

# AP Language & Composition (2026–2027) Summer Reading Assignment



## Welcome to the 2026-2027 AP Lang. Class!

I am so glad you have chosen to take on the hard work of taking AP Lang. this year! I love teaching this class because it focuses on honing the skills and refining the art of communication through persuasion, skills that are invaluable to have no matter what you do after high school and college (if you choose to pursue that route). Being able to take a position on an issue, provide supporting evidence, and to do so in a way that is convincing will benefit you in many areas of your life. Please take a moment to join the [Google Classroom](#) for access to the digital summer assignment materials and any pertinent announcements about the course.

The summer assignment is not only designed to help you prepare for the upcoming school year, but for your eventual AP English Language and Composition exam and college, where skills developed through avid reading are essential. As Stephen King says in *On Writing*, “If you don’t have time to read, you don’t have the time (or tools) to write.” Only the well-read student can respond knowledgeably and intelligently to the open essay questions on the AP exam, which is why summer reading is vital to your success, as is the need for continuous brain exercise during the summer months; in addition, here in NJ we are a bit behind our southern and western states counterparts, who start school earlier in the summer and therefore, have a month or so extra time to practice before the May exam. Here, you will find the instructional requirements and materials for your summer assignment. Your enrollment in AP Lang. is contingent upon satisfactory completion of your original work. This assignment is due on the first day of school and carries your first major writing grade for the school year. Remember to pace yourself accordingly during the summer break, as I will recognize last-minute or incomplete work when I see it. You may wish to wait until August to read these, so they will be fresher in your mind.

The summer assignment for AP Lang. not only indicates your willingness to work hard but it also measures your commitment to the course. AP Lang. is for students to enjoy the immersion in reading and explore rhetoric and non-fiction. If reading is not something you enjoy, this college-level course may have you reconsidering your junior English selection. An AP student is expected to put exceptional effort into all readings, as the workload will be consistent.

### Texts:\*

- *How to Read Literature Like a Professor*, Thomas C. Foster
- *1984*, by George Orwell

### Assignment:

1. Read Foster's *How to Read Literature Like a Professor*: annotate pertinent information you would like to address or discuss. These annotations (highlights, comments in margins, arrows, circles) will be checked the first day back to school for credit. Use sticky notes on the pages if the book is not yours.
2. Read George Orwell's *1984*. Annotate information you would like to address or discuss. Pay particular attention to parts of the text that discuss language (and how the Party uses and manipulates language). These annotations (highlights, comments in margins, arrows, circles) will be checked the first day back to school for credit. Use sticky notes on the pages if the book is not yours. Though AP Lang. will focus primarily on non-fiction texts, works of fiction also present arguments, either implicitly or explicitly. As you read, ask yourself: What is the main argument of this book? What does Orwell do to support that argument? What elements or techniques from your Foster reading relate to what Orwell is doing in *1984*?
3. Write a rhetorical précis about *1984*. For instructions on how to write a rhetorical précis, see page 4 of this packet.
4. Write a paragraph (minimum 6-10 sentences) that summarizes the major plot points of *1984*. Your first sentence should be an abbreviated version of the first sentence of your rhetorical précis, meaning it should include some basic information such as author, title, and genre. The rest of the paragraph should be a brief-but-detailed summary of the novel. It should not delve into meaning, theme, or analysis of the text; just state, in a factual sense, what happens.

### Then, your task...

5. Write a 2-3 page, MLA style essay that responds to the following prompt:
  - o In *1984*, George Orwell presents a dystopian society in which the totalitarian regime of Big Brother uses language as a tool of control. Through the invention of Newspeak and the manipulation of truth, Orwell illustrates how restricting language can limit thought and manipulate reality.

Carefully read and annotate *1984*; then, write an essay analyzing how Orwell uses rhetorical strategies to convey his message about the power of language to shape perception, control thought, and maintain authority.

In your analysis, consider Orwell's use of diction, imagery, irony, tone, and other rhetorical elements. Discuss how these choices support his warning about language and authoritarianism.

Be specific in your references to language and of course, proper citations. As you know, plagiarism and/or AI usage will not be permitted and will be met with disciplinary action and loss of credit. Failure to complete the summer assignment will result in your removal from the course.

\* the high school library and the county library should have copies of these books; Amazon should also have used copies for much reduced prices; the annotations within the book help you learn and therefore, jotting and marking up your own book is requested (sticky notes work too, if the book is not your own).

Copies of *How to Read Literature Like a Professor* are available in room C-7 and can be signed out for the summer. Just keep in mind that they must be returned in September; failure to do so will result in a charge for the missing book. I also have copies of *1984* that can be signed out for summer reading.

I have also included links to digital PDF copies of the required texts; you can keep your annotations in a notebook if you choose to use the digital texts, just make sure that your annotations have page number references.

If you do not join before then, I will send you an invite to the AP Lang. [Google Classroom](#) sometime in the summer, via school email. Please email me should you have a question. Don't hesitate; you are *not* bothering me. That's what I'm here for!

Ms. Tykowski ([ltykowski@hopatcongschools.org](mailto:ltykowski@hopatcongschools.org))

## How to Write a Rhetorical Précis

**Fill-in-the-Blank Model:** (yours should obviously be properly formatted as a full paragraph)

(Author's credentials), (author's first and last name) in his/her (type of text), (title of text) published in (publishing info.\*) addresses the topic of (topic of the text) and argues that (argument).

He/she supports this claim by \_\_\_\_\_, then, \_\_\_\_\_, then \_\_\_\_\_, and finally \_\_\_\_\_.

(Author's last name)'s purpose is to (author's purpose in writing) in order to (change in reader/society the author wants to achieve).

He/she adopts a(n) \_\_\_\_\_ tone for his/her audience, the readers of (*publication\*\**) and others interested in the topic of.

\* For your rhetorical précis, because your text is a novel, you can provide information such as date of publication here.

\*\* For your rhetorical précis, because your text is a novel, it was not published within a larger publication, such as an article published in a journal or on a website. You can modify this to discuss readers of the genre, dystopian fiction.

### Rhetorical Précis Example:

Sheridan Baker, in his essay "Attitudes" (1966), asserts that writers' attitudes toward their subjects, their audiences, and themselves determine to a large extent the quality of their prose. Baker supports this assertion by showing examples of how inappropriate attitudes can make writing unclear, pompous, or boring, concluding that a good writer "will be respectful toward his audience, considerate toward his readers, and somehow amiable toward human failings" (58). His purpose is to make his readers aware of the dangers of negative attitudes in order to help them become better writers. He establishes an informal relationship with his audience of college students who are interested in learning to write "with conviction."

**Note:** The first sentence identifies the author (Baker), the genre (essay), the title and date, and uses an active verb (asserts) and the relative pronoun that to explain what exactly Baker asserts. The second sentence explains the first by offering chronological examples from Baker's essay, while the third sentence suggests the author's purpose and WHY he has set out that purpose (or seems to have set out that purpose—not all texts are explicit about this information and readers have to put the pieces together.) The final sentence identifies the primary audience of the essay (college students) and suggests how this audience is brought into/connected to the essay's purpose.

### **Rhetorical Précis Example (for a fiction text):**

Acclaimed science fiction writer Ray Bradbury, in his dystopian novel *Fahrenheit 451*, published in 1953, addresses the topic of censorship and the dangers of a society that suppresses intellectual freedom and critical thought. He argues that when books are banned and independent thinking is discouraged, society loses its humanity, creativity, and capacity for truth. He supports this claim by depicting a future where firemen burn books to maintain social conformity, then illustrating the emotional emptiness and ignorance that result from this censorship, then contrasting characters like Montag and Clarisse to show the awakening of individual thought, and finally presenting a hopeful vision of resistance through a community that preserves literature. Bradbury's purpose is to warn readers about the consequences of censorship and passive conformity in order to encourage the preservation of knowledge, free thought, and individuality. He adopts a cautionary and reflective tone for his audience, the readers of dystopian fiction and others interested in the consequences of technological advancement and authoritarian control.