

Advanced Placement Language and Composition: Summer Assignment 2017  
(Juniors of 2017-18)

**Extra copy available on SchoolLoop--English Department Locker**

*Advanced Placement Language and Composition* is an academic course roughly equivalent to a college course in rhetoric. The term rhetoric has to do with the challenge of writing carefully (or “speaking”) with a purposeful strategy in order to express unique meaning to a particular audience. This is something we (sometimes unknowingly) do every day in one form or another. In this course, we will more formally recognize and hone these natural skills of communication. As such, we will go well beyond traditional literary techniques such as analyzing such concepts as setting, theme, characterization, or symbolism (most common to a course in literature/novels). Instead, we will emphasize (the extremely careful, methodical) reading of short essays in order to analyze an author’s strategic choices with respect to language and organization.

While there are multiple modes of writing, this summer we will ask you to carefully read and analyze two forms with which you are already quite familiar: Process Analysis and Comparison/Contrast. The goal is to read closely in order to **identify the very deliberate author choices** often made within these purposeful forms of organization, as well as to practice writing with similar targeted passion.

Your Assignment:

Section 1/Step 1

- Sign out/borrow from the school library *The Norton Sampler: Short Essays for Composition*, **Sixth or Fifth edition**, edited by Thomas Cooley.
- Read the *Introduction* to the book of sample essays, which includes Annie Dillard’s original essay and her reflection essay. As you read, record **(then later, type)** a list of observations you make about the choices she as the author consciously makes.
- Read ALL of the two chapters on *Comparison/Contrast & Process Analysis* (in 6<sup>th</sup> edition--*Chapter Five* and *Chapter Six*; in 5<sup>th</sup> edition--*Chapter Three* and *Chapter Six*)
- Methodically peruse each *introduction* to each mode (type) of writing. **Write one paragraph that precisely summarizes your understanding of EACH of the introductions (to each different mode)**, making sure that your paragraph uses almost exclusively your own wording rather than closely parroting the author. So therefore, you will type one paragraph for each of the two modes (2 total paragraphs, MLA form) in order to articulate your understanding of the choices that an author likely needs to consider for each form (Process Analysis & Comparison/Contrast) of writing.
- Also, for every individual essay you read in these chapters, you will be required to answer four questions. You will need to answer the first two questions under the heading **Strategies and Structures** as well as the first two questions under the heading **Words and Figures of Speech**. Your answers should be long enough to thoroughly and precisely explain your perspective on the questions. Type your answers, please.

## Section 2/Step 2

- Write an essay (MLA typed, double-spaced, targeting a length of *around 800 words*) where you respond to the following topic in the Comparison/Contrast mode of writing as laid out in the readings.
  - ✓ dogs versus cats
  - ✓ “dog people” versus “cat people”

[In order to write successfully on your choice of these *seemingly* banal topics, you will need to feature strong “voice” in your essay. This is the challenge, comparing and contrasting the two with voice and passion. Do not include research or facts from research; rely **only** on your knowledge and observational insight regarding the two genres of music and the fans of each. Please assume the following:

- That your reading audience is *already* familiar with a working dictionary definition (denotation) and a rough working knowledge of dogs and cats or dog people and cat people.
- That your audience’s interest is centered on your strong personal views on the categories; thus, they are reading for your *voice*.

Voice is built carefully using the following components:

- Passion or enthusiasm
- Unique perspectives and tone
- Precise and less usual word choices
- Surprising details and vivid description]

You will need to turn in all brainstorm notes or outlines or rough drafts in addition to your final draft.

- Finally, **type** a 400-600 word reflection and analysis that describes the many choices you made as you constructed (brainstorm, rough form, revision, final form) your essay. You may well be answering (in more flowing form than a list) such questions as:
  - *How and why did you organize your essay (in parts or “chunks” or even paragraphs) the way you did in the final draft?*
  - *How did you find ways to emphasize meaning in your essay?*
  - *Why did you make specific language choices?*
  - *How and why did you infuse your personal voice into specific parts of the essay?*
  - *How did you arrange the style, length, and form of sentences in the way you did?*
  - *How did you choose to use vivid description for effect?*
  - *What parts of the essay did you make more theoretical or conceptual? What parts did you try to make very concrete and tangible? Why?*
  - *How did you create an overall mood?*
  - *What tone were you trying to achieve as author? Why? How did you indicate this tone?*

**Staple or bind work into two sections that align with all the work required in Step One and Step Two. You will need to send or deliver your Summer Work to the following address (if sent--postmarked by Tuesday, August 8):**

**Mr. Boris  
AP Language and Composition  
San Rafael High School  
150 Third Street  
San Rafael, CA 94901**