Please share this syllabus with your parents and ask them to read it. I am happy to answer any questions you or they have about the work we will be doing!

Course Description
The purpose of the AP English Language course is twofold. First, this is an honors English course during which you will develop skills as an efficient reader, effective writer, and critical thinker. Secondly, this course is designed to give you practice and preparation for taking the Advanced Placement English Language test in May. While we will work directly with the test, and sometimes do hands-on work with released exams, this is not purely a test-prep course. During AP Language, you will do college level reading and writing, and it is my first priority that you are OVER prepared for any academic experience you find when you move on with your education.

In general, the work we do in AP 11 is assigned to develop skills in reading and composing purposeful writing, including the ability to analyze, argue, reason, and synthesize. Students interpret a variety of texts from various historical periods and disciplines identifying speaker, subject, and audience. The ability to analyze rhetorical strategies and techniques prepare students to incorporate these strategies in their own writing. Students write to analyze, argue, and synthesize ideas and information from various sources and demonstrate knowledgeable application of MLA and/or APA style. Students will become reflective writers, increasingly incorporating effective rhetoric into their compositions and tailoring their writing to a particular audience and purpose within a given context.

The intellectual and academic growth you work towards should be reflected naturally on the AP Language test. Your efforts on the test will yield a single score of 1-5, and universities may use that score to determine how qualified you are for earning elective or English college credit. Issuing institutions determine what credit is awarded, but Indiana state law does dictate some crediting in our own state. The College Board suggests these qualifications: 5 = extremely/very highly qualified; 4 = highly qualified; 3 = qualified; 2 = may or may not be qualified; 1 = not qualified. The greatest classroom indicators of success on the AP Language test taken in May are engaging consistently and thoughtfully in all work, maintaining a positive attitude, and being aware of why we do what we do.

Goals of the Course
In general, my goal for you is to grow as a student in order to be an effective, college-level critical thinker, reader, writer, and decision maker. To achieve that, I hope you can experience these things by the end of the year:
1. …view yourself as a capable, successful, and continually growing critical reader, writer, and thinker.
2. …read all texts critically and actively in order not only to comprehend them but also to understand their complexities and understand the impact of stylistic and rhetorical choices on writing and audience.
3. …develop purposeful, mature, and effective writing in a variety of genres such as academic, personal, and reflective.
4. …make surprising, sophisticated, and critical claims about what you read.
5. …have performed admirably on the AP Language and Composition test and earned some well-deserved college credit!

Course Textbooks (rented, not purchased)
- The McGraw Hill Reader
- The Little Brown Handbook

Required Materials
- assigned readings in hard copy (provided) or course texts (when noted on the unit reading outline)
- a sturdy plastic folder for submitting multiple draft writing
- a composition notebook (with bound pages)
- access to a Google Drive account and Google Docs
- iPad, notebook paper, pens…etc…
**Grades and Grading Scale**

Grades will be generated by a variety of things each nine weeks. Some work will be assigned to develop specific skills, and assessment of that work will be influenced by what it is, when we are doing it, and how much of it we have done. For example, if I ask you to do an in-class analysis that was released from Advanced Placement, my assessment of you will be different in April than it is in September because by April, you’ll have had months of practice in such thinking and writing. Also, there will be some work assigned each nine weeks that you are in total control of: reading the assigned works and being prepared to write about them, multiple draft writing assignments, to name a couple. All of these things are crucial in the context of preparing for college work and for the AP Language and Composition Test that is given sometime in May.

Below is a rubric that offers definitions for grading scales. Assessment of virtually all work, except for “completion” work, will align with these criteria.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>“A” work is exceptional. It far exceeds the expectations of what is assigned. An “A” is earned on work that demonstrates consistent engagement with course content and/or a comprehensive and mature grasp of skills involved in doing the work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>“B” work above average. It goes beyond the expectations of what is assigned. A “B” is earned on work that demonstrates quality engagement with the course content and/or a marked development in the skills involved in doing the work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>“C” work is competent and gets the work done. There is nothing inherently wrong with C work; it may simply meet the expectations of what is assigned. A “C” is earned on work that demonstrates acceptable engagement with course content and/or some development in the skills involved in doing the work. “C” academic work, like work anywhere, is average and acceptable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>“D” work is below average. It does not meet some essential criteria for what is assigned. A “D” is earned on work that demonstrates a more limited understanding of the course content, limited development of the skills involved in doing the work, and/or lack of effort.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Failing work does not meet enough of essential criteria for what is assigned. An “F” is earned on work that fails to demonstrate an understanding of basic course content and/or too little development of the skills involved in doing the work.</td>
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Remember: just because it is done doesn’t mean it is exceptional.

**Ongoing Work and Developing Skills in Critical Reading and Composition**

In AP Language, we play the “long game.” You will typically have homework, but there will be very little “studying.” Your success in this course is directly proportional to the consistent effort and engagement you put into work done in all aspects noted below. All these activities are aligned with requirements laid out in the Indiana Academic Standards and comply with best practices as suggested or required by the College Board.

*He that reads and grows no wiser seldom suspects his own deficiency, but complains of hard words and obscure sentences, and asks why books are written which cannot be understood.* (Samuel Johnson)

I. **Vocabulary Acquisition and Language Study**
   a. study of specific vocabulary from texts that have particular rhetorical impact
   b. ongoing vocabulary study: “found” and assigned vocabulary
   c. ongoing use of *The Little Brown Handbook*
II. **The Reading** (these are tools used at to help students develop the skills practiced with the coursework, and some may be prioritized over others based on the needs of students; all are recommended by the College Board for PSAT, SAT, and AP test preparation)

a. **Class discussions**: Class discussions are a vital part of growth in the course. In them, we model the kinds of thinking most beneficial to preparing for the AP Language test AND later, more academic, reading experiences at a university. We will focus our attention on identifying the writer’s topic, the primary argument they are making about that topic, and the stylistic and rhetorical strategies s/he uses to advance the argument.

b. **Visual Analysis**: Each unit will contain cartoons, photographs, film clips, charts, and/or artwork that we will use not only to enhance the theme of the unit but also to serve as a visual learning tool. We will analyze visual texts with the same focus and purpose as written texts. Students will learn the importance of rhetoric in the visual world.

c. **SOAPSTONE**: Students may use the SOAPSTONE method for analyzing texts.

d. **Dialectical Journals**: In-class or out, students may use a specific kind of journal that encourages “conversation” about an author’s ideas and strategies in a dual-entry format.

e. **Rhetorical Precis**: The précis is a highly structured four-sentence paragraph that records the essential elements of spoken or written discourse.

f. **Questions about Rhetoric and Style**: Many readings come with questions about authorial choices or stylistic elements. Answering these questions as a pre- and post-reading activity will help you develop skills in recognizing particular, common strategies employed by writers and skill in explaining how they work to achieve a purpose in any given text.

g. **Practice AP Tests and AP style questions**: Each nine weeks, students will take a 55-question AP-style multiple-choice test. These are actual, released AP Language and Composition released exams, so by the time you get to the AP Language test in May, you will have taken four different multiple-choice AP tests in preparation. Due to the limited resources the College Board provides, I will not release the test questions, but you are welcome to come review a test without taking it with you or keeping any images of it. The AP test multiple choice section yields scores that (like the SAT) are normed (see below). I will not record raw scores on these tests—that would be grossly unfair. Instead, I will record scores that reflect the typical spread of scores each year. Details will be given in class.

*If people cannot write well, they cannot think well, and if they cannot think well, others will do their thinking for them.*  (George Orwell)

III. **The Writing**

a. **Traditional Academic Writing**: Each nine weeks, I will require you to complete at least one, perhaps two, multiple-draft assignment pertinent to the contents of the unit we are working through. The format of the assignments could serve to prepare you for upcoming work. (For example, in the first nine weeks we will write an argument synthesis so you are better prepared in the second nine weeks to write argument syntheses as timed writings in class.) The assignments are versions of work you will see during university course work and will be purpose-driven: narrative, argument, analysis, and research/argument synthesis. I respond to drafts of writing using both an analytical rubric and comments; both are designed to give students guidance in development of the assignment.

b. **Inquiry Based Writing**: During the second semester, we will engage in at least one “IBW” project, which is a process of inquiry-driven writing that allows students to learn by (1) asking critical, open-ended questions (ones they cannot already answer) concerning a topic they are interested in, (2) investigating answers to their question, (3) creating a written product that argues a particular answer, (4) discussing or sharing their findings with other writers, and (5) reflecting on their process or investigation and composition, and (6) presenting findings in a TED-style presentation to the class.

c. **Annotated Bibliography**: As part of an IBW project, I will ask you to compose a series of annotated bibliography entries, a list of cited articles you have consulted in doing some kind of academic writing. This research process will include finding, evaluating, citing, and writing about sources. The writing could include summarizing information, analyzing specific arguments, and/or speculating as to the worth of the ideas in articles in advancing or drafting research. “Annotated bibs” are a standard form of research writing in college, especially in all sciences (i.e. biology, chemistry, psychology, sociology, linguistics) as well as social sciences, social work, education, and many composition courses.
d. **Writer’s Notebook and Quickwrites:** It is vital that you have space to write, think, and express yourselves in a completely self-driven way. One of the most difficult things to develop is an ability to put into words an original idea, something that is your intellectual property, whether it concerns a reading, a memory, a current event, an essential question, a conversation you heard, or simply an observation about the human condition. (Harder is figuring out what to do with it once you have it, but more on that later…) To that effect, many days we meet, I will ask you to engage in non-fiction writing of your choice for 10-15 minutes. I may or may not give you a prompt, but if I do, the prompt is always optional. You may do with it what you wish—ignore it, modify it, or write about it. When we finish, I will offer an opportunity for anyone to share the ideas they wrote about or even read from what they composed. This will not be an opportunity to critique.

e. **Workshop and Reflecting:** First semester I will ask you to produce non-fiction writing of your own design and choosing that is NOT research-based. You choose the topic, audience, and even genre, as long as it is non-fiction. We will develop the writing using a writer’s workshop forum with peer interaction, teacher conferencing with individuals and small groups, and post-essay reflection synthesis. These ideas will likely come from the developing Writer’s Notebooks. This is your chance to write about something that totally engages you in a form that serves your purposes—narrating, arguing, informing, researching, or some combination of these things. (The “blended” drafts are usually the most interesting.) This portfolio writing project will be due the 2nd nine weeks; but I will ask you to submit drafts of several of self-selected writings throughout the school year—things that genuinely interest you as ideas or developing drafts.

f. **Timed Writings:** Several times each nine weeks, students will produce a piece of prompt-driven writing within a timeframe of about 50 minutes. The prompts will be pulled from previous Advanced Placement Language and Composition tests and will require students to produce an argument or synthesize sources into an argument (both in the first semester) or produce an argument about a text and how an author achieves a particular purpose with his audience (rhetorical analysis). These timed writings will be scored holistically with the rubric associated with each particular prompt (as per College Board professional development). We will make extensive use of student models which are released from the College Board for the purposes of assessment. During the second semester we will review the kinds of writing we did first semester in preparation for the AP Language test.

g. **Peer Review:** will be conducted in class and virtually, using Canvas tools. Writers learn from other writers; thus, peer review is a typical and essential part of learning how to compose effective writing. You will work through your own questions about the drafts you compose, and you will respond to guided questions I provide about specific assignments. These peer review efforts are an integral and required part of all multiple-draft writing assignments, and not completing peer review, or completing it in shallow or purposeless ways, will result in negative impact on your grade.

h. **Submitting Writing:** you will submit multiple draft writing assignments in hard copy AND in dedicated assignments on Canvas so I have an electronic copy of your work.

i. **Teacher Response to Writing:** I usually do not respond to first drafts. We will utilize some kind of peer review with initial efforts to an assignment. I do typically respond the penultimate draft (the second to last). That way, before you submit work, you have some guidance as to how to complete an assignment the most effective and efficient ways. As part of my response to your penultimate draft, I will respond questions you pose about your draft, point out any glaring problems so you can address them before submission, and mark the same rubric I will use to assess your final, submitted draft. (I will also ask you to mark the rubric as a means of self-assessment.)

j. **Ongoing work reported via a Google Doc shared with me.** You will make the document available for my commenting and commenting. On this document, you will use this document to record a variety of things, including, but not limited to:

   i. page and word count of multiple draft writing assignments (in-progress and final drafts)
   ii. reflections on writing or tests
   iii. vocabulary work including challenging vocabulary you select and vocabulary assigned
   iv. any concerns or issues you’d like to share with me confidentially (as only I will have access to the Doc)
   v. notes from class (we don’t do many) or notes taken in group discussions or projects

### IV. Assessing the Work

a. Some work will be norm-referenced in assessment—that is, your performance will be considered in the context of the group scores (such as highest scores and the range of scores). The PSAT, SAT, and the multiple choice section of the AP Language test are norm-referenced. Reading tests, the AP-style test in the fashion of the summer reading test, are norm-referenced. The 55-question reading tests we take each nine weeks, as well as both fall and spring
final exams, are norm referenced. I will plot scores to determine the highest and average scores then set the total possible points based on that spread.

b. Other work will be criterion-referenced. Your performance will be assessed based on comparison to some standard or criterion. Writing assignments, both the in-class and multiple draft varieties, are typically criterion-referenced. AP-style, in-class drafts will be graded holistically, with an extrinsic rubric, just as they will be scored in June after students take the AP Language and Composition test.

Each Unit/Nine Weeks You Can Expect

Roughly each nine weeks you can count on:

- 8-10 intense and (usually) enjoyable readings
- vocabulary study as part of discussions of the readings or as separate work
- reading checks or written responses to the reading assignments
- one or two major, multiple-draft writing assignment
- 3 in-class, AP-style timed writings (argument, synthesis, analysis)
- one AP-style reading test (normed) that measures critical reading skills and developing test-taking skills
- self-chosen, low-stakes writer’s notebook time (my hope is that this occurs daily, at least in the first semester)

Grading Categories

Writing Assignments, Reading Quizzes, AP-style Reading Tests, Timed Writings, Other Projects 80%
In-class work and Homework 20%

Academic Policies

- Plagiarism is willfully using words or ideas that belong to another person in any academic work. Plagiarism is not limited simply to robbing an academic source of words or ideas; students who allow others to complete their work for them or use another’s efforts as their own are also guilty of plagiarism. The consequence of plagiarism may be a 0 for the assignment in question for all parties involved.
  - Communicating outside of class about timed writings, AP-style readings tests, reading quizzes, or any other assessments is considered cheating. Do not give others an advantage you did not have.
  - Unless you are seriously ill, injured, recovering from surgery, or in mourning, please keep up with work via Canvas. If you are experiencing any of those things, please communicate with me as early and as often as possible. You are responsible for work due during an absence when you return; similarly, you are responsible for completing assessments, tests, writing, and/or quizzes the day you return, unless you have communicated with me and I have replied and given you an extension.
  - Do not email me work unless you have prior approval or at my request; any work emailed to me without my request for it will be probably be deleted.

- Homework uploaded into Canvas assignments are due at the time specified in the assignment. I typically make assignments due at the beginning of class, but I leave them open until 11:59pm the same day. Work uploaded after the due date and time in Canvas will be recorded as 60% of earned credit. Technology is not an excuse; if you want to avoid problems or deductions, please upload work the night before and look for a confirmation.

- Work missed during absences will be recorded as a 0 until you make it up. This is not a penalty; it is a placeholder. Announced quizzes and tests missed due to your absence on test/quiz day must be made up the day you return.

- All major written work (including drafts), and many homework assignments, should be submitted typed. If they are not, expect a deduction in your final grade of at least a quarter of the points. Typed documents should have one-inch margins and be typed in 12 point Times New Roman, Courier New, or Arial fonts.

- Please ask about particular grades within 72 hours of posting or after work is returned. After two weeks, you will probably get a blank stare because I won’t remember a thing…

- Save all work that is returned to you; we reflect as part of our ongoing work, and you will need to refer to your past efforts in order to explain your continuing growth as a student.

- If you owe me any kind of assessment or required work, that AP Language work takes priority over music/voice lessons during the school day. With no communication about missing work, any work not made up in a week after an absence will stay a 0.

- Since some of the work we do will be test-centered, I do use a norming process to convert raw scores on the assessments to course grades that contribute to your nine-weeks and semester grades.
  - A released multiple-choice exam is 55 questions. The average score on the M/C portion of the AP Language test each year typically falls between 55-60%. The numbers that follow in parentheses is the grade I will record for that
range of scores on each nine-weeks reading test: 55-46 (55—A); 35-45 (47—B); 26-34 (41—C); 20-25 (36—D); 10-19 (32—F). Scores lower than a 25/55 usually get some re-testing opportunity.

- Each free-response question is given scores for how well it demonstrates (A) an understanding of the rhetorical task—arguing, synthesizing, analyzing—and (B) the maturity of the prose style. In class, each draft is worth 40 points, and the following points will be recorded in the gradebook for each performance score: 40 (8—effective); 35 (7—better than adequate); 33 (6—adequate); 31 (5—marginal); 28 (4—not yet adequate); 26 (3—more practice necessary)

**General Policies**

- Don’t waste your time; you chose to be here.
- Regardless of your religious affiliations, please abide by The Golden Rule at all times. If you do not know what The Golden Rule is, please look it up!
- Be proactive. Make things happen. At some point during this course, you will not improve unless you actively seek to do so and take more ownership of your work than I do.
- I feel no obligation to help you perform better in class if you engage in any of the following
  - sleeping
  - working on homework from another class during AP Language
  - distracting yourself or others with iPads or other technology
    - If I feel I need to communicate with you regarding one of the issues listed above, I may contact you first via email; after that, I will address the issue with you directly in class.
- If you need to talk to me, you are welcome to drop in, but please be understanding if I cannot meet with you due to other pressing responsibilities. If I can’t meet, we’ll try to make time or talk in class if it’s a good time.

  *Don’t mistake my kindness for weakness. (Al Capone)*
What follows is the Course Audit, a document I am required to produce in the process of certifying my course as a valid AP Language course.

Each year, I am required by the College Board to re-certify my syllabus and full-year course outline. During the course of the school year, we will work our way through at least four of the following units. The units, readings, and assignments are subject to change based on time available, opportunities for alternative (maybe better) texts, the needs of students, and the perceived ability of students to do higher-level work. Whenever possible, work done in preparation for the AP Language and Composition test (argument, synthesis, analysis) will be relevant to the unit of study. Because of the limitations of resources, sometimes this is not possible.

Unit 1: Reading, Writing, Teaching, and Learning: What is the Purpose of Education?

**Possible Texts:** (including columns, essays, and excerpts): “Good Readers and Good Writers” (Nabokov), “I Know Why the Caged Bird Cannot Read” (Prose), “Superman and Me” (Alexie), “Learning to Read and Write” (Douglas, pre-20th Century text), “Graduation” (Angelou, AP M/C questions) “Best in Class” (Baldwin), “A Talk to Teachers” (Baldwin), “This is Water” (Wallace), other articles and columns as discussion/writing starters; various pieces of artwork, cartoons, images, graphic data, and video clips; selection of fiction that complement our study in the unit.

**Essential Questions:** What is the purpose of education? To what extent do our schools serve the goals of a true education?

**Possible Major Writing Assignments:** (to be completed in addition to the assignments mentioned above in the ongoing strategies)

1. Timed Writings: at least three; AP-released prompt done in class as a timed writing
2. Educational Narrative: a piece of non-fiction writing that utilizes elements of fiction (dialogue, setting, characterization, etc…) to reveal something important in the educational development of the writer
3. Argument Synthesis: this assignment will ask you to purposefully synthesize sources into your writing to help you develop an argument

**Additional Work/Resources:**
- **LBH**
  - Chapter 7 a-b (139-154)
  - Chapter 9
  - Chapter 10
  - 43B (593-606)

Unit 2: Pop Culture: What Influences Us And Why?

**Possible Texts (paired readings—we will NOT have time to include all 16+ texts):**

1. What is the relationship between culture and pop(ular) culture? “Corn Pone Opinions” (Twain); “On High and Popular Culture” (Williams)
2. Why do we love horror?: “My Creature from the Black Lagoon” (King) “My Zombie, Myself” (Klosterman)
3. What Impact Does Television Have On Our Lives?: “A Nation of Vidiots” (Sachs), “Supersaturation, or, The Media Torrent of Disposable Feeling” (Gitlin)
5. What do iconic images say about us?: “Our Barbies, Ourselves” (Prager); “The Mystery of Mickey Mouse” (Updike)
6. Why are we obsessed with sports teams?: “Kill ‘em, Crush ‘em, Eat ‘em Raw!” (McMurtry); “A Spectator’s Notebook” (Vervaecke)
7. Who defines what is tasteless?: Marrying Absurd (Didion); “Red, White, and Beer” (Barry); Funeral selfies
8. How does film influence us, culturally and individually? “Going to the Movies” (Toth); “Escape from Wonderland: Disney and the Female Imagination” (Ross); “High School Confidential” (Denby)
9. Selection of fiction that complement our study in the unit.

**Essential Questions:** To what extent does pop culture influence our understanding of or the world or ourselves?

**Possible Major Writing Assignments:**

1. Timed Writings (Argument Synthesis): at least three; AP-released prompt done in class as a timed writing; requires use of sources.
2. Rhetorical analysis/Image Analysis: this assignment will ask students to analyze the intent and structure of images from popular culture in order to explain how purposes are accomplished with particular strategies; possible text, “Wonder Woman” (Steinem) and Wonder Woman (Patty Jenkins, 2017)

**Additional Work/Resources:**
- **LBH**
  - Chapter 11
  - Chapter 31
  - Chapter 38
Unit 3: Family Life and Gender Roles: What Influences Who We Are and Who We Become?


Essential Questions: How do we reinforce or perpetuate gender stereotypes? What is the benefit or consequence of that?

Academic Focus: critical reading and rhetorical and stylistic analysis

Possible Film Study/excerpts: Tootsie (1989)

Possible Major Writing Assignments:
1- Timed Writings (text-based argument): an argument in which you will be asked to analyze how a writer achieves a particular purpose with an audience (rhetorical analysis).
2- Timed Writings: review of argument and argument synthesis
3- A writing project that offers four choices: comparative analysis of print advertisements, a film scene analysis, a gender-related narrative, or an argument synthesis utilizing the unit readings.

Note about the Fourth Nine Weeks

The fourth nine weeks is usually an exercise in crazy juggling. The 2020 AP Language and Composition test is scheduled for the morning of Wednesday, May 13th, but the AP Chemistry and APUSH tests (both heavy hitters in many junior schedules) are Thursday, May 7th and Friday, May 8th respectively. Both the AP Biology and APES tests are Monday, May 11th (morning and afternoon, respectively). So the two weeks of testing will be a blur of preparing, studying, and testing. Similarly, we will be doing our own preparing as best we can for the AP Language test the weeks leading up to the two-week stretch of test-intensive days. In addition, we will be completing our inquiry project outlined in the “The Writing” section above (“Inquiry-Based Writing”). Therefore, the following units, some variation of them, or some combination of them, may be used during the last nine weeks.

Option 1: The Power of Language: What do our Words Reveal about Us?


Essential questions: How does the language we use reveal who we are? How does the language around us influence our decisions?

Possible Major Writing Assignments:
1- Locate and analyze an advertisement, which utilizes minimal text—no more than 6 words. Analyze the rhetoric of the language used in the image and explain how it is related to other elements of the advertisement as a whole. Who is the intended audience? How and why does the minimal text/language appeal to the intended audience? What other purposes does the use of language reveal besides “selling?”
2- Write a narrative or personal essay exploring the impact of words on some aspect of your life or history, or some role you fulfill—academic, family member, athlete, bible-study leader, class officer, etc…

Option 2: Satire: Using Humor as a Shield or a Sword


Essential Questions: What is the rhetoric of humor? How do we identify it and use it intellectually?

Big Ideas: satire (in all its forms), other forms of humor, allusion and popular culture/media/news

Possible Film Study/Excerpts: Shrek, The Lego Movie, select episodes of Black Mirror

Possible Major Writing Assignments:
1- AP-style timed writings focused on satire and humorous writing.

Option 3: Food as a Cultural Artifact: What does our Food Reveal about what we Value?

Essential Questions: What influential role does food play in culture today? What does it say about our values, or conflicting values? How has its role changed across generations?

Possible Major Writing Assignments: (to be completed in addition to the assignments mentioned above in the ongoing strategies)

1- Timed Writings (text-based argument): an argument in which you will be asked to analyze how a writer achieves a particular purpose with an audience (rhetorical analysis).