

AP LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION

General Course Description

Advanced Placement Literature and Composition is a full-year college level course. In this course, you will read mostly fiction in a variety of genres (including novels, poetry, and drama) and study multiple ways to approach these texts with a serious attention to the craft of writing to achieve specific results. This course runs on a seminar format requiring active participation every day. You will respond to reading in multiple ways, including timed writing practice, formal essays, oral explication, creative application of the principles we observe in writing, and multiple choice practice. You will also prepare for the AP examination held in early May, for which the College Board charges a fee.

The AP Mindset

This is a college-level literature class taught within the high school environment. It demands considerable time, effort, commitment, and interest in the subject. If you have lukewarm feelings about writing and reading, *reconsider*. *Seriously*. Failure to meet deadlines (except due to extenuating circumstances) or to complete required assignments will result in significant late penalties or zeroes on significant grades. If I receive work that indicates a lack of full engagement, I will initiate an early student-parent-teacher conference to discuss the feasibility of continuing.

SUMMER WORK ** DUE ON THE FIRST DAY OF CLASS**



Step 1--Reading

Read the novel *1984*. Take whatever notes you need to help yourself digest the reading, knowing that you will have to apply your understanding in the tasks below and in the first weeks of class. The novel is neatly broken into Parts 1, 2, and 3 if that assists with your pacing.

Step 2— Vocabulary

For each of Parts 1, 2 and 3, find **5** vocabulary words new to you and that you can connect to important characters or situations in the text (a total of **15** words). Look for words that stretch you as you read. Copy out the complete sentence from the text. Write out a definition for that word that best suits the meaning in the text. Write 1-2 sentences for each word describing how it transcends the specific textual use to connect to other situations/characters/themes in the novel.

Step 3— Written Analysis

For each of Parts 1, 2 and 3, isolate a passage, each no longer than 40 lines (1.5 pages) that strikes you as particularly interesting in both content and writing style. Don't rely on some on-line source to guide you to *important* passages, but look for pages that woke YOU up as a reader, and then try to understand how Orwell achieved that effect. Make a digital image of the text or use an on-line text of *1984* (like this one at <http://www.george-orwell.org/1984>) to insert that passage into a hard copy or digital document, and annotate that document for use of literary technique.

What do you annotate for? Think about how Orwell employs any of the following techniques deliberately to achieve a specific effect on meaning or audience.



- **Context:** Consider what happened just before or just after this passage and how the passage contributes to larger-scale developments.
- **Story elements:** Consider opportunities and limitations of chosen point of view, direct & indirect characterization of protagonist/antagonist/minor characters, development of internal & external conflicts, opportunities and limitations of setting, verbal/situational/dramatic irony, and the big-picture abstract theme the author attempts to deliver
- **Imagery elements:** Consider the chosen sensory imagery, figurative language, symbolism, allusions, and repeating motifs that build the world inhabited by characters as well as add layers beyond the literal.
- **Diction choices:** Consider how the author displays a distinct attitude toward the subject (tone) and an atmosphere for the reader (mood), and how the sentence construction and individual words chosen, repeated, or juxtaposed affect the reader.
- **Narrative structure:** Consider how linear/non-linear chronology, deliberate shifts or divisions, flashback, foreshadowing, flashforward, and narrative pace guide the reader through the passage.

Then write explications of 400-500 words for each of the 3 passages. These are neither glorified journal entries nor full formal essays; rather, each should address the context of the passage, highlight how specific literary techniques help construct meaning, and comment on the effect of these choices on the reader and overall meaning. **AVOID PLOT SUMMARY.**

Use **THESIS / EVIDENCE / ANALYSIS / CONCLUSION** structure.

- **THESIS:** Contextualize the passage and then clearly and specifically state your these about what overall idea(s) the passage gets across and the primary tool(s) it uses to do so.
- **EVIDENCE/ANALYSIS:** Pull from the full length of the passage. Use multiple quotes (including short phrases woven into your own sentence), first contextualized and then analyzed for meaning, often employing 'requoting', throughout the response. Make sure these directly establish your line of reasoning in support of your thesis.
- **CONCLUSION:** Solidify the overall bits of information, giving a sense of how it all works together to build meaning and how this passage contributes to the overall novel.

Following is my model annotating and explicating pages 1-2 of the novel. My color coding is merely illustrative; no need to replicate it in yours.



BEFORE THE FIRST DAY OF CLASS:

1. **READ 1984**
2. **COLLECT 15 vocab words with original sentences + definitions + connections to situations/characters/themes in the novel**
3. **ANNOTATE digital or hard copies of 3 passages**
4. **TYPE 3 400-500 word original explications focusing on Orwell's use of literary technique (and attach annotations)**

I can't wait to get started!

QUESTIONS? I'll check email periodically all summer:

jamie.gillette@fivetowns.net

Setting: negative, depressing diction—
 thirteen, vile, gritty dust, boiled cabbage,
 old rag mats, no use, Hate Week,
 varicose ulcer, pig-iron, dulled,
 blunt, cut off — Sick + isolated
 have? unlucky #

Part One, Chapter 1

It was a bright cold day in April, and the clocks were striking thirteen. Winston Smith, his chin nuzzled into his breast in an effort to escape the vile wind, slipped quickly through the glass doors of Victory Mansions, though not quickly enough to prevent a swirl of gritty dust from entering along with him.

The hallway smelt of boiled cabbage and old rag mats. At one end of it a coloured poster, too large for indoor display, had been tacked to the wall. It depicted simply an enormous face, more than a metre wide: the face of a man of about forty-five, with a heavy black moustache and ruggedly handsome features.

Winston made for the stairs. It was no use trying the lift. Even at the best of times it was seldom working, and at present the electric current was cut off during daylight hours. It was part of the economy drive in preparation for Hate Week. The flat was seven flights up, and Winston, who was thirty-nine and had a varicose ulcer above his right ankle, went slowly, resting several times on the way.

On each landing, opposite the lift-shaft, the poster with the enormous face gazed from the wall. It was one of those pictures which are so contrived that the eyes follow you about when you move. BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU, the caption beneath it ran.

Inside the flat a fruity voice was reading out a list of figures which had something to do with the production of pig-iron. The voice came from an oblong metal plaque like a dulled mirror which formed part of the surface of the right-hand wall. Winston turned a switch and the voice sank somewhat, though the words were still distinguishable. The instrument (the telescreen, it was called) could be dimmed, but there was no way of shutting it off completely.

He moved over to the window: a smallish, frail figure, the meagreness of his body merely emphasized by the blue overalls which were the uniform of the party. His hair was very fair, his face naturally sanguine, his skin roughened by coarse soap and blunt razor blades and the cold of the winter that had just ended (pages 1-2).

what else does he try to escape? unsuccessful

Similar details about Big Brother + Winston juxtapose them - foil characters? power vs. sickly

also inescapable
 More characterization of Winston -

large scale of Big Brother's poster - also inescapable?

all caps
 imprecise inescapable

exposition - details of this dystopian world

Ms. Gillette's model response:

In these opening paragraphs of *1984*, George Orwell, effectively establishes the grim tone of his dystopian novel by connecting setting and characterization to emphasize the powerlessness of the main character Winston Smith compared to the power represented by Big Brother and the party.

The month of the story, April, traditionally brings with it expectations of rebirth and life; Orwell inverts those expectations by making the scene dull and unpleasant. As "the clocks were striking thirteen" (how exactly this would happen provides the first puzzle to unravel for the reader), the unluckiness associated with the number thirteen is deepened as Smith makes "an effort to escape the vile wind," providing for the reader both a further image of the negative reality of April as well as an early introduction to the motif of escape that will punctuate the novel. Smith's response to this wind is futile, as "gritty dust" follows him inside, highlighting the inability to act powerfully to a desirable end result. Everything in this environment is driven by a force represented by the "enormous" face of Big Brother, and at every turn it defeats Smith's efforts. It is "no use" to use the lift because of priorities set by the party, causing Smith to struggle up the stairs, moving "slowly, resting several times on the way," emphasizing his frailty. He is capable of dimming the words on the telescreen once inside his flat, but the reader is informed immediately afterward that "there was no way of shutting it off completely", reinforcing the complete powerlessness of the individual in this setting. Accordingly, Winston is directly described as "a smallish, frail figure" whose "meagreness" can hardly compete with the force and power represented by the image of Big Brother, introduced so early in the novel's narrative. In fact, the two quickly become foil characters: even though it is Winston who is the living character in the scene and Big Brother only the paper representation of one, Winston's face is "naturally sanguine...roughened by coarse soap and blunt razor blades" while Big Brother's is "ruggedly handsome" with eyes that watch Winston wherever he moves, broadcasting his message in all capital letters. It's clear right away who holds the power here.

While the passage provides efficient exposition about the world depicted in *1984* appropriate to the beginning of a novel (hints of Victory Mansions, Hate Week, telescreens, and material deprivations), it quickly delivers a piercing glimpse into the downtrodden Winston, escalating the person vs. society conflict that will commence immediately afterward with his decision to write in his illicit journal. He will defy the powerful forces of Big Brother regardless of his "meagreness", but at tremendous cost. (443 words)

For your reference, here is the AP rubric for this kind of writing + information about grade conversion between AP and the CHRHS gradebook:

Scoring Rubric for Question 2: Prose Fiction Argument (6 points)

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria				
Row A Thesis (0-1 points) 7.B	0 points For any of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is no defensible thesis. The intended thesis only restates the prompt. The intended thesis provides a summary of the issue with no apparent or coherent claim. There is a thesis, but it does not respond to the prompt. 			1 point Responds to the prompt with a thesis that presents a defensible interpretation of the passage.	
Row B Evidence AND Commentary (0-4 points) 7.A 7.C 7.D 7.E	0 points Simply restates thesis (if present), repeats provided information, or offers information irrelevant to the prompt.	1 point EVIDENCE: Provides evidence that is mostly general. AND COMMENTARY: Summarizes the evidence but does not explain how the evidence supports the student's argument.	2 points EVIDENCE: Provides some specific, relevant evidence. AND COMMENTARY: Explains how some of the evidence relates to the student's argument, but no line of reasoning is established, or the line of reasoning is faulty.	3 points EVIDENCE: Provides specific evidence to support all claims in a line of reasoning. AND COMMENTARY: Explains how some of the evidence supports a line of reasoning. AND Explains how at least one literary element or technique in the passage contributes to its meaning.	4 points EVIDENCE: Provides specific evidence to support all claims in a line of reasoning. AND COMMENTARY: Consistently explains how the evidence supports a line of reasoning. AND Explains how multiple literary elements or techniques in the passage contribute to its meaning.
Row C Sophistication (0-1 points) 7.C 7.D 7.E	0 points Does not meet the criteria for one point.	1 point Demonstrates sophistication of thought and/or develops a complex literary argument. <i>Responses that earn this point may demonstrate a sophistication of thought or develop a complex literary argument by doing any of the following:</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying and exploring complexities or tensions within the passage. Illuminating the student's interpretation by situating it within a broader context. Accounting for alternative interpretations of the passage. Employing a style that is consistently vivid and persuasive. <i>This point should be awarded only if the sophistication of thought or complex understanding is part of the student's argument, not merely a phrase or reference.</i>			

September 2019

AP	Assessment	Grade book
6	Extremely well-qualified	93-100%
5	Well-qualified	85-92%
4	Qualified	76-84%
3	Possibly qualified	70-75%
2	No recommendation	50-69%
1	No recommendation	< 50%