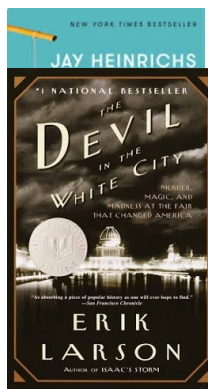


AP English Language and Composition Summer Assignment 2026

Welcome to AP Language and Composition! I'm excited that you have decided to explore the power of rhetoric by signing up for this course. According to the College Board course description, the AP English Language and Composition course "engages students in becoming skilled readers of prose written in a variety of contexts, and in becoming skilled writers who compose for a variety of purposes." To help you prepare for your coursework and ultimately the AP Language Exam next May, you will be reading and taking notes this summer. These assignments will help you get a jumpstart on skills you will be learning in class and topics we will be discussing. Since AP English Language is devoted to the study of non-fiction prose styles (autobiography, biography, essays, letters, speeches, journals, articles), you need to familiarize yourself with these types of writing. The following selections will get you started, and selections from some of these works will be studied and examined in class. It is important to note that, since this is a college-level course, the reading lists for AP Language and Composition may contain works that may include some mature content. It is also imperative that you do not procrastinate on this reading since you need time to read TWO texts, be able to think about these serious works to understand all the levels of meaning, and to be able to complete your assignment on time.

So, in order to hit the ground running and be successful in the fall, you'll need to complete the following tasks over the summer. These tasks are time consuming, so please do not put them off until the end of summer break.

Tasks at a Glance:



Read *Thank You for Arguing* by Jay Heinrichs (3rd Edition)

Read *The Devil in the White City* by Erik Larson

- Respond to items for each book. Responses should be typed and formatted according to MLA standards. Be prepared to participate in online discussions with peers during the first week of school. Also, be prepared to be quizzed over Heinrich's book early in the school year.

Item Responses:

It goes without saying that all responses and comments should be conducted in a professional manner. Please be sensitive to others' beliefs and feelings when posting in discussions. When in doubt, leave it out (it rhymes, so you know it's true). Throughout the year we will be engaging in many thought-provoking, controversial discussions. This is a good opportunity for you to start working on making your point without damaging relationships or offending others.

- Responses to instructor questions should be formatted as fully developed, well-supported paragraphs. This is how I'm grading you, so make sure that I know you read and understood the texts.
- You must respond to all items.

Question / Response Items:

Thank You for Arguing Items

1. Keep an argument journal: Record 3 arguments that you encounter in your life over the summer and analyze how Heinrichs would characterize these arguments. Are they effective/ineffective? What techniques are they utilizing and how are they applying them (according to what you've read in *Thank You for Arguing*)?
2. Apply one of Heinrichs' argument strategies/techniques to an argument that you're trying to make. Explain clearly what outcome you were hoping for, and how you applied persuasive techniques. Evaluate your argument's success.

Devil in the White City Items

1. Identify one of the author's main arguments and explain its development throughout the text. How is the subject introduced? How does Larson elaborate and reiterate this issue in multiple places in the book? How do later examples build upon earlier ones? Be thorough.
2. Analyze the ways the Chicago World's Fair of 1893 impacts American society. Consider the innovations and emerging cultural ideas introduced during the exposition and evaluate their lasting influence on American culture.
3. Analyze the picture of late nineteenth-century America that emerges from *The Devil in the White City*. How is that time both like and unlike contemporary America? What are the most significant differences? In what ways does that time mirror the present?
4. Identify a passage (a few paragraphs) from your book that you found to be particularly persuasive. Analyze the passage and decide what made it successful. Feel free to include things you might have done differently. Be sure to explain the passage's context in relationship to the author's greater purpose.
5. Identify and explain three problems with one of the author's arguments.