

Dear In-coming AP Language Students:

May 2009

The best way to prepare for AP Language next year is to read voraciously. Reading expands your vocabulary, your perceptions, and your understanding of rhetoric, the art of persuasion. Reading a variety of challenging literature is especially important since you are advancing to a college-level course which emphasizes complex ideas and sophisticated communication skills.

This summer we hope you will read **more** than the required assignments. Challenge yourself to explore masterpieces of English Literature, current issues debated in the news, and classics of American Literature you have not yet read.

**Required:**

1. Read and annotate (write in your book or use sticky notes) one of the English Literature classics listed below. You will write an in-class essay on this book the first week of school, so pay close attention to the literary elements and provocative themes this book reveals. Choose from the following list:
  - *A Tale of Two Cities*, Charles Dickens
  - *Dracula*, Bram Stoker
  - *Emma*, Jane Austen
  - *Frankenstein*, Mary Shelley
  - *Gulliver's Travels*, Jonathan Swift
  - *The Once and Future King*, T. H. White
  - *The Power and the Glory* OR *The End of the Affair*, Graham Greene
  - *Return of the Native*, Thomas Hardy
  - *Wuthering Heights*, Emily Bronte
2. Trace a newspaper columnist. Use the attached handout which explains the responses you must turn in the first day of class.

**Optional, but strongly encouraged:**

3. Read an American Literature classic. If you are currently in regular sophomore English, you must read *The Great Gatsby*! Twenty years from now you will feel like a major ignoramus if you have not read this novel! To be considered culturally literate, you should also read *Death of a Salesman* and *The Crucible*.
4. If you are currently in Honors American Literature, challenge yourself to read more of the following classics. *The Scarlet Letter*, *Huckleberry Finn*, *Ethan Frome*, *The Glass Menagerie*, *Intruder in the Dust*, *East of Eden*, *The Bluest Eye*, and *Catcher in the Rye* are just a few unforgettable examples of famous works which will make you a Jeopardy Champion!
5. Read the newspaper, listen to the news, and engage your parents or other adults in scintillating conversations to expand your understanding of allusions and significant events. To become a persuasive writer you must be knowledgeable of the world around you, both past and present.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Cladny

Mrs. Ferrill

Mr. Siekmeier

# Following a Columnist for Summer

Some of the most prominent practitioners of stylish written rhetoric in our culture are newspaper columnists. Sometimes they are called *pundits* (from the Hindu—learned man, authority, or critic).

Choose a columnist to study from the list on the reverse side. Note that these are professional print journalists (not bloggers). Once you have selected a columnist to study, complete the four tasks below. You may also have success locating columns via EBSCO.

- 1) A brief (100-200 word) biography of the columnist. Make sure you cite your sources. *Before* you visit Wikipedia, check Gale’s Literature Resource Center and/or Contemporary Authors or the columnist’s website.
- 2) Three (3) thoroughly annotated columns. We suggest cutting and pasting the columns into Microsoft Word and double-spacing them. Your annotations should emphasize:
  - \*The thesis of the column in one sentence.
  - \*The means by which the columnist seeks to convince readers of the truth of his central idea and indicators of this.
  - \*The stylistic device(s) at work in the column (“the dress of thought”—Samuel Johnson).
  - \*The tone of the column (the author’s attitude toward the subject).
  - \*Errors of logic (if any) that appear in the column.
- 3) For one (1) column, find and attach an alternate view:
  - a) an unbiased news report about the topic of the column;
  - b) either another columnist’s alternate outlook on the issue, or a letter to the editor that disagrees with the original column.
- 4) With the perspective of an alternate view, *take a position that defends, challenges, or qualifies the argument of the original column* (in 100-200 words).

Study these columns with the knowledge that you, too, are a writer of arguments, a rhetorician. Look for something that this columnist does well to incorporate into your own written rhetoric.



adapted from Jim Veal, Peachtree Ridge H.S., Suwanee, GA

## Opinion Columnists II

### *Local Newspaper*

<http://www.denverpost.com/opinion>

### *New York Times* columnists

<http://www.nytimes.com/pages/opinion/index.html>

### *Panoply of columnists*

<http://www.townhall.com/columnists/>

### *Washington Post* columnists

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/opinions/>

### *Particular Columnists*

\*George F. Will—syndicated columnist

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/linkset/2005/03/24/LI2005032402294.html>

\*Mona Charen—syndicated columnist

<http://www.jewishworldreview.com/cols/charen.html>

\*Ellen Goodman—*Boston Globe* columnist

[http://www.boston.com/bostonglobe/editorial\\_opinion/ellen\\_goodman/](http://www.boston.com/bostonglobe/editorial_opinion/ellen_goodman/)

\*Jonah Goldberg—*Los Angeles Times* columnist

<http://www.latimes.com/news/columnists/>

\*Peggy Noonan—Former presidential speechwriter; *Wall Street Journal* columnist

<http://www.opinionjournal.com/columnists/pnoonan>  
<http://online.wsj.com/public/article/declarations.html>

\*Thomas Sowell—Hoover Institution scholar

<http://www.hoover.org/bios/sowell.html>

\*Cynthia Tucker—*Atlanta Journal-Constitution* columnist

<http://www.ajc.com/opinion/content/opinion/tucker/index.html>

\*Charles M. Blow—*The New York Times* visual Op-Ed columnist

[http://topics.nytimes.com/top/opinion/editorialsandoped/oped/columnists/charles\\_m\\_blow/index.html](http://topics.nytimes.com/top/opinion/editorialsandoped/oped/columnists/charles_m_blow/index.html)