

Advanced Placement (AP) Language and Composition Summer Reading for Grade 11

Purpose and Nature of the Summer Reading Assignment: The AP Language and Composition course focuses on close analysis of language as it assists students in developing their own clear writing voice. This course emphasizes the study of argumentation, expository and persuasive writing, and the use of rhetorical terms. It also prepares students for the AP Language and Composition examination, for which students may earn up to three college credits. By completing these summer reading and language activities, students can prepare for success in this year's class activities. We hope you will also enjoy the reading and that it provides you with the opportunity to see the world from a different perspective, as well as appreciating the universality of human experience conveyed by literature.

Required Summer Reading: Please read and complete both assignments prior to the start of school.

Assignment#1: *The Woman Warrior* Maxine Hong Kingston

Activity: Kingston writes, "Unless I see [my aunt's] life branching into mine, she gives me no ancestral help." When we read about other's lives, we need to make bridges to our own experiences in order to truly understand their stories. For this activity, you will build bridges to Kingston's stories by creating a scrapbook of your own. The five chapters of your scrapbook should correlate to the five chapters of *The Woman Warrior*. Begin by choosing an important quote from each chapter. Then, choose or create a visual (a photograph, collage, or drawing) which reveals how your experience is similar to hers. Write a paragraph explaining this bridge. You may interview family members and add their voice to this scrapbook if you wish. A grading rubric for this scrapbook is attached and the assignment counts for 25 points in the 10% Completion category.

Assignment#2: *Voice Lessons* packet.

Activity: In order to understand how language works so that you can analyze argument and become a better writer yourself, you need to learn some new vocabulary to describe these tools writers use. First, read the attached *Voice Lessons* packet. Memorize the terms in bold, and then apply these ideas by completing the six exercises, following the directions. Please be sure to apply your new vocabulary and show us your best critical thinking so that we can gauge your current skills accurately. Completion grade of 24 points (4 points per page).

Contact [Davina T. Smith@mcpsmd.org](mailto:Davina.T.Smith@mcpsmd.org) if you have any questions after you carefully read this.

Voice Lessons for Close Reading and Analysis
(Keep this handout in your AP English Language notebook)

Understanding voice gives readers a deeper appreciation of the richness of language and a deeper understanding of literature. Through voice we come to know authors; by exploring voice, we learn to wield language. The aim of our studies is to better develop a personal voice. To do so, we must first learn to recognize voice and analyze its elements. The five elements of voice we will focus on to begin our studies are diction, detail, imagery, syntax, and tone.

Diction= The author's choice of words to express shades of meaning and tone. Effective writers avoid non-specific, weak words such as *nice*, *thing*, *stupid*, etc. Instead, a strong writer employs precise, descriptive words for specific effect. For example, in our *Voice Lessons* exercises, one writer does just that as he writes that the United States Army does not merely want revenge; it thirsts for revenge. A door does not simply shut; it thuds closed. Verbs are the strongest parts of speech, and strong verbs such as "thirsts" and "thuds" are powerful and descriptive.

Diction is dependent upon topic, purpose, and occasion. The topic often determines the specificity and sophistication of diction choices. A writer creating a scholarly article for a scientific journal would use specialized diction choices to convey meaning precisely and efficiently.

The writer's purpose—whether to convince, entertain, amuse, inform, or plead—partly determines diction choices. For example, if an author's purpose is to inform, the reader can expect straightforward diction. In contrast, if the purpose is to entertain, the reader will likely encounter ironic, playful, or unexpected diction choices.

A writer's diction choices also depend upon the occasion. Formal diction is largely reserved for scholarly writing, serious prose, or poetry. Informal diction is the norm in exposition, newspaper editorials, and works of fiction. Colloquial diction borrows from informal speech and is typically used to create a mood or capture a particular historic or regional dialect.

Be aware of both the **denotation** (dictionary definition) and **connotation** (emotional meaning) of diction choices. When a writer calls a character slender, this conveys a different feeling from calling the character gaunt.

Diction choices can impart freshness and originality to writing. Words used in surprising or unusual ways make us rethink what is known and re-examine meaning. For example, writer Annie Dillard describes the sea as "a monster with a lace hem." Good writers often opt for complexity rather than simplicity, for multiple layers of meanings rather than precision.

Detail= Facts, observations, and incidents used to develop a subject and impart voice. Specific details bring life and color to description, focusing the reader's attention and bringing the reader into the scene. Detail makes an abstraction concrete, particular, and unmistakable. For example, when Orwell describes an elephant attack, the attack comes alive through his description of the elephant's specific violent actions. By directing readers' attention to particulars, detail connects abstraction to their lives and engages them.

Detail can also create **understatement**, through a lack of detail. The absence of specific details, for example, may be in sharp contrast to the intensity of a character's pain. The laconic cowboy who claims his gunshot wound is "Only a scratch" is using understatement, which makes him appear brave. In this case, elaborate, descriptive detail could turn the pain into sentimentality. Good writers choose detail with care, selecting those details which add meaning and avoiding those that trivialize or detract from their expression.

Imagery= The verbal representation of sensory experience. In literature all five senses may be represented: sight (visual imagery), sound (auditory imagery), touch (tactile imagery), taste (gustatory imagery), and smell (olfactory imagery). Visual imagery is the most common, but good writers experiment with a variety of imagery. Imagery depends on both diction and detail: an image's success in producing a sensory experience results from the specificity of the author's diction and choice of detail.

Imagery itself is not figurative, but may be used to impart figurative or symbolic meaning. For example, the parched earth can be a **metaphor** for a character's despair, or a bird's flight a metaphor for hope. Traditional imagery typically has a cultural history. For example, in western culture, immersion in water frequently signifies rebirth or baptism, and the image of flight frequently symbolizes freedom. However, sometimes a writer will play with this cultural expectation and subvert its meaning. For example, Toni Morrison incorporates flight imagery to convey the effects of running away from our responsibilities. An alert reader needs to recognize and analyze traditional meanings of images, departures from tradition, and the effect of both on the meaning of the text.

Syntax= The way that words are arranged within sentences. Although the basic order of the English sentence is prescribed (there must be a subject and verb; word order cannot be random), there is great latitude in its execution. How writers control and manipulate the sentence affects the voice we hear and imparts personality to the writing. Syntax encompasses word order, sentence length, sentence focus, and punctuation.

Most English sentences follow a standard pattern of subject-verb-object/complement. Deviating from this pattern can startle the reader and draw attention to the sentence or particular words in the sentence. There are many ways to change normal word order, such as—

- Inverting subject and verb (Am I ever sorry!);
- Placing a complement at the beginning of a sentence (Hungry, without a doubt, he is.);
- Placing an object in front of a verb (Sara I like—not Susan).

Good writers shift between conformity and nonconformity, preventing reader complacency without overusing unusual sentence structure to the point of distraction. Linguistically, the point of most emphasis is on the last word in a sentence (a good reason to never end a sentence with a weak preposition).

Another aspect of syntax is sentence length. Writers vary sentence length to avoid monotony and control emphasis. A short sentence following a much longer sentence is emphasized by the **juxtaposition**. Many modern writers place key ideas in short sentences, but this has not always been the case throughout history. Now it is.

Writers also use syntactic tension—the withholding of syntactic closure-- to engage readers. Sentences that delay closure are called **periodic sentences**. Periodic sentences carry high tension and interest: the reader must wait until the end of the sentence to understand the meaning.

Here's an example: *As long as we ignore our children and refuse to dedicate the necessary time and money to their care, we will fail to solve the problem of school violence.* By using the syntactic tension of a periodic sentence, this writer places the emphasis in this sentence on the problem. We can't understand this sentence until we read all the way to the end word.

In contrast, sentences that reach syntactical closure early (**loose sentences**) relieve tension and allow the reader to explore the rest of the sentence without urgency. Note the difference in tension when we change the sentence

to a loose sentence: *We will fail to solve the problem of school violence as long as we ignore our children and refuse to dedicate the necessary time and money to their care.* The emphasis here is on the cause of failure.

Repetition is another way writers achieve syntactical focus. Purposeful repetition of a words, phrase, or clause emphasizes the repeated structure and focuses the reader's attention on its meaning. Repeating parallel grammatical forms such as infinitives and prepositional phrases balances parallel ideas and give them equal weight.

Punctuation is another way writers can manipulate syntax to reinforce meaning, construct effect, and express their voice. Of particular interest in shaping voice are the semicolon, colon, and dash.

- The *semicolon* (;) gives equal weight to independent clauses in a sentence; the resulting syntactical balance reinforces parallel ideas and imparts equal weight to both clauses.
- The *colon* (:) directs reader attention to the words that follow. A colon sets the expectation that important, closely related information will follow, and words after the colon are emphasized.
- The *dash*(--) marks a sudden change in thought or tone, sets off a brief summary, or sets off a parenthetical part of the sentence. A dash often conveys a casual tone.

Tone= Expression of attitude. It is the writer's (or narrator's) implied attitude towards his subject and audience. Tone is created by word selection (diction) and arrangement of words (syntax) and by purposeful use of details and images. Tone sets the relationship between reader and writer.

Tone is usually described with an adjective, such as one of the following: affectionate, angry, anxious, apprehensive, approving, ardent, bitter, calm, confident, confused, disrespectful, exhilarated, joyful, sympathetic, etc.

Understanding tone is requisite to understanding meaning. Identifying and analyzing tone requires careful reading, sensitivity to diction and syntax, and understanding of detail selection and imagery. This is where all your skills come into play. But, if we don't understand that a writer's tone is joking, we might misinterpret his meaning and find ourselves offended or angry. That's one reason that email, which does not convey tone well because of its brevity, relies on emoticons to show tone :)

Excerpted from--

Dean, Nancy. *Voice Lessons—Classroom Activities to Teach Diction, Details, Imagery, Syntax, and Tone*. Gainesville, Florida: Maupin House, 2000.

How to Successfully Write in Response to the *Voice Lesson*' Exercises

Before we begin your practice using *Voice Lessons*, there is one other skill that we need to review. For each exercise, you are expected to gracefully embed **at least one quote** as evidence to support your analysis.

Let's look at a sample *Voice Lesson*, with three student responses. The students' ability to include quotes and analysis ranges from just awful (Mary) to merely okay (Joe) to great (Susie). If you are not sure how to use quotes to support your analysis of a passage, look over these examples for a quick review. Here we go—

Imagery

Read and think:

On the night the baby was to be born the villagers raided our house. Some were crying. Like a great saw, teeth strung with lights, files of people walked zigzag across our land, tearing the rice.

Maxine Hong Kingston, *The Woman Warrior*, page 13

Write about it:

1. How does the imagery help convey the villagers' mood as they punish the family?

(A) Susie wrote an excellent response that embeds evidence (the quotes) to support her well-developed analysis. She also included an MLA citation to show the reader where the quote originated. Note that since subsequent quotes are from the same page, she only needs one citation:

Kingston employs violent imagery in this scene, comparing the villagers to a “great saw” (Kingston 13), cutting down and destroying everything in its path. This simile also emphasizes how cohesive they act as a single unit. Even though some villagers weep as they destroy the family's crops, they are all committed to punishing the family. The chaos of this scene is further emphasized as the villagers are moving “zigzag,” or randomly, as they are violently “tearing the rice,” revealing the passion of this destruction.

(B) Joe's response is just barely okay. He correctly inserts a quote but not very gracefully, his analysis is weakly developed, and he does not use MLA citations correctly:

The narrator uses lots of tool imagery in this passage. The narrator says, “files of people walked zigzag” (page 13). Tools are used to accomplish things and these villagers are accomplishing a job together.

Do you see the difference between an embedded quote (Susie's writing) and the way Joe works his quote into his writing? This is a difference in style—she has it, he doesn't.

(C) And now for poor Mary. She apparently was asleep during English the last few years. She does not know how to correctly introduce a quote, provide a citation, or even begin to analyze the quote. This is not acceptable:

The writer uses imagery. “Like a great saw, teeth strung with lights, files of people walked zigzag.”

Choose Susie as your role model. She writes clearly, knows how to embed a quote smoothly into a sentence, and analyzes how this imagery conveys the villagers' mood. Now you try it yourself with the following *Voice Lessons*

Name: _____

Don't forget that you must use at least one embedded quote on each page of these exercises. This is required and will be checked as part of your grade. Write in complete sentences.

Diction

Read and Think:

He spent hours in front of the mirror trying to **herd** his teeth into place with his thumb. He asked his mother if he could have braces, like Frankie Molina, her godson, but he asked at the wrong time.

Gary Soto, "Broken Chain," *Baseball in April and Other Stories*

Write About It:

1. What is Gary Soto implying about the narrator's teeth when he uses the verb **herd** in the first sentence?
2. How would the meaning change if the sentence were written like this?

*He spent hours in front of the mirror trying to **push** his teeth into place with his thumb.*

Now you try it:

Fill in the blank below with a strong verb that creates a clear picture in the reader's mind just as Soto does. Avoid such obvious verbs as *brush*, *comb*, or *fix*. Be creative!

She spent hours in front of the mirror trying to _____ her hair in place for the party.

Name: _____

Detail

Read and Think:

It isn't a pretty pass. The ball is moving so slowly I can clearly see its white laces turning through the air. I can see Tommy Zoda and Johnny Sanders, the middle linebackers, straining to reach for it, but it falls softly like a spent balloon into the fingers of Jared Bonton, Hudson's tight end.

Jan Cheripko, *Imitate the Tiger*

Write About It:

1. What is the main idea or focus of this paragraph? What details support the main idea and bring the reader into the narrator's experience?
2. How would the meaning and impact of the passage change if Cheripko had written the paragraph like this?

It is a terrible, slow pass. Members of our team try to catch the ball, but it falls right into the hands of one of their team's players.

Now you try it:

Write a paragraph about a time you tried to do something and weren't very successful. Use lots of vivid detail. Start with a general statement and support it with the specific details that make the experience come alive for the reader.

Name: _____

Imagery

Read and Think:

The silence was delicate. Aunty Ifeoma was scraping a burnt pot in the kitchen, and the *kroo-kroo-kroo* of the metal spoon on the pot seemed intrusive. Amaka and Papa-Nnukwu spoke sometimes, their voices low, twining together. They understood each other, using the sparest words. Watching them, I felt a longing for something I knew I would never have. I wanted to get up and leave, but my legs did not belong to me, did not do what I wanted them to.

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, *Purple Hibiscus*

Write About It:

1. Imagery is the re-creation of sensory experiences through language. Which of the five senses (sight, sound, taste, touch, smell) is most important here? Underline the particular words that create this sense experience for the reader.

2. The *kroo-kroo-kroo* of the metal spoon on the pot is described as *intrusive*. What does this mean? What image is contrasted with the sound of the metal spoon on the pot? What effect does this have on the passage?

Now you try it:

Describe your school hallway between classes. Focus on the sounds that are important in the scene. Use two contrasting images and a made-up word which imitates a sound, as Adichie does in her passage.

Name: _____

Syntax

Read and Think:

But once I spread my fingers in the dirt and crouch over the Get on Your Mark, the dream goes and I am solid again and am telling myself, Squeaky you must win, you must win, you are the fastest thing in the world, you can even beat your father up Amsterdam if you really try. And then I feel my weight coming back just behind my knees then down to my feet then into the earth and the pistol shot explodes in my blood and I am off and weightless again, flying past the other runners, my arms pumping up and down and the whole world is quiet except for the crunch as I zoom over the gravel in the track.

Toni Cade Bambara, "Raymond's Run" (*Creative Short Stories*)

Write About It:

1. Look at the first sentence in this passage. The sentence is made up of many short clauses in a row, each clause separated by a comma. Read the sentence aloud several times and think about it. A comma indicates a short pause, a little breath. Why do you think the author wrote the sentence this way instead of dividing it into separate sentences? In other words, how does the sentence structure emphasize the meaning of the sentence?
2. Both of these sentences start with conjunctions (but, and). What is the purpose of a conjunction? Why do you think the author has chosen to start these sentences with a conjunction?

Now you try it:

Write a sentence describing getting a phone call you are really excited about. Try to capture your excitement through your sentence structure, as Bambara does, using short clauses connected by commas. Begin your sentence with a conjunction (*and, but, or*).

Name: _____

Tone

Read and Think:

Turning off my headlamp, I freeze in the darkness. I quietly wait to hear the noise again. Suddenly something scuttles in the leaves scattered on the ground. My heart beats faster. What is it? Could it be a snake?

Rene Ebersole, "Night Shift," *National Geographic Explorer*, Oct. 2004

Write About It:

1. What is the tone of this passage? How does the syntax help create the tone? Look especially at the use of verb tense, sentence length, and questions.
2. How would the tone of the passage change if it were written like this?

I turned off my headlamp and froze in the darkness. I quietly waited to hear the noise again. Suddenly something scuttled in the leaves scattered on the ground. My heart beat faster. I wondered what it was and if it could have been a snake.

Now you try it:

Change the tone of the following paragraph by changing the syntax. In order to do that, change the verbs from the past tense to the present tense. Then combine some sentences to create longer sentences, but keep your most important ideas in short sentences. Finally, turn the last sentence into two questions.

I stopped suddenly and looked around me. I could not hear a sound. There was no traffic. I couldn't see anyone walking around in the park. Everything was too still. I wondered if something had happened and where everyone had gone.

Excerpted from--

Dean, Nancy. *Discovering Voice: Voice Lessons for Middle and High School*. Gainesville, Florida: Maupin House, 2006.

This rubric outlines how your first assignment will be graded. Read this carefully and attach it to your scrapbook before you submit it to your teacher. We look forward to quickly learning more about you, your writing, and your critical thinking abilities by reading this scrapbook.

Assignment 1: *The Woman Warrior* Scrapbook

Bring in your scrapbook with an appropriate cover that includes your name and class period. Each page of the scrapbook is worth a total of five points. To earn these points, each page must include the following:

- ✓ An important quote (documented with a page number) that reveals a significant aspect of the chapter
- ✓ A visual which insightfully reveals how your experience connects to Kingston's narrative
- ✓ A well-written paragraph that clearly explains the bridge between Kingston's experience and your own
- ✓ A neat and visually appealing appearance

Page 1: _____/5 points

Page 2: _____/5 points

Page 3: _____/5 points

Page 4: _____/5 points

Page 5: _____/5 points

Total Points: _____/25 points in the 10% Completion category

This rubric outlines how your second summer assignment will be graded. Read this carefully and attach it to your Voice Lessons before submitting it for grading.

Assignment 2: *Voice Lessons Packet*

Each Voice Lesson is worth four points. To earn these points, each page must include the following:

- ✓ Response reflects logical and critical thinking with analysis of language, not just paraphrase.
- ✓ Write in complete sentences unless the question asks you to circle words or create a list.
- ✓ Provides a clearly written response to all questions and prompts on the page.
- ✓ At least one correctly embedded quote on each page. See examples on page five.

Lesson 1: _____/4 points

Lesson 2: _____/4 points

Lesson 3: _____/4 points

Lesson 4: _____/4 points

Lesson 5: _____/4 points

Lesson 6: _____/4 points

Total Points: _____/24 points in the 10% Completion category