

# AP Language

“He wanted paper and something to write with, some way to sustain a thought, to place it in the world.” --Don DeLillo

Mr. Pogreba

Room 14



## general expectations

AP Language is a course open to juniors for English III credit and to seniors for elective credit. The class serves for English credit and will prepare students for the AP Language and Composition exam, which offers college credit for passing students.

This will be my eleventh year teaching the course as a regular every day class, but I also taught the class for two years as an elective, no-credit night course.

The course will be focused on the study of argumentation, rhetoric, and analysis. We'll spend a great deal of our time analyzing and evaluating interesting non-fiction, though the course will also cover the occasional fiction piece. We will also study the key points of American literature.

This will be a very different experience from your normal English class.



**“What can you do against the lunatic who is more intelligent than yourself, who gives your arguments a fair hearing and then simply persists in his lunacy?”**

**--George Orwell**

## A College Level Course

Courses taken in preparation for the AP examination are intended to be taught as if they were replacements for college level course. To that end, this course will be quite challenging, requiring strict adherence to deadlines, intellectual engagement, and rigorous preparation. I expect to be able to treat you as the kind of student who is

ready and willing to embrace a challenging course. In return, you will have more freedom to explore your own ideas and interests than in a traditional class.

## Effort is Essential

Our focus this year will be on well-written pieces that reflect revision and care. The good news is that much of our reading will be shorter pieces, most of the writing will be focused pieces of no more than 2 pages, and assignments will have long deadlines and time to complete the work.

In return, I expect you to spend ample time thinking about and engaging with the texts and writing assignments. I promise never to waste your time with busy work designed to fill time; in return, I hope that you can promise to do your best with each assignment.

Ultimately, my expectations are straightforward: each student should make his or her best effort to grow in the class as both a writer and thinker. My greatest frustration as a teacher is when students impose limits on themselves, either because of fear or an unwillingness to take a risk.

## PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION



Education must be about the free flow of ideas in a community of learners and teachers. I find a system of rigid hierarchy, with students as the passive recipients of knowledge, to

be an ineffective, if not counter-productive, technique of instruction. As Yeats wrote, "Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire." Yeats, like Paolo Freire, inspires my core philosophical belief about education, that simply providing knowledge without the tools to critically examine one's self and one's world does not fully develop the capacity of students to achieve all they are capable of. My ultimate goal for my students is a simple one. I hope that they will have the confidence, analytical tools, and awareness to become active participants in our society, and fully aware individuals, confident in their own identities.

As a teacher, I believe that my role is to facilitate student exploration of ideas without imposing my own opinions and values. Each student (and teacher) brings unique insight to literature, life, and the issues discussed in class, and a teacher who fails to allow the consideration of all ideas is not truly helping students develop into more critical thinkers; she is teaching them to accept, to acquiesce—and our society cannot afford to transform minds that are naturally inquisitive and critical into those that are staid and unmoving, or worse, easily swayed. Only open dialogue, in an environment that is safe for intellectual exploration, forces students to fully consider their values, their knowledge, and their place in the world. My role as a teacher is to create that atmosphere of respect and safety, develop a culture of discussion, and provide material that will lead to challenging and interesting discussion among the students. A classroom should be a place of laughter, occasional flashes of insight, and shared experience: a community of learners.

## writing assignments

There will be frequent writing assignments with firm deadlines in this class. Assignments turned in on time will receive extensive commentary for use in future revisions of the assignment.

**Writing assignments may be turned in up to one week late for full credit**, but papers received late will not receive feedback and you will not have the

opportunity to revise.

**There will be no exceptions to this policy.**



## essay submission

Each first draft of essays will be due on a Friday. If you prefer, you can submit the paper to me electronically using Google Drive before 12:00 p.m. on Sunday. Please check the calendar. Please do not abuse this privilege. I am unimpressed with excuses about technological failures and e-mail outages.

## late work

If you miss a test or quiz, **you will have one week from the time it was taken to make it up**. You should plan to take the makeup quiz or test before school, at lunch, or after school. It will be your responsibility to make up and keep track of these quizzes and tests.

## projects

During the course of the year, we will engage in a few long-term projects to demonstrate mastery of argumentation concepts and thematic elements we are discussing. The projects will be announced well in advance of their due date, and while I strongly prefer that these be cooperative, the possibility for individual work will exist on at least some of the assignments.



## vocabulary

We will have a **vocabulary quiz each week for the first three quarters of the course**. The content of the vocabulary will be varied and include a review of Latin and Greek roots, ACT/SAT words, and rhetorical and literary terms. Each fourth week will be a review of the preceding three weeks.

## participation

AP Language is a class built around the study of argumentation and ideas. I expect every student to participate meaningfully and productively in class. Excellent participation will not only improve your grade in the course, but develop your skills. **Participation is 10% of the grade for each quarter.**



## annotation

**You should carefully annotate and highlight every piece of reading you do in class.** Rather

than grading quizzes, I will grade the thoroughness and thoughtfulness of these annotations. We'll discuss techniques for annotation in the first few weeks of class.

## grammar

For the sake of the future of the English language, your ACT score, and my emotional well-being while I grade your essays, **we will do some intensive grammar remediation** using NoRedInk and other direct instruction. You'll be fine. It won't be the worst thing in the world.

## doom!

During fourth quarter before the AP test, we'll do some **intensive timed write practice** to get ready to dominate the exam. It's better not to think about it.

# Thematic Units of Study

*Almost every unit we study this year will be a 2-4 week look at a related set of topics, arguments, and ideas. While I have chosen some of the units, the class will also be able to create its own units of study as well.*

## Classical Persuasion



The foundation of the course will be a study of classical rhetoric and argumentation. We'll explore logos, pathos, ethos, tone, and the ten most important rhetorical terms a person should know in order to effectively analyze speech and written communication.

## Propaganda



This unit will focus on the study of historical and contemporary propaganda techniques, and the work of Hermann and Chomsky, Orwell, Ellul, and Postman. A culminating project will require the students to develop a propaganda/political campaign.

## Politics and Protest



When political persuasion fails or is not heeded, rhetors often turn to protest. This thematic unit will explore the power dynamics in communication, the role of protest in society, and its efficacy. We'll read works by Martin Luther King, Jr., Eugene Debs, and Jeanette Rankin, among others.

## Satire



As powerful as direct efforts to persuade and even propaganda can be, satire is often an even stronger weapon for change. We'll study the classical roots of satire and great writers like Orwell, Swift, Twain and more.

## The Educated Person



This unit will focus on what it means to be educated, equality in education, and the role of schools in society. We'll center our discussion on the works of Freire and Kozol, with other points of view to challenge and accompany their thinking. A culminating project will require students to develop and present an education improvement project.

## Race in America



Centered around *Between the World and Me* by Ta-Nehisi Coates, we'll tackle the issue of race and racism in the United States. We'll read historical texts by the Founding Fathers, speeches by Lincoln and King, and work by contemporary authors.

## American Literature



We will study some of the giants of American literature, focusing on one novel each quarter as well as a collection of shorter works. We definitely read *The Great Gatsby* and *The Things They Carried*.

## Wilderness Writing



This unit will focus on human interaction with the natural world, as well as our rights and responsibilities to the environment. We'll discuss the masters like Thoreau, Leopold and Carson, debate climate change, take a nature walk and more.

## The Weeks of Doom



This unit will be our focused preparation for the AP exam, including sessions in and out of class to review writing, multiple choice, and strategies for mastering the test.

## Grammar

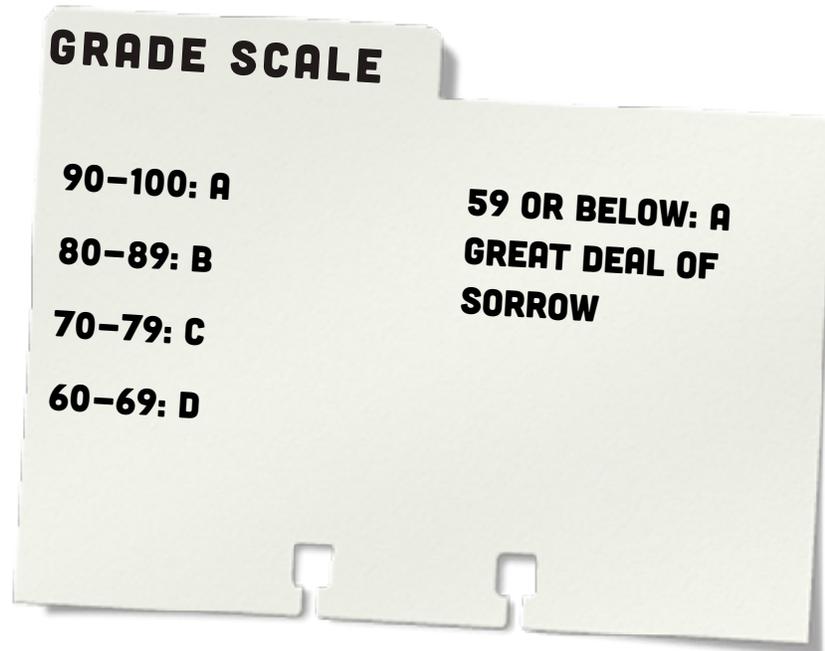


We'll work on grammar as ongoing practice during the year, developing skills with discrete exercises and in writing. We'll primarily focus on skills that will be useful for the ACT exam. We'll have review sessions in and out of class during the weeks before the ACT exam.

# Materials and Grading

*While much of the reading will be short pieces of fiction and expository writing, these titles will be read, either in their entirety or in significant excerpts.*

- *Current Issues and Enduring Questions*
- *The Norton Reader, 12th Edition*
- *The Shame of the Nation* by Jonathan Kozol
- *Outliers* by Malcolm Gladwell
- *Pedagogy of Freedom* by Paolo Freire
- *The Things They Carried* by Tim O'Brien
- *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald
- *Into the Wild* by Jon Krakauer
- *Silent Spring* by Rachel Carson



## The AP Examination



The AP exam will take place on Wednesday, May 13th at 8:00 a.m. All students are encouraged to take the exam, which will cost \$94. Assistance is available for students who cannot afford the cost of the test.

In the weeks leading up to the test, we will do intensive writing practice and have the opportunity to review both in class and outside.

## Other Resources

All of the material for the course will be provided for students, but if you are interested in additional writing resources for expository writing, I would recommend the following titles:

- Diana Hacker, *A Writer's Reference*
- Donald Murray, *The Craft of Revision*
- Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein, *They Say, I Say*
- Andrea Lunsford and John Ruskiewicz, *Everything's An Argument*

*Any edition of these texts would be great, and all are available reasonably priced online in used copies.*

## Contact Mr. Pogreba

**Class Phone**  
406.324.2262

**Home Phone**  
406.461.8651 (emergencies please)

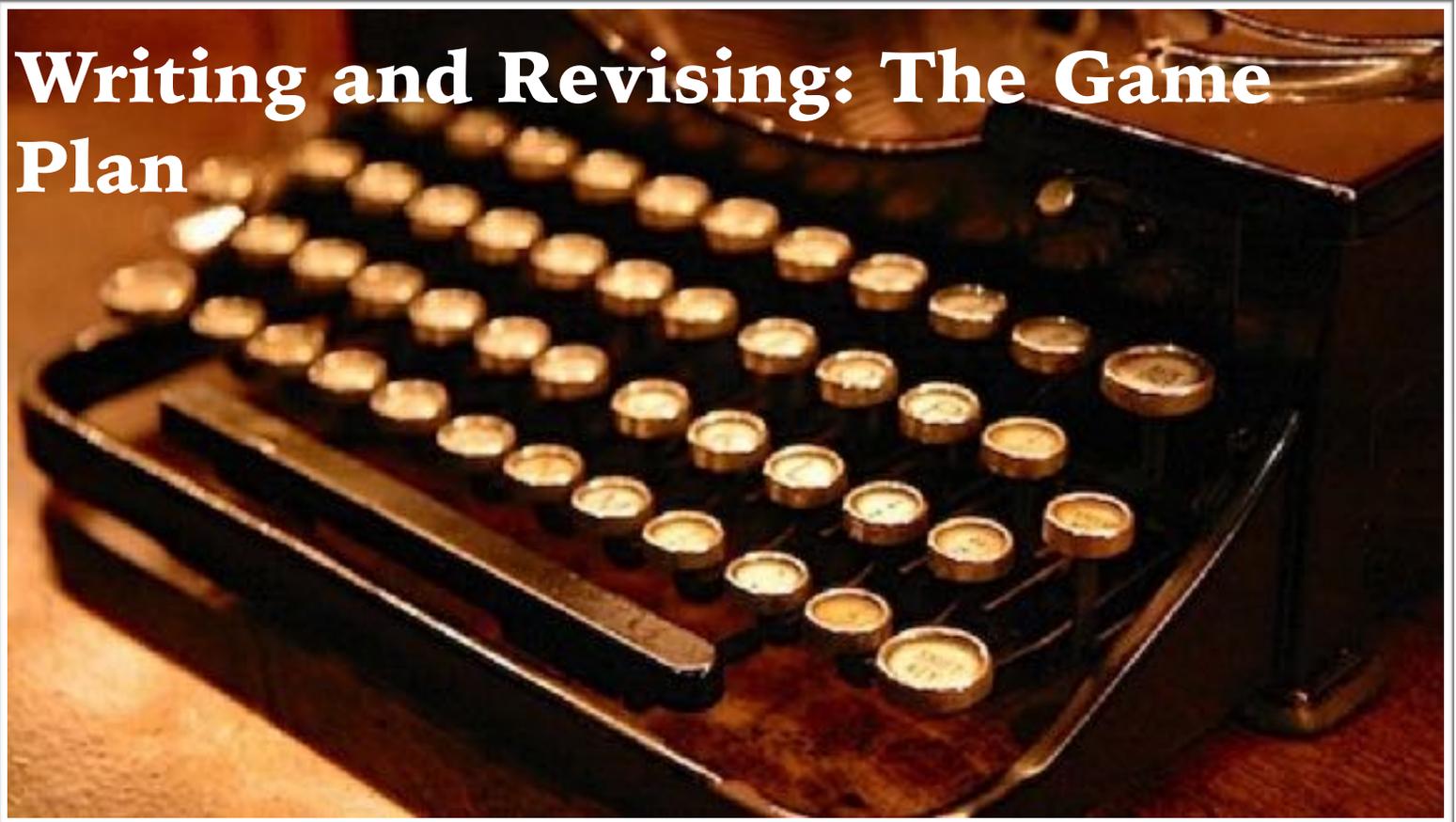
**Class Web Site**  
<http://www.quixoticpedagogue.org>

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**Class Twitter**  
mrpogreba

**Google Talk/Google Docs Address**  
[dpogreba@gmail.com](mailto:dpogreba@gmail.com)

# Writing and Revising: The Game Plan



## Essays

It's only through writing, reflection and revision that writers are made. As a result, we will write a great deal this year, but you will have some degree of control over how much writing you end up completing in the course.

Every other week, there will be a formal essay assignment. It will be due (in printed form) on Friday in class or before Sunday at 12:00 p.m. if you submit using Google Drive. These are unshakeable and unalterable deadlines and forms of submission.

The essays will gradually increase in point value as your skill improves.

You may turn in an essay up to one week late for full credit, but late papers will only receive a grade and may not be revised. You can revise essays as many times as you like as long as you follow the revision guidelines and expectations.

During the fourth quarter, we will engage in intensive writing preparation for the AP exam. More details to come.

## Revision

Revisions will be due 2-3 days from the date an essay is returned. You can revise each essay for grade improvement and writing skill development.

Revisions will:

- be submitted in print, attached to all previous drafts of the essay.
- be returned on the deadline date.
- reflect serious, thoughtful revision.
- include the specific suggestions I offered for your paper and the broad improvements I suggested to the class.

I reserve the right not to accept revisions that do not meet these requirements.

Please make sure that revisions are worth both your time and mine.

## Essay Formatting

Please follow these guidelines when you submit essays:

- 12 point font
- 1" margins
- double-spaced, except for the header

## Google Drive

My account name is [dpogreba@gmail.com](mailto:dpogreba@gmail.com). Please make sure to share your documents with this address and only this address.

There is a guide available online at [quixoticpedagogue.org](http://quixoticpedagogue.org) detailing the process by which you should use Google Drive to submit and revise your essays.