

# Summer Assignment for Cadets Taking AP Language and Composition

Welcome to AP Language and Composition!

I am excited to begin this journey with you and look forward to an engaging, challenging, and rewarding year of reading, writing, and thinking together. This letter will give you a clear understanding of the expectations for this AP-level course and what you can look forward to as we explore the power of language.

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## Expectations for AP Students

As a student in an Advanced Placement (AP) class, you are enrolled in a college-level course with college-level expectations. This means:

- **Independence and Responsibility:** You are expected to manage your time effectively, keep up with reading and assignments, and advocate for your own learning.
- **Active Participation:** Be prepared to engage in thoughtful discussions, ask questions, and contribute to a supportive academic community.
- **Consistent Effort:** Success in this course requires regular practice in reading and writing. Stay organized, complete assignments on time, and revise your work as needed.
- **Resilience and Growth:** This course is challenging by design. Mistakes and setbacks are part of the process. Be open to feedback and committed to improving your skills.

Taking an AP course shows colleges and universities that you are willing to take on rigorous academic challenges—so take pride in the commitment you’ve made!

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## About AP Language and Composition

AP Language and Composition focuses on analyzing and crafting arguments through nonfiction texts. The goal is to help you become a skilled reader and an effective writer in a variety of rhetorical contexts.

You will:

- Read a wide range of nonfiction works including essays, speeches, letters, journalism, memoirs, and more.
- Study rhetorical strategies and analyze how writers use language to achieve purpose and persuade audiences.
- Practice writing in different modes—narrative, expository, analytical, and argumentative—with a strong emphasis on developing voice, structure, and evidence-based reasoning.
- Prepare for the AP exam in May, which includes multiple-choice questions on rhetorical analysis and three essays: a synthesis, a rhetorical analysis, and an argument.

Above all, this course is about learning to think critically and communicate clearly—skills that will serve you well far beyond the classroom.

## Explanation of Summer Assignment:

For this assignment, you will need to purchase the following text:

- **Walden & Civil Disobedience (Vintage Classics) 2014**  
ISBN-10 = 0804171564  
ISBN-13 = 978-0804171564

*(If there are financial concerns with purchasing summer reading books, please contact Mrs. Certesio ASAP.)*

Henry David Thoreau's *Walden*, and his essay, *Civil Disobedience*, are foundational texts in American literature and philosophy. Over the summer, you will be reading *Walden* and completing the following assignment. We will be reading and utilizing *Civil Disobedience* for our studies later in the school year. As you read *Walden*, you will engage with Thoreau's central ideas of simplicity, independence, self-reliance, and nature, while also practicing key skills you will need for success on the AP Language & Composition exam. **(YOU ARE ONLY READING THE WALDEN PART OF THE BOOK FOR THE SUMMER ASSIGNMENT.)**

### Objectives:

This assignment will help you:

- Identify and analyze rhetorical strategies and appeals
- Understand and evaluate tone, style, and purpose
- Annotate complex non-fiction effectively
- Develop original arguments based on textual evidence
- Begin practicing AP-style essay writing (Rhetorical Analysis and Argument)
- Identify relevant source material for Synthesis

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## PART 1: Annotated Reading

Carefully read *Walden*, annotating as you go. Your annotations should:

- Highlight rhetorical devices (e.g., metaphor, parallelism, iron, rhetorical questions, etc)
- Identify appeals to ethos, pathos, and logos
- Note shifts in tone and how they shape meaning
- Comment on diction, syntax, and imagery
- Pose thoughtful questions and personal responses

\*\*The chapters on "Economy," "Where I Lived, and What I Lived For," "Solitude," and "Conclusion" are frequently cited in AP prompts and contain rich rhetorical content.

\*\*For further information and illustration of annotating methods, watch the following videos on YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ni1zoQ71lxM> *AP Language: How to Annotate Effectively*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BqhEBFvDU4U&t=18s> *How I Easily Annotate Rhetorical Analysis Non-fiction*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iFg4Qq4jfzs&t=1492s> *How to Annotate Text (Rhetorical Modes & Choices)*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tugtrh0sqd8&t=11s> *How to Annotate Text (Rhetorical Modes Pt 2)*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ds70y0vWIF8> *Annotate With Me Exam Prep*

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## PART 2: Rhetorical Analysis Journal

Choose 5 different passages (of at least one substantial paragraph each) from different parts of *Walden*. For each, write a 300-400 word journal entry that includes:

- A brief summary of the passage
- Analysis of Thoreau's rhetorical strategies
  - What choices does he make? (diction, tone, example, structure, etc)
  - How do these choices support his message or purpose?
- A reflection on the effect on the audience, both in Thoreau's time (1817-1862) and now

Use specific textual evidence. These will help prepare you for the Rhetorical Analysis Question on the AP Exam.

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## PART 3: Argument Essay

Write a well-developed essay (600-800 words) responding to the following prompt:

In *Walden*, Thoreau writes:

- **"Our life is frittered away by detail. Simplify, simplify."**  
— *Walden*, Chapter 2: "Where I Lived, and What I Lived For"
- **"If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer."**  
— *Walden*, Chapter 18: "Conclusion"
- **"Most men lead lives of quiet desperation."**  
— *Walden*, Chapter 1: "Economy"

Consider the extent to which you agree or disagree with ONE of Thoreau's assertions above. Use evidence from your reading, observations, and experiences to support your argument.

This essay mirrors the Argument Question on the AP Exam. Show your ability to:

- Take a clear position
  - Organized your ideas effectively
  - Support your claims with relevant evidence
  - Use a formal and persuasive style
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## PART 4: Synthesis Reflection

Locate 1 of the following types of sources that either agrees or disagrees with one of the points Thoreau tries to make in *Walden*:

- An essay or article
- An editorial
- A TedTalk or podcast
- A print cartoon or advertisement
- A graph or chart

Write a 300-400 word reflection addressing the following:

- What connections do you see between *Walden* and the other source?

- How does *Walden* relate to modern life?

This is practice for the Synthesis Question on the AP exam, which requires connecting multiple sources to a central idea.

**\*\*You will need a copy of or access to these sources during our 1<sup>st</sup> MP.**

## Assessment Criteria:

Your work will be evaluated based on:

- Depth and clarity of annotations
- Insight and analysis in journal entries
- Thoughtfulness and originality in your argument
- Relevance of sources and thoughtfulness in your synthesis reflection
- Command of language and mechanics

All materials (annotated copy of text, rhetorical analysis journal, argument essay, and synthesis reflection /sources are all **due by the first day of school**. This assignment will be utilized frequently during the first marking period and is a major component of your first marking period grade. Late assignments will receive a 10% deduction for each day late. **Any cadet failing to submit a summer assignment by the end of the first week of school will be removed from the AP class and placed in another English course.**

\*If you have any questions about the assignment, make sure to reach out to me ASAP. The first day of school, when the assignment is due, is NOT the time to ask questions.

[colleen.bradley@dma.k12.de.us](mailto:colleen.bradley@dma.k12.de.us)

(see rubric on next page)

## AP Language & Composition Summer Assignment Rubric

### Part 1: Annotated Reading – 25 points

**Objective:** Annotate *Walden* with attention to rhetorical strategies, tone, and personal response.

Criteria	Score
Thorough, thoughtful annotations that highlight rhetorical strategies, appeals, tone shifts, and personal insight. Clear evidence of close reading.	23-25
Consistent and generally thoughtful annotations. Some rhetorical attention shown, though occasionally superficial.	20-22
Limited or basic annotations. Focuses mostly on summary rather than analysis.	17-19
Minimal or no annotations; lacks engagement with the text.	0-16

### Part 2: Rhetorical Analysis Journal (5 entries) – 25 points

**Objective:** Analyze Thoreau's rhetorical strategies and reflect on audience effect using textual evidence.

Criteria	Score
Each entry includes summary, rhetorical analysis, and reflection. Strong textual support and insight.	23-25
Mostly complete entries with adequate analysis and reflection. Minor issues in depth or clarity.	20-22
Basic summaries with limited analysis or vague connections. Weak or inconsistent evidence.	17-19
Incomplete entries, minimal effort, or missing analysis.	0-16

### Part 3: Argument Essay – 25 points

**Objective:** Respond to one of Thoreau's assertions with a clear, evidence-based argument.

Criteria	Score
Clear position, logical structure, persuasive tone, and well-supported claims. Excellent control of language.	23-25
Reasonably clear position and support. Organization and style are mostly effective.	20-22
Weak or unclear argument; underdeveloped or poorly organized. Some evidence present but ineffective.	17-19
Lacks focus, evidence, or development; missing or incomplete.	0-16

#### Part 4: Synthesis Reflection – 15 points

**Objective:** Connect *Walden* to a modern source through analysis and reflection.

Criteria	Score
Strong, relevant source; clear connections to Thoreau's ideas and modern life. Insightful reflection.	14-15
Appropriate source with mostly clear connections. Some thoughtful analysis.	12-13
Weak or loosely connected source; limited reflection.	10-11
Missing or unclear source; little or no analysis.	0-9

#### Conventions & Presentation – 10 points

**Objective:** Demonstrate command of grammar, mechanics, and formal writing style.

Criteria	Score
Virtually error-free; polished and academic in tone and formatting.	9-10
Minor errors that do not distract from clarity or professionalism.	7-8
Frequent errors or inconsistent tone. May detract from understanding.	5-6
Poorly edited or formatted; numerous errors.	0-4