This assignment will prepare you for the essentials of AP Language. You’ll develop foundational skills so you can be successful in the class. You’ll also read famous, fascinating, incredible, seminal essays by wonderful authors that will pique your curiosity about society, humanity, technology, and identity.

Think of this assignment as an AP Language Boot Camp. You’ll have a chance to show what you’ve learned through a quiz to be given during the first two days of school in September. Are you ready for an incredible journey into rhetoric?

Let’s go!

To get started...

1. **Learn your Tone Words** (See attached list, pages 2-6).
   We will use these tone words again…and again…and again. Learn them. Know them. These are awesome adjectives you should start to use during your conversations this summer!

2. **Read the following Essays** (see list, page 7).
   Have you ever wondered what it even means to learn? How would you feel if you were thrown in jail, just for standing up for your rights? What if the way you see yourself is different from the way others see you? Does anyone really appreciate the complexities of being able to speak another language? What if you were confronted by a crazed elephant, ready to trample you? Even if you’ve never asked yourself these questions, check out these incredible essays. You won’t be disappointed. All of these essays can be found online, for free. Or you can pick up a packet from Ms. DeMella, Ms. Fahey, Ms. Livingston, or Mr. Cronk, the English Coordinator.

3. **Critically think** (see attached questions, page 8).
   For each essay, answer the questions on a separate document. These questions should become second nature to you – like the tone words, they will appear again…and again…and again throughout the course. Constant practice will help you form a solid foundation for the course.

4. **Show what you know**.
   During the first week of school, you’ll have a quiz on both the tone words and the questions related to the essays.
English 3AP: Vocabulary List

Directions: As part of your 3AP summer reading assignment, you must learn the following words and definitions. These words will appear on the reading assessment quiz to be given on the second day of the school year in September, and they are crucial background knowledge for this collegiate level course.

Mood and Tone Words

1. **Ambivalent** - having or showing very different feelings (such as love and hate) about someone or something at the same time

   - He felt *ambivalent* about his job. [=he both liked and disliked his job]
   - He has an *ambivalent* relationship with his family.
   - She has a deeply/very *ambivalent* attitude about/to/toward religion.
   - The senator is *ambivalent* about running for president. [=the senator has not decided whether or not to run for president]

2. **Apathetic** - not having or showing much emotion or interest

   - Young people are becoming increasingly *apathetic*.
   - a *politically apathetic* [=indifferent, uninterested] generation
   - the *apathetic* attitude of the public

3. **Baffled** - completely confused

   - a *baffled* look [=a look that shows confusion]
   - His explanation left me feeling even more *baffled*= confused] than I had felt before.

4. **Belligerent** - angry and aggressive :feeling or showing readiness to fight

   - a *belligerent* remark
   - He was drunk and *belligerent*.

5. **Cynical** - believing that people are generally selfish and dishonest

   - *Cynical* people say there is no such thing as true love.
   - People are so *cynical* nowadays.
   - She's become more *cynical* in her old age.

   — often + *about*

   - He's *cynical about* marriage.
   - Many young people today are *cynical about* politics.
6. **Contemplative** - involving, allowing, or causing deep thought
   - She's in a *contemplative* mood today. [=she is quiet and thoughtful today]
   - He has lived a quiet, *contemplative* life.
   - a *contemplative* book

7. **Diffident** - lacking confidence: not feeling comfortable around people
   - He becomes *diffident* [=shy, timid] around girls.
   - She has a *diffident* [=reserved] manner.

8. **Didactic** - designed or intended to teach people something
   - *didactic* poetry
   - Connotation - *usually disapproving* — used to describe someone or something that tries to teach something (such as proper or moral behavior) in a way that is annoying or unwanted
   - Audiences were turned off by the movie's *didactic* quality.

9. **Disdainful** - feeling strong dislike or disapproval for something or someone you think does not deserve respect: feeling or showing disdain
   - He looked at the waiter with a *disdainful* glare.
   - a *disdainful* attitude toward authority
   - — often + of
   - a critic who is *disdainful of* all modern art

10. **Dejected** - sad because of failure, loss, etc.
    - The *dejected* players left the field.
    - She's been so *dejected* [=depressed, unhappy] since her sister moved away.

11. **Derisive** - formal
    - the feeling that people express when they criticize and laugh at someone or something in an insulting way
    - *derisive* [=scornful] laughter
    - a *derisive* [=derogatory] term

12. **Droll** - having an odd and amusing quality
    - a *droll* little man with a peculiar sense of humor
- a book of droll stories

13. **Empathetic** - understanding and sharing another person's experiences and emotions

- He was very empathetic. He felt great empathy with/for/toward the poor.

14. **Fawning** - disapproving

: trying to get the approval of an important or powerful person by giving that person praise, special attention, etc.

- a sports star surrounded by fawning fans

15. **Flippant** -

: lacking proper respect or seriousness

- He made/gave a flippant response to a serious question.

16. **Furtive** -

: quiet and secret; trying to avoid being noticed

- He cast a furtive glance in our direction.
- We exchanged furtive smiles across the table.
- furtive movements

17. **Harried** - bothered by many problems or worries : very worried or anxious

- harried shoppers/travelers

18. **Indignant** -

: feeling or showing anger because of something that is unfair or wrong : very angry

- She wrote an indignant letter to the editor.
- He was/got/became very indignant about/over the changes.
- an indignant tone of voice

19. **Morose** - of a person : very serious, unhappy, and quiet

- He became morose and withdrawn and would not talk to anyone.

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: very sad or unhappy

- morose song lyrics
• **morose** thoughts

20. **Obsequious** - disapproving

: too eager to help or obey someone important

• She's constantly followed by *obsequious* assistants who will do anything she tells them to.

21. **Patronizing** - disapproving

: showing that you believe you are more intelligent or better than other people

• She spoke to us in a *patronizing [condescending]* tone.
• a *patronizing* smile

22. **Pedantic** - disapproving

: annoying other people by correcting small errors and giving too much attention to minor details

• a *pedantic* teacher
• a *pedantic* insistence on following the rules exactly

23. **Pessimistic** - having or showing a lack of hope for the future : expecting bad things to happen

• I'm *pessimistic* about our chances of winning. [=I don't think we'll win]
• Most doctors were *pessimistic* that a cure could be found.
• The film gives a very *pessimistic* view of human nature.
• He has an extremely negative and *pessimistic* attitude.

— opposite **OPTIMISTIC**

24. **Plaintive** - *formal*

: expressing suffering or sadness : having a sad sound

• a *plaintive [=mournful, sorrowful]* sigh
• We could hear the *plaintive* cry of a wounded animal in the woods.

25. **Pompous** - disapproving
: having or showing the attitude of people who speak and behave in a very formal and serious way because they believe that they are better, smarter, or more important than other people

- a pompous [=self-important] politician
- a pompous remark
- She found it difficult to talk about her achievements without sounding pompous.

26. **Sardonic** - formal

: showing that you disapprove of or do not like someone or something : showing disrespect or scorn for someone or something

- The movie is a sardonic look at modern life.
- sardonic humor/comments
- a sardonic expression/smile

27. **Sadistic** -

: enjoyment that someone gets from being violent or cruel or from causing pain

— compare **MASOCHISM**

- sadistic behavior
- a sadistic criminal

28. **Supercilious** -

: having or showing the proud and unpleasant attitude of people who think that they are better or more important than other people

- a supercilious professor
- a supercilious tone/attitude
- supercilious behavior
Francis Bacon, “Of Studies” (1625)

Henry David Thoreau, “On the Duty of Civil Disobedience” (1849)

Frederick Douglass, “What to a Slave is the Fourth of July?” (5 July 1852)

George Orwell, “Shooting an Elephant” (1936) and “Politics and the English Language” (1946)

Martin Luther King, Jr. “Letter from Birmingham Jail” (1963)

Amy Tan, “Mother Tongue” (1990)


AP Language and Composition Essential Readings
Summer Assignment – Critical Thinking Questions

Directions: For each of the essays, answer the following questions in a separate document. Identify the title and author for each set of question.

1. Identify the speaker. Identify or infer the speaker’s age, gender, class, and education. What can you tell or what do you know about the speaker that helps you understand the point of view expressed?

2. Describe the occasion. What is the time and place of the piece? What is the current situation (that prompted the writing)? Is this a political event, a celebration, an observation, a critique, or …? What is the historical context of the text?

3. Describe the audience. (Who are the readers to whom this piece is directed? It may be one person or a specific group. Does the speaker specify an audience? What assumptions exist in the text about the intended audience?)

4. Describe the purpose. (What is the purpose behind the text? Why did the author write it? What is his/her goal? (To find the purpose, ask, “What did the author want his/her audience to think or do as a result of reading this text?”) What is the message? How does the speaker convey this message?)

5. Describe the subject. (What topic, content, and ideas are included in the text? State the subject in a few words or a short phrase. Is there more than one subject? How does the author present the subject? Does he introduce it immediately or do you, the reader, have to make an inference?)

6. Describe the tone. (What is the attitude of the author? Is the author emotional, objective, neutral, or biased about this topic? What types of details “tell” the author’s feelings about the topic? What types of diction (choice of words), syntax (sentence structure), and imagery (metaphors, similes, and other types of figurative language) help reflect the tone? How would you read the passage aloud if you were the author?)