

AP Language and Composition Summer 2009

Elizabeth Smith

mary.smith2@mnps.org

615.668.7188

Welcome to the world of rhetoric. AP Language and Composition is a college-level course that, according to the College Board, “engages students in becoming skilled readers of prose written in a variety of periods, disciplines, and rhetorical contexts, and in becoming writers who compose for a variety of purposes.” Be prepared for a vigorous year; one that will challenge you to change the way you look at language.

The purpose of the summer assignment, other than to torture you (just kidding!), is to keep your mind engaged through the summer and give you some background for this new class. Until now, you have primarily studied fiction and analyzed it for literary elements. AP Lang and Comp is very different, and these readings will give you confidence in the new language of analysis that we will use. Contact me at the above address or number if you have questions.

Summary of the assignment:

- Read 2 books.
- Complete a set of cards for each book according to the attached instructions,
- Write a short paper introducing you to me using one of the attached prompts.

The Reading Part: Choose a *memoir*:

Below I have listed some examples that students have enjoyed in the past. You are not limited to this list! I want you to choose a book that you will enjoy.

- If I Die in a Combat Zone, Box Me Up and Ship Me Home by O'Brien
- On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft by Stephen King
- Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass
- Silent Dancing: A Partial Remembrance of a Puerto Rican Childhood by Judith Ortiz Cofer
- Dreams from My Father: A Story of Race and Inheritance by Barack Obama
- Autobiography of a Face by Lucy Grealy
- Reading Lolita in Tehran: A Memoir in Books by Azar Nafisi
- Teacher Man by Frank McCourt
- Autobiography of Malcolm X

Complete the Cards assignment for each text. The directions are different for Thank You for Arguing so pay attention.

the Cards:

Read through the entire assignment so that you understand each part of the assignment before you begin.

1. Complete cards as you read. Do NOT wait until you finish the book. Since the assignment requires a close reading of the text, the information you must collect cannot be found in movies, plot summaries, or Sparknotes.
2. You will need about (25) 5x8 note cards, lined on one side. You may use colored or spiral-bound cards to suit your individual study style. You may write on the backs (unlined side) of cards.

3. Write the card heading in big, bold letters on the first line of every card. Write your initials in the upper right corner of each card.
4. Cite page numbers for each card.
5. Cards must cover the entire span of the book.
6. The required information on cards should be easy to find and understand, but the cards are tools, so they will not be perfectly neat “final drafts.” Use lists and bullets for information unless the instructions tell you to use complete sentences.

Prepare your cards as follows:

Card #1: Bibliographic Entry. On the lined side, write a bibliographic entry for the work. Use Modern Language Association (MLA) style. (Websites abound with MLA style instructions, examples, and even MLA entry “generators.”)

Card #2: Visual Symbol. Find a visual symbol important to the work. Explain the symbol and tell why you chose to use that symbol and its significance to the overall work. Since these are memoirs, you will need to look closely to find a symbol and it may be more related to the writer’s life than the text. Quote the lines (and cite the page numbers) that inspire you to choose this symbol. Write in complete sentences.

Cards #3 and #4 (2 cards): Setting. Identify at least 5 phrases or descriptions that identify the setting where each memoir takes place. They may describe time, place, region, or atmosphere. Use bulleted phrases and cite page numbers.

Cards #5, #6, and #7 (3 cards): Striking images, Ideas, Events, Objects, Phrases, Words. From the work, choose five items that seem significant or striking – for example, an image, an event, an idea, an object or thing, a phrase, a word. For each, state the context of the item (what it refers to) and why you think it is significant. Use complete sentences. (example: “paper-mache Mephistopheles” (p 23) –refers to the bricklayer who never lays any bricks; Marlow describes him as empty and shallow—the devil’s agent, representing the evils of imperialism.)

Card #8: Figures of Speech. Find an example of a figure of speech in the book (metaphor, simile, personification, onomatopoeia, oxymoron, irony, hyperbole, symbol, allusion) (a) Record the example and cite the page number, (b) identify the technique, (c) explain its meaning in context of the book.

Card #9: Rhetorical Technique. Find an example of a rhetorical technique (rhetorical question, parallelism, repetition, euphemism, anaphora, paradox, antithesis, etc). This will be easier if you read Thank You for Arguing first.

- Record the example
- Identify the techniques
- Explain how it is used for “effect” (more than saying it another way).

Card #10: Recurring, Motifs/Archetypes. Identify at least one recurring motif (Think about color, objects, events, things, concepts). Cite at least 3 occurrences (don’t forget to cite page numbers). Briefly state the context of the occurrence (what is it about, what’s happening with it). Then, write a sentence or two stating how the use of the motif is connected to meaning.

Card #11: Rhetorical Response. Identify one of the following appeals in the book; provide specific evidence. Again, reading Thank You for Arguing first will help!

- **ethos**—appeals to the audience’s sense of ethics/character

- pathos—appeals to the feelings and emotions of the audience to change their attitudes)
- logos—appeals to the audience’s reason.

Card #12: Structure. Explain how the work is put together (the architecture of the work) and what effect this structure has on the work as a whole. These memoirs have distinctive structures that are easily identified, but be sure to explain how the structure affects the work as a whole.

Card #13: Theme. State what you consider to be the meaning of the work as a whole. Explain your observation with details from the book. (cite page numbers) Use separate cards for different meanings. Write in complete sentences. Since these are memoirs, the theme may not be a conventional one. Concentrate on explaining the meaning. What does your writer believe?

Cards #14, #15, #16, #17, and #18 (5 cards): Key Passages. Find five key textual references (phrase, sentence, paragraph, excerpt) significant to your understanding of the book. Copy the passage correctly (quotation marks, cite page number) and explain what the passage reveals about the overall meaning of the book. Write in complete sentences. Make sure to represent the beginning, middle, and end of the book (example: “he had the pose of a Buddha” (p.4) – allusion. The allusion describes Marlow’s sitting position and even his trance-like state while he is telling his story. It also identifies him as someone unusual and different from the rest of the crew.)

Card #19: Personal Response. Write about your impression of the book, after you have completed the reading and the other note cards. Consider your emotional reaction, positive and negative factors, connections to your own interests and experiences. **DO NOT SIMPLY GIVE A THUMBS-UP, THUMBS-DOWN RECOMMENDATION!** Write in complete sentences.

Everyone will read:

Thank You for Arguing: What Aristotle, Lincoln, and Homer Simpson Can Teach Us About the Art of Persuasion
by Jay Heinrichs

the Cards: Directions for Thank You for Arguing

Read through the entire assignment so that you understand each part of the assignment before you begin.

1. Complete cards as you read. Do NOT wait until you finish the book. Since the assignment requires a close reading of the text, the information you must collect cannot be found in movies, plot summaries, or Sparknotes.
2. You will need about (30) 5x8 note cards, lined on one side. You may use colored or spiral-bound cards to suit your individual study style. You may write on the backs (unlined side) of cards.
3. Write the chapter title in big, bold letters on the first line of every card. Write your initials in the upper right corner of each card.
4. Cite page numbers for each card.
5. Cards must cover the entire span of the book.
6. The required information on cards should be easy to find and understand, but the cards are tools, so they will not be perfectly neat “final drafts.” Use lists and bullets for information unless the instructions tell you to use complete sentences.

Prepare your cards as follows:

Card #1: Bibliographic entry. On the lined side, write a bibliographic entry for the work. Use Modern Language Association (MLA) style. (Websites abound with MLA style instructions, examples, and even MLA entry “generators.”)

Card #2: Introduction. Respond to the author’s explanation about why he wrote this book. Answer these questions: What do you expect from the book after reading the introduction? Do the marginal notes help or hinder your understanding? What tone do you hear when you read? What about the writing makes you think this? Write in complete sentences. On the back of the card write bulleted definitions of terms in bold or ones you do not know.

Cards #3 through 26: Choose what you believe to be the (2) most important quotations in each chapter. Explain why you chose each one and how it fits into the book as a whole. On the back of each card, write a bulleted list of terms and definitions presented in the chapter. Define the terms in your own words to demonstrate understanding of the concept.

Card # 27: Write a personal reflection. What is your new understanding of rhetoric? How much of the information is new to you? How has this text changed your perception of the rhetoric around you? Write this card in complete sentences.

The Writing Part: Show Me Who You Are

Introduce yourself and your writing to me through the following assignment: Write an introductory letter (to me from you) that shows me the “you” everybody knows or the “you” nobody knows (except you). Make the text extremely 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 prompts to structure your letter:

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 me to sense why this person is important to you. Avoid telling the relationship; instead show the relationship. If at all possible, avoid obvious like Gandhi, Jesus, and Mother Theresa 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 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 from the physical world to explore the 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 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, don’t tell.
5. Define your current personality through an anecdote from your childhood. Show, don’t tell.

Format: typed, 1½ -double spaced, two pages only. Edit yourself to make what you want to say fit in the space you are given.