the arguments presented as well as on the rhetorical strategies and stylistic techniques you find interesting. You MUST include at least one specific reference from *Thank You for Arguing*; *this m*ust include a citation.

Formatting info: **Both paragraphs <u>combined</u> should provide no more than a ONE-PAGE RESPONSE to the column. Each response must be typed, double-spaced in a 10 or 12 point font. Attach the column to the back of your typed response. You will need provide a cover page that includes your name, the name of your columnists, and lists the dates of the columns to which you have chosen to respond. (Make sure the publication date appears on each of your columns.)**

Instructions for Writing a Précis Response

A rhetorical précis invites active readers to analyze an essay's content (the *what*) and delivery (the *how*). It consists of four sentences **only**—sentences performing different roles, adhering to different requirements—that blend summary and analysis. To do this you will need to read the column a number of times to make sure you completely understand the author's context.

Directions: When writing your one-page response, objectively summarize the column accurately in your own words using the précis format. The sentence roles are described below for you. After the précis, compose your subjective response, noting any questions, objections, or enlightenment generated by the column and/or the rhetorical strategies employed by the columnist.

Example Précis

- The **FIRST SENTENCE** identifies the essay's **author** and title, provides the article's date in parentheses, uses some form of the verb *says* (*claims*, *asserts*, *suggests*, *argues,* etc...) followed by *that*, and the essay's thesis (paraphrased or quoted).

  Example: In "English 99: Literacy Among the Ruins" (2001), Frank Gannon asserts that his experiences teaching English 99, a pass/fail course designed for students not quite ready for college English classes, prove that literary ignorance pervades all social and cultural groups in American society.

- The **SECOND SENTENCE** describes the author's **support** for the thesis, the way in which the author **develops** the essay. This is usually in chronological order.

  Example: Gannon illuminates this concern by descriptively detailing the three distinct "types" of students in his class and all of their general failures in both conceptual and grammatical writing skills.

- The **THIRD SENTENCE** analyzes the author's purpose using an ***in order to*** statement. (Rhetorical strategies could be discussed here – for example, *exaggeration* is noted in the example below.)

  Example: He overly exaggerates the three groups' shortcomings in order to overtly emphasize the lack of literary skill in today's society and to showcase the frustration he felt daily.

- The **FOURTH SENTENCE** describes the essay's target **audience** and characterizes the essay's **tone** (the author's relationship with that audience)

  Example: Gannon takes a sarcastic and humorous view while addressing society, but more specifically those concerned with the education system.

- Adapted from E. Gunnar, Conifer High School, CO

AP Summer Reading Columnist Formative Score Sheet

Name _____

Formative 1: Selection and Annotation of columns :   **_____/100**

_____/ 5 columns attached and annotated (select one)

     _____   Thoroughly annotated – 50 points

     _____   Satisfactorily annotated – 44 points

     _____   Moderately annotated – 37 points

     _____   Minimally annotated – 32 points

     _____   Inadequately annotated – 25 points

     _____   Not annotated – 0 points

_____/ Columns are all centered on POWER (10 points – 2 each)

_____/ Columns are current (5 points – 1 each)

_____/ Columns are appropriate for AP content (15 points – 3 each)

_____/ Each column has at least TWO specific annotations from *Thank You for Arguing*. Must include page numbers (20 points – 2 each).

     #1_____   #2_____   #3_____   #4_____   #5_____

Formative 2: Column Précis: **_____/100**

CATEGORY	100	85	75	65	55	0
Understanding	Response shows considerable analysis; focuses on primary text; contains significant support for / details about main points both from the column and from *Thank You for Arguing*; stays on topic; is of appropriate length; and follows prescribed format.	Response shows some originality & inventiveness; focuses on primary text; contains substantial support for / details about main points both from the column and from *Thank You for Arguing*; stays on topic; is of appropriate length; and follows prescribed format..	Response shows some analysis; focuses on primary text; contains support for / details about main points both from the column and from *Thank You for Arguing*; stays on topic; is of appropriate length; and follows prescribed format.	Response shows an attempt at originality, but misinterprets some elements; refers to the primary text; attempts support for / details about main points from the column and from *Thank You for Arguing*; stays on topic; and follows prescribed format. Problems with syntax and/or grammar may impede clarity of response. May be unacceptably brief.	Response shows little understanding of task and texts; refers to the primary text; lacks support for / details about main points from the column and/or *Thank You for Arguing*; may drift off topic; does Problems with syntax and/or grammar may impede clarity of response. May be unacceptably brief.	Not submitted

<u>SAMPLE STUDENT RESPONSE</u> (and yes, one of our students actually wrote this…)

Response to "Don't Blame Romney"

In "Don't Blame Romney" (November 7, 2012), Ann Coulter asserts that Republicans cannot blame their 2012 presidential candidate, Mitt Romney, for not winning the election, because it was the many mistakes made by the party, and the fact that an incumbent president will usually conquer his opponent that caused the majority of Americans to vote in favor of Obama during the election. Coulter explains this conclusion by descriptively illustrating the mistakes made by the Republican Party, as well as thoroughly explaining why an incumbent president has an advantage over his opponent. She uses metaphors and similes to stress the mistakes made by Romney's party during his presidential campaign. Coulter takes a factual, yet accusing approach of the party she supports to address Americans, but more specifically, fellow Republicans.

After reading "Don't Blame Romney", written by Ann Coulter, I began to question whether or not anyone else shared her same views of the latest presidential campaign. I am not very involved in politics, but now feel like I should be more informed and concerned. I haven't thought much about whether or not I will be a Republican or a Democrat or a member of any other party when I am able to vote, but Coulter's writing is extremely persuasive and evoked a lot of thoughts about what my position might be while I was reading. I felt as if Coulter's argument as to who should be blamed for Romney not winning the 2012 election was slightly unconventional, but by the end, I was actually starting to believe her. Coulter used metaphors in order to compare, which helped me to relate and better understand her position. She also uses rhetorical questions in her writing, and that made me think deeper about why she feels like the blame cannot be placed on one person for the outcome of the election. When discussing two Republicans' views on abortion, Coulter uses the **identity strategy** to persuade people to agree with her (Heinrichs 191). Jay Heinrichs states that it is human nature to want to fit in with a group. By singling out Todd Akin and Richard Mourdock about their radical view on the subject of abortion, Coulter caused her audience to feel a need to fit in and agree with everyone else. She uses the words "overwhelming majority" in order to persuade her audience to believe what she believes so that they will not feel left out of the group. Overall, Coulter made me question her position, along with what my position might one day be.