

AP English Language and Composition Students,

AP English Language and Composition, as a year-long course, is unlike many high school English classes in terms of the texts and content assigned to students. Whereas most secondary school English curricula revolves around literature, the AP English Language and Composition will focus on non-fiction, and the arguments and rhetoric employed within the genre.

During the course of this summer, students planning to enroll in AP English Language and Composition will encounter one of the United States' most canonical works of non-fiction. Before the school year begins, students will be asked to read and annotate Henry David Thoreau's *Walden*. The link to purchase the book can be found [here](#), or pasted below as well.

To quote the College Board's website: "The AP English Language and Composition course focuses on the development and revision of evidence-based analytic and argumentative writing, the rhetorical analysis of nonfiction texts, and the decisions writers make as they compose and revise." In our first unit of the year, students will examine "the rhetorical situation" of a text - and learn and discuss all of the factors that allow that text to enact and enforce an argument.

With this in mind, after reading and annotating Henry David Thoreau's *Walden*, students should write three separate paragraphs where they respond to the following prompts that are related to the rhetorical situation:

1. What do you believe to be the exigence of the work? In other words, what has compelled Thoreau to write *Walden*?
2. Who was Thoreau's audience? To whom is this author speaking?
3. What is Thoreau's purpose with this work? What effect does the author hope to have on his audience?

Please elaborate and expand on your thoughts within each of these three paragraphs - and don't be afraid to quote directly from the text.

After writing these three paragraphs, students should write a fourth and final response that is more personal in nature. I ask that students write me a personal letter (one to three paragraphs max) where they answer the following question: How did this text affect you? Do you agree or believe in Thoreau's words? Why or why not?

Lastly, students should create a vocabulary list from this book. I ask that students record 25 vocabulary words that they found in this work. Students should write out all 25, identify which page they found the word within *Walden*, and then define the word as well.

Please note that students should maintain a digital copy of their written work so it is available to turn in online (via the Canvas student portal) the first day of class. You will also need to bring your annotated book.

Link to *Walden*: <https://www.amazon.com/Walden-Henry-David-Thoreau/dp/1494812509>

Besides reading *Walden*, I also ask that students of AP English Language and Composition read two additional books: One work of fiction and one work of nonfiction. After reading the work of non-fiction, students must write a one-page reflection, citing three moments from the story from which they found particularly impactful. After reading the work of fiction, students should complete the a chapter-by-chapter analysis of the novel:

Fiction:

Homegoing by Yaa Gyasi

For each Chapter (yes, you have to do this **multiple times**), I would like you to:

1. Think deeply about what you believe is Gyasi's purpose to this individual chapter. Then, write a one-sentence argument (thesis statement) where you identify what Gyasi is emphasizing about the human beings in her story?

Example: In the short story "The Bad Graft," Karen Russell uses the spirit of a Joshua Tree to overshadow her human characters' actions, and to make a larger statement about how brief and fragile a human life can be.

2. Identify any literary or rhetorical devices that you can find in each story. Here is a brief list:

Ethos/Pathos/Logos	Diction	Imagery	Tone
Symbolism	Metaphor	Simile	Analogy
Personification	Hyperbole	Understatement	Euphemism

3. For each chapter, write a one-paragraph argumentative piece where you answer the following question: "What rhetorical or literary strategies does Gyasi use to further the purpose of her story?" In other words, In 5-8 sentences, combine your answers from questions one and two, above. Please allow your opening sentence

to act as your thesis statement, and use at least two quotes from the text to support your argument. Again, you must do this for every chapter.

Nonfiction - students can ONE text from the list below:

In Cold Blood by Truman Capote

Red: Passion and Patience in the Desert by Terry Tempest Williams

The Emerald Mile by Kevin Fedarko

Roughhouse Friday by Jaed Coffin

After reading the work of non-fiction, students must write a one-page reflection, citing three moments from the story from which they found particularly impactful.