

Tab 1

2026 Advanced Placement English Language and Composition Summer Assignment

INSTRUCTOR: Ms. Jenna Slack-Larimer

EMAIL: jenna.slack-larimer@asfg.edu.mx

In AP Language, you will read and analyze nonfiction works from various periods and write essays with different aims: for example, to explain an idea, argue a point, or persuade your reader of something. To prepare for this, you will complete the following tasks during the summer.

Generative AI and Online Sources Policy: The work you submit for this assignment and all assignments in AP English Language and Composition should be your own work and your original ideas. The use of generative AI or outside resources (for example, ChatGPT and Sparknotes) will be considered academic dishonesty, but more importantly, it inhibits you from growing as an independent thinker.

TASK 1. Read at least one book of long-form NON-FICTION.

Instead of a traditional novel, read at least one long-form work of nonfiction. The goal is for you to track an extended argument. Need recommendations? [Here is a list of 2025's top non-fiction titles](#) according to Goodreads, and there [is a list of books from earlier years that previous students have rated highly](#) at the end of this document.

TASK 2. Dialectical Journaling with a Rhetorical Focus

As you read the book above, instead of summarizing the plot, note the author's rhetorical choice in a **HANDWRITTEN Dialectical Journal** with 10–15 entries from points spaced throughout the book.

Like this (but handwritten):

<i>Quote & Page Number</i>	<i>Rhetorical Choice/Strategy</i>	<i>Analysis (The "So What?")</i>
<i>"Insert a powerful quote here." (p. 45)</i>	<i>Identify what the author does (e.g., uses a heartbreaking anecdote, shifts tone, employs historical parallel).</i>	<i>Explain why the author made this choice. How does it make the audience feel? How does it build their argument?</i>

Refer to the list of rhetorical choices commonly seen in long-form non-fiction writing at the end of this document for more context.

TASK 3. The Real-World Application: Op-Ed Tracking

AP Lang requires massive global and cultural awareness for the Argument essay, so it's time to start building your mental library of current events. Find, read, and analyze **three OPINION pieces (Op-Eds)** from reputable sources (e.g., *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Atlantic*, *The Wall Street Journal*, or [Arts and Letters Daily](#)). Print out the essays, read them, mark them up.

- Highlight important ideas and/or rhetorical choices if you notice any
- Write your thoughts, comments, and reactions in the margins.
- Note new words, look them up, and write the definition on the page.
- Jot down questions

AND for each article, identify the **Rhetorical Situation** using the **SPACE** acronym:

- **Speaker:** Who is writing and what is their authority?
- **Purpose:** What does the writer want the audience to *think* or *do*?
- **Audience:** Who is the specific target group for this piece?
- **Context:** What is happening in the world right now that prompted this piece?
- **Exigence:** What was the immediate "spark" that forced the author to write this *now*?

TASK 4. Introduction to Aristotle's *The Art of Rhetoric*

Most of the theoretical underpinnings of this course originated in Aristotle's work. [I have condensed some of the important passages here.](#) Read the summary carefully. It is not easy, but it will prove very valuable for the course.

As you read, **summarize** the ideas in your own words (no AI, please). Also, provide definitions with examples for each of the following terms:

- Syllogism
- Enthymeme
- Induction

We will discuss this document in class, so please bring your HANDWRITTEN notes. You will be handing them in the second week of class.

AP Lang Summer Reading

Book Recommendations

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Common Rhetorical Choices in Long-form Non-fiction

A rhetorical choice is simply **anything a writer intentionally does to convey their purpose**. For a long-form book or essay, authors have to use macro-level strategies to keep a reader engaged over hundreds of pages. Here is a list of common, high-level rhetorical choices translated into everyday English (layman's terms), how AP Lang students should write about them.

Structure & Pacing (How the Story is Built)

1. Juxtaposition (The Quick Switch)

- **What it means:** Placing two completely different things side-by-side to highlight their differences.
- **In layman's terms:** Highlighting a sharp contrast.
- **How it works:** An author might put a chapter about a billionaire's lavish lifestyle right next to a chapter about a homeless shelter. By slamming them together, the author doesn't *have* to say "inequality is bad"—the contrast says it for them.

2. Strategic Structural Shifts (Changing the Focus)

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Establishing Credibility & Tone (How the Author Sounds)

4. Self-Deprecation or Vulnerability (Lowering the Guard)

- **What it means:** The author pointing out their own flaws, mistakes, or biases.
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- **What it means:** Using wit, sarcasm, or funny anecdotes in a serious book.
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- **What it means:** Choosing words that carry heavy emotional baggage.
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