**AP English Language and Composition**

**Summer Reading Assignment**

**2018-2019**

**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. If you search for editorials online, then you must make sure that you go to the **OPINION section** of the newspaper. **At the top of your article it should say Opinion, Editorial or Perspective**. **If it doesn’t then it isn’t an opinion piece.**

Make your selection in one of the following categories:

* Politics
* Environment
* Education
* Science and Technology
* Economics/Finance
* Health

Visit <http://www.onlinenewspapers.com/Top50/Top50-CurrentUS.htm> to see a list of 50 reputable online newspapers. These are just suggestions, but they are a good place to start.

Once you select your topic, you must locate **6 different editorials** **dealing with the issue you have chosen to follow** (none may be dated earlier than June 1, 2018). For each article, obtain a hard copy, either the actual newspaper clipping or a computer printout. Annotate the editorial 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.

**During the third week of school, you will use these articles to respond to a prompt regarding the issue you have chosen. It will count as a quiz grade.**

**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 Précis (see attached for directions)
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. (see below for information about style)

**Editorial Assignment Scoring Rubric**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Elements** | **10 pts.** | **8 pts.** | **6 pts.** | **4 pts.** | **0 pts.** |
| **Annotations** | Extensive | Thorough | Sufficient | Inadequate | Missing |
| **MLA Citation** | Excellent attention to format | The majority is properly formatted. | Lapses in format requirements. | Little attention to format requirements. | Lacking format  completely. |
| **Precis** | Excellent attention to format. | The majority is properly formatted. | Lapses in format requirements. | Little attention to format requirements. | Lacks precis format completely. |
| **Content**  **Response** | 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. |
| **Credibility**  **Response** | 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 assignments."***

**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.