

# **AP English Language and Composition**

## **Summer Reading Assignment**

## Part I - In Cold Blood (Truman Capote)

*This is not your typical true crime story! Capote reports on a robbery turned murder in a Kansas town, but he so deeply immerses himself into the minds of the criminals that it seems as though he was actually there.*

### ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTION

As you read, keep a dialectical journal. You will create dialectical journal entries which are representative of the major sections of the text. The divisions in the book are noted below. You should have **3 entries per segment** of the book, which will result in a **total of 12** entries for the entire assignment. Place these entries in a marble composition book.

In Cold Blood - Part I ("The Last to See Them Alive")  
Part II ("Persons Unknown")  
Part III ("Answer")  
Part IV ("The Corner")

Each journal entry must focus on the assigned rhetorical strategy employed by the author. The goal of each journal entry is to explain **how** the device helps the author to create meaning and to achieve his purpose. This journal will be evaluated using the attached rubric and will count as a quiz grade during the first marking period.

### INSTRUCTIONS

Your last name will determine your specific area of focus within each book.

Focus on Diction: Last names A – H  
Focus on Imagery: Last names I – P  
Focus on Detail: Last names Q - Z

### Rhetorical Strategies – what to consider as you read

#### Diction - the word choice

What words does the author choose? Consider his/her word choice compared to another. Why did the author choose that particular word? What are the advantages and disadvantages?

Ex: Self-confident: proud, conceited, egotistical, stuck-up, haughty, smug, condescending

Describe diction by considering the following:

- a) **syllables** – words can be **monosyllabic** or **polysyllabic**. The higher the ratio of polysyllabic words, the more difficult the content.

- b) **denotative/connotative meanings**
- c) **concrete** (specific) or **abstract** (general)
- d) **sounds** – words can be pleasant sounding (**euphonious**) or harsh sounding (**cacophonous**)

### **Images - vivid appeals to understanding through the senses**

What images does the author use? What does he/she focus on in a sensory way? NOTE: Images differ from detail in the degree to which they appeal to the senses. The use of vivid descriptions or figures of speech that appeal to sensory experiences helps to create the author's *tone*.

Discuss imagery by considering the following

- a) Comparisons - simile, metaphor
- b) Word play
- c) Overstatement/Understatement
- d) Semantic Inversions - rhetorical question, irony, oxymoron, paradox

### **Details - *facts* that are included or those that are omitted**

What details does the author choose to include? What do they imply? What does the author choose to exclude? What are the connotations of their choice of details?

## **Dialectical Journal Writing**

What, you might ask, is a double entry journal? Like annotation, double entry journal writing is a way for the reader to interact with the text and to record impressions and responses to the text as he/she reads. In the left-hand page or column, copy or summarize intriguing, puzzling, or moving text, or text which connects to a previous entry or situation. In many cases, you will be given a particular passage to work with or you will be given a question/comment to connect to the text. Reactions to the text are recorded in the right hand column. These entries will include analysis, reaction, connection, or a question to the text. As it is with annotation, these responses should be varied and explicit. (Although a reaction, "HAHA" does not suffice!) Typically, entries are made in a dialectical journal whenever a natural pause in the reading occurs, so that the flow is not interrupted constantly. Other times, the assignment will dictate the frequency of your responses. (ex: tracing a particular symbol or motif, noting changes in tone)

As you read, note striking words, images, phrases, or details. Speculate about them. Why did the author choose them? What do they add to the story? Why did you notice them? On a first reading you might put checks in the margin/use sticky notes where the passages intrigue you; on the second reading, choose the most interesting ideas, then write about them. As you respond to the quotations, focus on the ways in which the author uses language to create an effect. What is it about the language that stands out and makes the passage distinctive? How does the passage reflect the author's style and reveal larger themes of the work?

## Scoring Rubric

**A score of 4 (90-100) is given to journals that meet the requirements of the assignment and are characterized by the following qualities:**

- Reading log entry is written in an integrated and thoughtful way and demonstrates an awareness of the author and purpose of the work
- Summarizes/analyzes reading in a concise manner
- Infers the main idea
- Includes details to help reader understand the text
- Questions the author's purpose
- Makes a prediction
- Poses questions that extend beyond the text
- Makes a text-to-world connection

**A score of 3 (80-89) is given to journals that meet the requirements of the assignment and are characterized by the following qualities:**

- Fairly thoughtful
- Summarizes reading in a concise manner
- Poses questions
- Makes a text-to-self/text-to-text connection
- May have minor inaccuracies

**A score of 2 (70-79) is given to journals that meet most of the requirements of the assignment and are characterized by the following qualities:**

- Retells reading
- Includes too many irrelevant details
- May ask a question
- May make a prediction
- Has many inaccuracies

**A score of 1 (60-69) is given to journals that meet most of the requirements of the assignment and are characterized by the following qualities:**

- Retells reading but demonstrates little thought/analysis
- Has many inaccuracies

**A score of 0 is given to journals that do not meet the requirements of the assignment and/or are characterized by the following qualities:**

- Retells reading
- Has many inaccuracies
- Displays evidence of plagiarism

## Part II: Editorial Assignment

*Students who read about current issues will be far more prepared for the AP exam. The goal of this assignment is for students to become familiar with local, state, national, and global events. Using the issues of the day as a basis, students will examine differing perspectives and methods of argument.*

Scan credible newspapers and news magazines (paper or online versions) to find an important issue in **ONE** of the categories listed below about which there are opposing opinions or controversial pros and cons. Do not locate a news article that simply reports a story and does not provide an opinion. Make your selection in one of the following categories:

- Politics
- Economics/Finance
- Education
- Science
- Technology
- Health

Once you select your topic, you must locate 6 different articles dealing with that issue (none may be dated earlier than June 1, 2017). For each article, obtain a hard copy, either the actual newspaper clipping or a computer printout. Annotate the article as you read. Fill out a cover sheet with article information and responses to questions about each of your articles. Be sure to complete an individual cover sheet for each article. This assignment should be typed and printed for submission.

### Editorial Assignment – Cover Sheet Template

All entries must be typed and in this order for each article. Each entry should be numbered in the upper right hand corner and should be placed directly in front of the actual article. If you have cut your article from an actual paper/magazine, you may wish to tape it to a standard piece of paper. Organize your packet by date, from earliest to latest.

1. Proper MLA Citation
2. Rhetorical Precis
3. Identify the most compelling idea of the piece and state it in no more than three sentences.
4. Is this an effective argument? Explain why/why not in no more than three sentences.
5. Do you detect bias? Is it political, conservative, liberal, etc...? How do you know? Explain in no more than three sentences.
6. Note interesting phrases/ideas.
7. Describe the style of the writer in no more than three sentences.

## The Rhetorical Précis

(borrowed with permission from Trista Czapski)

The précis is a highly structured four-sentence paragraph that records the essential elements of a unit of spoken or written discourse, including the name of the speaker/writer, the context of the delivery, the major assertion, the mode of development and/or support, the stated and/or apparent purpose, and the relationship established between the speaker/writer and the audience (the last element is intended to identify the tone of the work). Each of the four sentences requires specific information; students are also encouraged to integrate brief quotations to convey the author's sense of style and tone.

### **Format:**

1. Name of author [optional: a phrase describing author], genre and title of work [date and additional publishing information in parenthesis]; a rhetorically accurate verb (such as "assert," "argue," "suggest," "imply," "claim," etc.); and a THAT clause containing the major assertion (thesis statement) of the work.
2. An explanation of how the author develops and/or supports the thesis, usually in chronological order – always identifying the rhetorical mode(s) employed.
3. A statement of the author's apparent purpose followed (introduce with the infinitive "to").
4. A description of the intended audience and/or the relationship the author establishes with the audience.

### **Further Details and Explanation of Purpose:**

The first sentence is probably the most difficult. Students should be careful to employ a rhetorically accurate verb followed by a THAT clause, avoiding the use of more general words such as "writes" and "states." The THAT clause is designed to demand a complete statement: a grammatical subject (the topic of the essay) and predicate (the claim that is made about that topic). If the THAT clause is not employed, students will end up allowing "about" and "how" to slip out in stating the thesis: i.e., "Sheridan Baker writes about attitudes in writing" or "... states how attitudes affect writing" -- neither of which reports what he claims to be true about attitudes.

The second sentence is less structured. Sometimes it works best to report the order of development: "The author develops this assertion first, by applying these techniques to two poems; second, by providing definitions; and third, by explaining the history of each approach." A more general statement may also work in the second sentence: "The author develops this idea by comparing and contrasting the lives of these two Civil War heroes." In works of literature, the second sentence may provide a short plot summary: "Hemingway develops this idea through a sparse narrative about the 'initiation' of a young boy who observes in one night both a birth and a death."

The third sentence sometimes inadvertently restates the thesis: "The author's purpose is to prove that..." Remember that one's purpose is always to put forward a thesis, but there are others as well. The infinitive "to" phrase should transcend a phrase such as "Her purpose is to inform;" look beyond such a simplistic response to assess what the author wants the audience to do or to feel as a result of reading the work.

In the fourth sentence, students need to ask how the language of the work excludes certain audiences (non-specialists would not understand the terminology; children would not understand the

irony) in order to see that the author did make certain assumptions about the pre-existing knowledge of the audience. This sentence may also report the author's tone.

**Student Produced Example:**

In her essay "Women Who Write too Much" from *Remembered Rapture* (1999), Bell Hooks suggests that all dissident writers, particularly black female writers, face enormous time pressures: if they are not prodigious, they are never noticed by mainstream publishers. She supports her position first by describing her early writing experiences that taught her to "not be afraid of the writing process"; second, by explaining her motives for writing, including "political activism"; and lastly, by affirming her argument, stressing that people must strategically schedule their writing and "make much of that time." Her two-pronged purpose is to respond to critics and to encourage minority writers to develop their own voice. Although at times her writing seems almost didactic, Hooks ultimately establishes a companionable relationship with her audience of both critics and women who seek to improve the effectiveness of their own writing.

**Editorial Assignment Scoring Rubric**

<b>Elements</b>	<b>10 pts.</b>	<b>8 pts.</b>	<b>6 pts.</b>	<b>4 pts.</b>	<b>0 pts.</b>
<b>Annotations</b>	Extensive	Thorough	Sufficient	Inadequate	Missing
<b>MLA Citation</b>	Excellent attention to format	The majority is properly formatted.	Lapses in format requirements.	Little attention to format requirements.	Lacking format completely.
<b>Precis</b>	Excellent attention to format.	The majority is properly formatted.	Lapses in format requirements.	Little attention to format requirements.	Lacks precis format completely.
<b>Content Response</b>	All categories met with thoughtful and thorough responses.	All categories met with thorough responses.	All categories met with adequate responses.	Missing 1 – 2 categories; responses lacking.	Missing entirely.
<b>Credibility Response</b>	All categories met with thoughtful and thorough responses.	All categories met with thorough responses.	All categories met with adequate responses.	Missing 1 – 2 categories; responses lacking.	Missing entirely.
Total:					

*“Henrico County Public Schools strongly encourages parents/guardians to work with their children as they read their summer reading books.”*