

**Advanced Placement (AP) Language and Composition
2011 Summer Reading for Grade 12**

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 prepares students for the May 2011 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 Things They Carried* by Tim O'Brien

Activity: O'Brien writes, "In any war story, but especially a true one, it's difficult to separate what happened from what seemed to happen. What seems to happen becomes its own happening and has to be told that way" (How to Tell A True War Story). In order to start making personal connections to the text, you will write a series of analytical journal entries as you read the novel.

Directions: As you read the novel, write reflective dialectical journal entries for nine different chapters. A dialectical journal asks you to, using a two column chart, identify passages from the novel that seem significant and analyze the significance of those quotations to the overall text. Each of your nine journal entries must identify 3 passages from the chapter. *In each journal entry, students must discuss HOW the chosen quotes make use of the vocabulary terms covered in the Voice Lessons packet. Each of the 5 terms (Diction, Detail, Imagery, Syntax, and Tone) must be used at least once in the journals. (See sample on following page.)*

Please do not summarize the quotes, which will result in a score no higher than 50%.

If you need inspiration to begin your journal, consider these questions:

- What does this chapter make us think about?
- How does this chapter characterize war or those involved in war?
- How does the title relate to this particular chapter?
- What strikes you as compelling about the main character or the narrator in the chapter?
- How do your previous ideas about the Vietnam War compare with what is communicated in this chapter?
- How is this chapter connected to other chapters or the rest of the novel?

A grading rubric for the Journal is attached as part of the last page of this assignment. This assignment counts for 27 points in the 10% Completion category.

Sample Dialectical Journal Entry:

<i>The Things They Carried</i> - by Tim O'Brien Passages from the text	Pg #s	Comments & Questions
“-they carried like freight trains; they carried it on their backs and shoulders-and for all the ambiguities of Vietnam, all the mysteries and unknowns, there was at least the single abiding certainty that they would never be at a loss for things to carry”.	Pg 2	O'Brien chooses to end the first section of the novel with this sentence. He provides excellent visual details of what each soldier in Vietnam would carry for day-to-day fighting. He makes you feel the physical weight of what soldiers have to carry for simple survival. When you combine the emotional weight of loved ones at home, the fear of death, and the responsibility for the men you fight with, with this physical weight, you start to understand what soldiers in Vietnam dealt with every day. This quote sums up the confusion that the men felt about the reasons they were fighting the war, and how they clung to the only certainty - things they had to carry - in a confusing world where normal rules were suspended.

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 five 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 20 points (4 points per page).

Contact James_C_Agnew@mcpsmd.org or Susan_T_Leckie@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*

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:

Kingston employs violent imagery in this scene, comparing the villagers to a “great saw,” 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 and his analysis is weakly developed:

The narrator uses lots of tool imagery in this passage. The narrator says, “files of people walked zigzag.” 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 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.

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 Zodac 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: _____

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 journal before you submit it to your teacher. We look forward to learning more about you and your writing through your observations and musings in this journal.

Assignment 1: *The Things They Carried* Journal

The text has been divided into three sections, so you should choose three chapters from each section, for a total of nine (9) journal entries. You will turn in your typed journal to Turnitin.com; your AP Language teacher will provide you with instructions on the first day of school. A hard copy of your typed journal entries is due on Tuesday, August, 30, 2011, the second day of school, **accompanied by your Turnitin.com receipt**. Your entries must be saved as one document with a heading for each separate entry that indicates the section of the novel, Chapter title, and the entry number (ex., Section 1, *The Things They Carried*, Entry 1 **or** Section 1, *On the Rainy River*, Entry 2). Each Journal Entry is worth a total of three points. To earn these points, each page must:

- ✓ Be clearly written and insightful
- ✓ Apply the *Voice Lessons* vocabulary.
- ✓ Make direct and implied references to details in text
- ✓ Be well-organized, coherent, and free of mechanical errors

Sections (3 journals/section)

Section 1 - Pages 1-85

Section 2 - Pages 86-154

Section 3 - Pages 155 to 246 (end)

Journal 1: _____/3 points

Journal 2: _____/3 points

Journal 3: _____/3 points

Journal 4: _____/3 points

Journal 5: _____/3 points

Journal 6: _____/3 points

Journal 7: _____/3 points

Journal 8: _____/3 points

Journal 9: _____/3 points

Total Points: _____/27 points in the 10% Completion category