

SAMPLE SYLLABUS #1

AP[®] English Language and Composition

Curricular Requirements

CR1	The course is structured by unit, theme, genre, or other organizational approach that provides opportunities to engage with the big ideas throughout the course: Rhetorical Situation, Claims and Evidence, Reasoning and Organization, Style.	<i>See pages:</i> 3, 4
CR2	The course requires an emphasis on nonfiction readings (e.g., essays, journalism, political writing, science writing, nature writing, autobiographies/biographies, diaries, history, criticism) that are selected to give students opportunities to identify and explain an author's use of rhetorical strategies and techniques.	<i>See pages:</i> 3, 5, 13
CR3	The course provides opportunities for students to develop the skills in Skill Category 1 – Rhetorical Situation (Reading): Explain how writers' choices reflect the components of the rhetorical situation.	<i>See pages:</i> 4, 6
CR4	The course provides opportunities for students to develop the skills in Skill Category 2 – Rhetorical Situation (Writing): Make strategic choices in a text to address a rhetorical situation.	<i>See page:</i> 8
CR5	The course provides opportunities for students to develop the skills in Skill Category 3 – Claims and Evidence (Reading): Identify and describe the claims and evidence of an argument.	<i>See pages:</i> 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 13
CR6	The course provides opportunities for students to develop the skills in Skill Category 4 – Claims and Evidence (Writing): Analyze and select evidence to develop and refine a claim.	<i>See pages:</i> 4, 6, 7, 8, 10, 13
CR7	The course provides opportunities for students to develop the skills in Skill Category 5 – Reasoning and Organization (Reading): Describe the reasoning, organization, and development of an argument.	<i>See pages:</i> 7, 8, 9
CR8	The course provides opportunities for students to develop the skills in Skill Category 6 – Reasoning and Organization (Writing): Use organization and commentary to illuminate the line of reasoning in an argument.	<i>See pages:</i> 7, 8

CR9	The course provides opportunities for students to develop the skills in Skill Category 7 – Style (Reading): Explain how writers’ stylistic choices contribute to the purpose of an argument.	<i>See page:</i> 10
CR10	The course provides opportunities for students to develop the skills in Skill Category 8 – Style (Writing): Select words and use elements of composition to advance an argument.	<i>See pages:</i> 10, 11, 12
CR11	The course provides opportunities for students to write argumentative essays synthesizing material from a variety of sources.	<i>See pages:</i> 7, 9
CR12	The course provides opportunities for students to write essays analyzing authors’ rhetorical choices.	<i>See pages:</i> 10, 12
CR13	The course provides opportunities for students to write essays that proceed through multiple stages or drafts, including opportunities for conferring and collaborating with teacher and/or peers.	<i>See pages:</i> 9, 12

Advanced Placement English Language and Composition Sample Syllabus #1

Course Description

The AP English Language course provides students with the opportunity to read rigorous texts from various eras and in different genres, analyzing the big ideas of rhetorical situation, claims/evidence, reasoning/organization, and style. **CR1** Students use given texts to reach the goal of effective writing and analysis: they will read and annotate texts from a critical perspective in order to craft well-reasoned essays and personal reflections in response.

The course is structured both thematically and chronologically, based on district requirements and College Board's unit guide. The over-arching theme for the course is that of power. The district requires all juniors to read *The Crucible*, *Macbeth*, and *The Great Gatsby*; I then extend and explore the basic readings by asking students to work with nonfiction titles that expand on the ideas stated or implied in the required texts.

The textbook for the course is Bedford's *Language of Composition* (2nd edition), supplying many of the nonfiction readings for the course. Some materials from *Language of Composition*, 3rd edition, are also used. Additional readings come from such varied sources as Project Gutenberg, current events, national publications, and any other resources that seems likely to provide for rigor, depth, and high interest. **CR2**

Big Ideas

Rhetorical Situation: Individuals write within a particular situation and make strategic writing choices based on that situation.

Claims and Evidence: Writers make claims about subjects, rely on evidence that supports the reasoning that justifies the claim, and often acknowledge or respond to other, possibly opposing, arguments.

Reasoning and Organization: Writers guide understanding of a text's lines of reasoning and claims through that text's organization and integration of evidence.

Style: The rhetorical situation informs the strategic stylistic choices that writers make.

Student Practice

Throughout each unit, Topic Questions will be provided to help students check their understanding. The Topic Questions are especially useful for confirming understanding of difficult or foundational topics before moving on to new content or skills that build upon prior topics. Topic Questions can be assigned before, during, or after a lesson, and as in-class work or homework. Students will get rationales for each Topic Question that will help them understand why an answer is correct or incorrect, and their results will reveal misunderstandings to help them target the content and skills needed for additional practice.

At the end of each unit or at key points within a unit, Personal Progress Checks will be provided in class or as homework assignments in AP Classroom. Students will get a personal report with feedback on every topic, skill, and question that they can use to chart

CR1

The syllabus must include an outline of course content by unit, theme, genre, or other organizational approach that also demonstrates the inclusion of the big ideas. The big ideas must be explicitly stated in the syllabus.

CR2

The syllabus must include a representative list of readings or indicate the readings used within each unit of study to demonstrate an emphasis on nonfiction. The majority of texts must be nonfiction.

their progress, and their results will come with rationales that explain every question's answer. One to two class periods are set aside to re-teach skills based on the results of the Personal Progress Checks.

Course Units

The units below show the general scheduling for the course. Please note that our school year extends to mid-June. My students will complete Unit 9 before the AP Exam. After the AP Exam, students will polish their college essays and read the Thornton Wilder play *The Skin of Our Teeth*, along with nonfiction pieces to support Wilder's ideas about humanity.

Unit One: The Power of Perspective: The Author and The Audience **CR1**

Topic: Community

Big Ideas: Rhetorical Situation; Claims and Evidence

Skills: 1.A, 3.A, 4.A

In Unit 1, students are laying a foundation for the work throughout the year. Accordingly, they will begin with a number of foundational texts, including those listed at the bottom of this section. Students will identify, reflect on, and write about rhetorical situation in a variety of activities.

Activities:

1. Students will read Chapter 1 in *Everyday Use: Rhetoric at Work in Reading and Writing*, which describes rhetorical situation and the rhetorical triangle. Students have completed the reading of a nonfiction book over the summer. During the first two weeks of school, they will submit a series of reflections written during the summer; these reactions will include their thoughts on style, organization, subject matter, and other items. Before discussing their summer reading, they will read President George W. Bush's "9/11 Speech," using the rhetorical triangle to identify the parts of the rhetorical situation, as well as the author's understanding of audience. Then, they will discuss in groups the components of the rhetorical situation addressed in the summer reading book (Skill 1.A). **CR3** After a discussion in class of claim, evidence, commentary, student groups will then list in bullet-point form the major claim, evidence, and commentary in one chapter or segment in the book (Skill 3.A). Next, students will develop a group paragraph that explicates claim, one piece of evidence, and commentary from the book. Finally, each student will continue the group paragraph by adding an additional example of claim, evidence, and commentary.
2. Before listening to Malala Yousafzai's speech to the United Nations, students will research some of the unfamiliar allusions, such as these: Mohammed al-Jinnah, Bacha Khan, the partition of India, the role of Gandhi and nonviolence in that partition, and other items. After reporting to the class, students will listen to and follow the transcript of Malala's speech to the United Nations. As a class, they will brainstorm the elements of the rhetorical situation in the speech, particularly noting exigence and audience, both explicit and implied (Skill 1.A). They will also pinpoint elements of claim, evidence, and commentary (Skill 3.A). The class will generate a rubric, listing items to be included in the paragraphs they will write. Students will then divide into groups; each group member will contribute a paragraph on one element of the rhetorical situation, using claim, evidence, commentary in the paragraph (Skill 4.A). **CR3 CR5 CR6** As a final step, students will exchange paragraphs and peer edit for elements specified on the rubric. After peer editing, students will revise paragraphs. Groups will submit their finished product to the class for comment.

CR3

The syllabus must include at least one description of an instructional activity, series of activities, or project in which students explain how writers' choices reflect the components of the rhetorical situation in an assigned text.

CR5

The syllabus must include at least one description of an instructional activity, series of activities, or project in which students identify and describe the claims and evidence of an argument in an assigned text.

CR6

The syllabus must include at least one description of an instructional activity, series of activities, or project in which students analyze and select evidence in order to develop and refine claims in their writing.

AP Classroom

Practice: Complete **Personal Progress Check MCQ** for Unit 1.

Practice: Complete **Personal Progress Check FRQ** for Unit 1.

Assessment

Complete paragraphing exercise about Bush’s 9/11 speech and Yousafzai’s United Nations speech.

Texts **CR2**

Speeches: George Bush’s 9/11 Address to the Nation; Malala Yousafzai’s speech to the United Nations on education

Letters and Op-Eds: Groucho Marx’s “Letter to the Warner Brothers”

Essays and Book Excerpts: “Home at Last” by Dinaw Mengestu; “Health and Happiness” by Robert Putnam; “In Search of the Good Family” by Jane Howard

Biography/Autobiography: “My First Lifeline” by Maya Angelou from *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*; excerpts from Frank McCourt’s *Angela’s Ashes*

Science and Technology: Current events as applicable

Visuals: Photo Essays about communities

Other Texts: During the summer, students read a nonfiction text from a list that changes yearly. Books on the list include such titles as these: Laura Hillenbrand’s *Unbroken*; Matt Richtel’s *A Deadly Wandering*; David Margolick’s *Elizabeth and Hazel*; and Trevor Noah’s *Born a Crime*.

Unit Two: The Power of Evidence: Claim, Evidence, and Commentary (Audience and Thesis)

Topic: Identity.

Big Ideas: Rhetorical Situation; Claims and Evidence

Skills: 1.B, 2.B, 3.A, 3.B, 4.A, 4.B

In Unit 2, students extend their skills in identifying and writing claim, evidence, and commentary (Skills 3.A, 4.A). They are introduced to the ideas of the logical appeals and begin working with explaining the “so what” of the appeals in their paragraphs (Skill 2.B). Students also begin to identify and describe the overarching thesis of an argument, relating that thesis to the argument’s structure (Skill 3.B), before writing thesis statements that require proof or defense, and which may preview the argument’s structure (Skill 4.B). In order to achieve these goals, students read background materials for *The Crucible*, as well as various selections that address the topic of identity. Students then read aloud *The Crucible*, analyzing the causes and effects of characters’ actions, as well as noting the use of the appeals and rhetorical devices (Skill 1.B). After reading the play, students turn to Margo Burns’ article, which addresses the poetic license Arthur Miller took with the historical events of the Salem Witch trials. They conclude by writing a short analysis of two pieces in this segment.

Activities:

1. Students read “Arm Wrestling with My Father” by Brad Manning and “Gender in the Classroom” by Deborah Tannen. Student groups use markers to identify claim, evidence, and commentary in each selection (Skill 3.A). After completing group work, students share their findings with the rest of the class; they use these two segments as the basis for discussing identity. Students consider how the writers drive the organization and structure of each argument (Skill 3.B). **CR5**

2. After reading several selections on identity, students divide into groups. Each group discusses and lists the elements of the rhetorical situation in one selection, as well as the primary and secondary audiences, writing their findings on the text (Skill 1.B). Groups then trade articles; they use different colored markers to identify and mark claim, evidence, and commentary in a selected paragraph from that article (Skill 3.A). Groups trade articles again; this time, they locate the thesis statement, making a judgment as to whether that statement previews the article's structure (Skill 3.B). **CR3 CR5** As a class, students discuss their findings on each article. Students then choose one of the articles to use as the basis for writing. First, students think about their impressions of the article and its implications. They then write a reaction to the article that follows these steps:
- Write a thesis statement that makes a claim about the content of the article, previewing the structure if possible (Skill 4.B). **CR6**
 - Write a paragraph that demonstrates an understanding of the audience's beliefs, values or needs (Skill 2.B) by utilizing claim, evidence, and commentary (Skill 4.A).

AP Classroom

Practice: Complete **Personal Progress Check MCQ** for Unit 2.

Practice: Complete **Personal Progress Check FRQ** for Unit 2.

Assessment

Complete thesis statement and paragraph drafting exercise.

Texts

Speeches: “The Speech of Miss Polly Baker” by Benjamin Franklin; Florence Kelley’s speech (AP prompt); Sojourner Truth’s “Ain’t I A Woman?”

Letters and Op-Eds: Letters of John and Abigail Adams

Essays and Book Excerpts: “Arthur Miller’s *The Crucible*: Fact and Fiction” by Margo Burns; “Guys vs. Men” by Dave Barry; “Vindication of the Rights of Women” by Mary Wollstonecraft; “Declaration of Sentiments” by Elizabeth Cady Stanton

Biography/Autobiography: “Joseph McCarthy,” U.S. History.com

Science and Technology: Articles by Martin Salazar, reporting on the Wenatchee Witch Hunts of 1995; “What Caused the Salem Witch Trials?” by Rebecca Beatrice Brooks, History of Massachusetts.org

Visuals: Photographs from the Salem Witch Trials archive

Other Texts: *The Crucible* by Arthur Miller; “Observations of a Bewitched Child” from *Remarkable Providences* (1684) by Cotton Mather

Unit Three: The Power of Controversy: Argument and Storytelling

Topic: Work

Big Ideas: Claims and Evidence; Reasoning and Organization

Skills: 3.A, 4.A, 5.A, 6.A, 5.C, 6.C

In Unit Three, students delve into the intricacies of argument. The big idea of reasoning and organization can be especially challenging because students must examine and understand how a line of reasoning develops in writing. Assigning the corresponding **Topic Questions for these skill categories in AP Classroom** can reveal misunderstandings and guide student practice.

Activities:

1. Students read and annotate “The Case for Working with Your Hands” by Matthew Crawford, marking the text for claim, evidence, and commentary (Skill 3.A). They then write and compare claims made by Crawford within the text, making a bullet-point list of evidence to support at least three claims (Skill 3.A). Students prepare a chart or short video that describes Crawford’s line of reasoning in the article; they explain how the line of reasoning supports his argument’s overarching thesis, as well as the method of development used to create the argument (Skills 5.A, 5.C). Students then write a thesis statement and a paragraph using claim, evidence, commentary in which they describe the effect of Crawford’s arguments (Skill 4.A). **CR5 CR6 CR7 CR8**
2. Students read and listen to President Roosevelt’s Fireside Chat #4, “On Economic Progress.” They then read “Dear Mrs. Roosevelt: Cries for Help from Depression Youth” by Robert Cohen. This text is a springboard for classroom discussion about the economic concerns that impacted teens during the 1930s versus the economic realities that impact high school students today. After discussing the economic issues faced during the Depression, they research one current economic issue faced by youth today. Students must find a minimum of four sources; one must be an interview and one must be a visual source. After completing their research and analyzing the source information, students write an argument that develops a position on the role that state and local governments should play in eliminating negative economic factors for U.S. teenagers. The essay includes a clear thesis and the development of a line of reasoning and commentary to support the reasoning (Skill 6.A). Students choose an appropriate method of development in which to present their argument, depending on the information gathered (Skills 4.A, 6.C). The argument must also synthesize at least three of the sources, including the visual. **CR6 CR8 CR11**

AP Classroom

Practice: Complete **Personal Progress Check MCQ** for Unit 3.

Practice: Complete **Personal Progress Check FRQ** for Unit 3.

Assessment

Complete synthesis essay about high school students and economics.

Texts

Speeches: Fireside Chat #4, “On Economic Progress,” October 22, 1933 by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt

Letters and Op-Eds: Letter from Elizabeth Stacey to her father-in-law (AP Prompt); “Dear Mrs. Roosevelt: Cries for Help from Depression Youth” by Robert Cohen

Essays and Book Excerpts: “The Case for Working With Your Hands” by Matthew B. Crawford; “Stuff is Not Salvation” by Anna Quindlen; “Blue-Collar Brilliance” by Mike Rose

Biography/Autobiography: Thomas Malthus on Population Growth

Science and Technology: “The Global Importance of the Technology Economy” by Marco Antonio Cavallo

Visuals: “Chancellor Segueir at the Entry of Louis XIV into Paris in 1660” by Charles LeBrun and “The Chancellor Sequier on Horseback” by Kehinde Wiley; Forbes *Price Index of Luxury Goods Keeps Pace With Inflation* by Scott DeCarlo

Other Texts: “To Be of Use” (poem) by Marge Piercy

CR7

The syllabus must include at least one description of an instructional activity, series of activities, or project in which students describe the reasoning, organization, and development of an argument in an assigned text.

CR8

The syllabus must include a description of an instructional activity, series of activities, or project in which students use organization and commentary in their writing to develop and demonstrate the line of reasoning in an argument.

CR11

The syllabus must include a description of at least one essay assignment in which students take a position on a topic synthesizing information from at least three sources. The assignment must indicate that students are using and documenting sources, at least one of which must be an alternative to written text (e.g. chart, graph, table, photograph, advertisement, political cartoon, video).

Unit Four: The Power of Nature: Analysis 101

Topic: Nature

Big Ideas: Rhetorical Situation; Claims and Evidence; Reasoning and Organization

Skills: 1.A, 2.A, 3.B, 4.B, 5.C, 6.C

Activities:

1. Students read “The Serpents of Paradise” from *Desert Solitaire*, annotating for rhetorical situation, anthropomorphism, allusions, and diction choices (Skill 1.A). Students also read Henry David Thoreau’s “Where I Lived and What I Lived For,” annotating for the same categories. Students then choose one of these pieces as the subject of study. They identify and describe the overarching thesis, as well as the use of claim, evidence, commentary. Using Toulmin as a model, they write an analytical thesis statement that requires proof and previews the structure of the argument (Skills 3.B, 4.B). **CR5 CR6** Students then write an introduction and conclusion to an essay on one of these pieces, paying particular attention to the method of development used by the author or speaker (Skills 2.A, 5.C). **CR4 CR7**
2. Students read a variety of texts that focus on how nature impacts individuals. Then, students conduct interviews with classmates about how nature impacts and informs their own experience. They share their findings with the class. After sharing, each student writes a Toulmin-type thesis statement that creates an original argument about nature. Class members vote on the three best thesis statements; they may then adopt one of the three statements for use in their own writing, or they may use their own statement. Students decide on the rhetorical situation underlying their essay and make choices that demonstrate an understanding of their audience’s values or needs. Students then choose a method of development in which to present their findings, write an introduction to support the thesis statement, and develop at least four paragraphs to address argument and counterargument. The essay closes with a well-crafted conclusion (Skills 2.A, 4.B, 6.C). **CR4 CR8**

CR4

The syllabus must include at least one description of an instructional activity, series of activities, or project in which students make strategic choices in their writing to address a rhetorical situation.

AP Classroom

Practice: Personal Progress Check MCQ for Unit 4.

Practice: Complete Personal Progress Check FRQ for Unit 4.

Assessment

Complete essay about nature’s impact on the individual.

Texts

Speeches: “Mind-Blowing, Magnified Portraits of Insects” by Levon Bliss (TED Talk)

Letters and Op-Eds: “Why Even a Little Nature Is Good for Your Brain” by Alex Hutchinson

Essays and Book Excerpts: From *Nature* by Ralph Waldo Emerson; “Illusions” by Ralph Waldo Emerson; From *The End of Nature* by Bill McKibben; “The Serpents of Paradise” from *Desert Solitaire* by Edward Abbey

Biography/Autobiography: From *Walden* “Where I Lived and What I Lived For” by Henry David Thoreau

Science and Technology: Excerpts from *I Contain Multitudes* by Ed Yong.

Visuals: From *Hungry Planet: What the World Eats* by Peter Menzel

Unit Five: The Power of Influence: Research, Claims, and Citing Sources

Topic: Ethics

Big Ideas: Reasoning and Organization; Style

Skills: 5.A, 5.B, 6.A, 6.B, 7.A, 8.A

In this unit, the big idea of style can be especially challenging because students must determine how the rhetorical situation informs the strategic stylistic choices that writers make. Assigning the corresponding **Topic Questions for these skill categories in AP Classroom** can reveal misunderstandings and guide student practice.

Activities:

1. After reading *Macbeth*, students brainstorm everything they know about ethics in relationship to categories of professional and personal experience (e.g., education, business, technology, medicine). They read Pinker’s “Is the World Getting Better or Worse? A Look at the Numbers.” In groups, students analyze the line of reasoning and explain whether the reasoning supports the overarching thesis of the argument (Skill 5.A). They explain how the organization of the text creates unity and coherence, supporting the argument’s reasoning (Skill 5.B). **CR7** They mark the essay for use of word choice, comparisons, and syntax, explaining how these items contribute to tone and/or style (Skill 7.A). Then, students conduct online research on the topic of ethics in today’s world, narrowing their topics to a specific problem that requires a solution. They write an argument paper that synthesizes a minimum of three sources, one of which must be a visual. Students should follow these steps: outline the articles for claim, evidence, commentary and thesis; create a thesis statement that allows them to develop a position on their chosen topic; write an introduction using the thesis statement; develop a line of reasoning and commentary; use transitional elements to guide the reader through the line of reasoning; and strategically use words, comparisons, and syntax to convey a specific tone or style. All sources must be properly documented (Skills 6.A, 6.B, 8.A). **CR11**
2. During the writing of the synthesis research papers, students discuss outlines with peers and brainstorm arguments and counterarguments, conference individually with the teacher after completion of the first draft, edit for language and syntactical choices, rewrite incorporating feedback, and publish a final product (Skill 8.A). After completing the process, students write a reflection on the task, addressing their understanding of the metacognitive process. **CR13**

AP Classroom

Practice: Complete **Personal Progress Check MCQ** for Unit 5.

Practice: Complete **Personal Progress Check FRQ** for Unit 5.

Assessment

Complete synthesis research papers.

Texts

Speeches: First Inaugural Speech, John F. Kennedy; First Inaugural Speech, Ronald Reagan; “Is the World Getting Better or Worse? A Look at the Numbers” by Steven Pinker

Letters and Op-Eds: Business ethics op-eds from *The Wall Street Journal*; “Evil Thrives When Good People Remain Silent” by Prince Chinedu Obi

Essays and Book Excerpts: From *The Empire Fights Back* by Chinua Achebe; “The Insane Root that Takes the Reason Prisoner:’ *Macbeth*, Boston, and the Two Paradoxes of Evil” by Rod Rosenbaum; “Is Greed Ever Good? The Psychology of Selfishness” by Stephen A. Diamond

CR13

The syllabus must provide a description of at least one essay assignment that requires more than one draft and includes evidence of collaboration with and feedback from teachers and/or peers.

Science and Technology: “How Evil is Tech?” by David Brooks

Visuals: “Seeing Connections,” p. 2057 *Language of Composition*, 3rd Edition

Other Texts: *Macbeth* by William Shakespeare

Unit Six: The Power of Education: Claims and Evidence, Style

Topic: Education

Big Ideas: Claims and Evidence; Style

Skills: 3.A, 3.B, 4.A, 4.B, 7.A, 8.A

Activities:

1. Students choose one selection from this list: “School” by Kyoko Mori; “Shanghai Schools’ Approach Pushes Students to Top of Tests” by David Barboza; “I Know Why the Caged Bird Cannot Read” by Francine Prose. Students annotate the selection for claim, evidence, commentary (Skill 3.A). They note the overarching theme of the selection, as well as the indications showing the argument’s structure (Skill 3.B). They outline the use of word choice, comparisons, and syntax to discover the relationship between these elements and the style or tone of the piece (Skill 7.A). **CR9** Students then write an analysis of that selection. They write a thesis statement requiring proof and previewing the structure of the argument (Skill 4.B). Then, they write two to four paragraphs that utilize claim, evidence, commentary to analyze the style and organization of the selection (Skill 4.A). **CR6** As they write, students use strategically chosen words, comparisons, and syntax to convey a specific tone or style; they may choose to echo or imitate the style or tone of the original piece (Skill 8.A). **CR10**
2. Students will read “Me Talk Pretty One Day” by David Sedaris and “Superman and Me” by Sherman Alexie. They write a comparison/contrast essay that addresses the style, diction choices, organization, comparisons, and syntax used by each author (Skill 7.A). In their own writing, they use strategically chosen words, comparison, and syntax to convey their own tone or style to the argument (Skill 8.A). **CR9**
CR10 **CR12**

AP Classroom

Practice: Complete **Personal Progress Check MCQ** for Unit 6.

Practice: Complete **Personal Progress Check FRQ** for Unit 6.

Assessment

Complete comparison/contrast essay about Sedaris and Alexie.

Texts

Speeches: “A Talk to Teachers” by James Baldwin

Letters and Op-Eds: “Let Teenagers Try Adulthood” by Leon Botstein

Essays and Book Excerpts: From *Education* by Ralph Waldo Emerson; “School” by Kyoko Mori; “Me Talk Pretty One Day” by David Sedaris; “Best in Class” by Margaret Talbot; From “Shanghai Schools’ Approach Pushes Students to Top of Tests” by David Barboza; “I Know Why the Caged Bird Cannot Read” by Francine Prose

Biography/Autobiography: “Superman and Me” by Sherman Alexie

Science and Technology: “Does Technology in the Classroom Help or Harm Students?” by Seth J. Gillihan

Visuals: “The Spirit of Education,” painting by Norman Rockwell; “What I Learned,” cartoon by Roz Chast; From *US Math Performance in Global Perspective* by Erica A. Hanushek, et al.

CR9

The syllabus must include a description of an instructional activity, series of activities, or project in which students explain how writers’ stylistic choices contribute to the purpose of an argument in an assigned text.

CR10

The syllabus must include a description of an instructional activity, series of activities, or project in which students make stylistic choices in their writing to advance an argument.

CR12

The syllabus must include a description of at least one essay assignment in which students develop and support a claim about an author’s rhetorical choices.

Unit Seven: The Power of the Written Word: Diction, Style, Mechanics, and Structure

Topic: Language

Big Ideas: Rhetorical Situation; Claims and Evidence; Style

Skills: 1.A, 2.A, 3.C, 4.C, 7.B, 7.C, 8.B, 8.C

Activities:

1. Students read “Use It or Lose It: Why Language Changes Over Time” by Nikhil Swaminathan. They then view the TED Talk, “How Language Shapes the Way We Think” by Lera Boroditsky. In groups, they consider the rhetorical situation for both the essay and the TED Talk (Skill 1.A); and explain the manner in which both authors qualify their claims, using modifiers, counterarguments, and alternate perspectives (Skill 3.C). They then discuss and explain the authors’ uses of independent and dependent clauses to show relationships between and among ideas (Skill 7.B), as well as the contribution made by grammar and mechanics to the clarity and effectiveness of each argument (Skill 7.C).
2. Students react to “Use It or Lose It: Why Language Changes Over Time” by Nikhil Swaminathan or “How Language Shapes the Way We Think” by Lera Boroditsky by writing a claim about one of the selections. They write a cogent introduction to an essay in which they make a claim and then qualify it, using modifiers, counterarguments, or alternate perspectives. The sentences in their essay should clearly convey their ideas and arguments; they use the established conventions of grammar and mechanics to communicate clearly and effectively (Skills 2.A, 4.C, 8.B, 8.C). **CR10**

AP Classroom

Practice: Complete **Personal Progress Check MCQ** for Unit 7.

Practice: Complete **Personal Progress Check FRQ** for Unit 7.

Assessment

Complete essay introduction about language.

Texts

Speeches: “How I Used Dungeons and Dragons to Teach Ethics” by Christopher Robichaux (TED Talk); “How Language Shapes the Way We Think” by Lera Boroditsky (TED Talk)

Letters and Op-Eds: “What Students Know that Experts Don’t: School Is All about Signaling, Not Skill-Building” by Bryan Caplan

Essays and Book Excerpts: “An Innocent at Rinkside” by William Faulkner; “Warren Buffett, Bill Gates, and the Billionaire Challenge” by the *Christian Faith Monitor* Editorial Board; “Slang in America” by Walt Whitman

Biography/Autobiography: “Learning to Read” from *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* by Malcolm X; “Learning to Read and Write” from *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* by Frederick Douglass

Science and Technology: “Use It or Lose It: Why Language Changes Over Time” by Nikhil Swaminathan.

Visuals: Cartoon from *World Economic Forum* by Zapiro

Other Texts: “For Mohammed Zeid of Gaza, Age 15” and “Why I Could Not Accept Your Invitation” by Naomi Shihab Nye. (poems)

Unit Eight: The Power of Beauty: Visual Rhetoric

Topic: Popular Culture

Big Ideas: Rhetorical Situation; Style

Skills: 1.B, 2.B, 7.A, 7.B, 8.A, 8.B

Activities:

1. Students view the two Hogarth paintings: “Marriage a la Mode: The Marriage Contract” and “Marriage a la Mode: The Toilette.” They deconstruct the painting, utilizing their knowledge of rhetorical situation to deduce the elements of the rhetorical triangle, as well as anything else they can glean from the paintings, considering the paintings as visual arguments (Skill 1.B). They then read Thackeray’s selection describing the paintings from *English Humorists of the 18th Century*. Again, students consider the rhetorical situation; then, they explain Thackeray’s word choice, comparisons, and syntax to create tone or style, as well as explaining how the author creates, combines, and places independent and dependent clauses to show relationships (Skills 7.A, 7.B). Finally, students choose a school-appropriate painting to use as the basis for their own description and analysis. They will write an essay defining the rhetorical situation and analyzing the visual and its message; they strategically use words, comparisons, and syntax to convey tone or style (in imitation of Thackeray) and write sentences that clearly convey ideas and arguments (Skills 8.A, 8.B). **CR10 CR12**
2. After reading *The Great Gatsby*, students write an analytical essay considering one of the major themes of the book and comparing those themes to “The New American Dream” by Courtney E. Martin (TED Talk) or *Gatsby’s American Dream: Reading The Great Gatsby Critically, Chapter 1* by John Green (YouTube). They pay particular attention to defining the rhetorical situation; they strategically use words, comparisons, and syntax to convey tone or style and write sentences that clearly convey ideas and arguments. Students also identify the audience to whom they are writing. They include language that appeals specifically to their intended audience. (Skills 2.B, 8.A, 8.B). After finishing their first drafts, students utilize peer workshops, conferencing (with teacher and others), revision, rewriting, and publishing. After completing the process, students write a reflection on the entire process, addressing their understanding of the metacognitive process. **CR12 CR13**
3. As part of their study of style, students examine short reading passages, annotating for language and syntax that develop a particular tone or style. Students highlight sentences with independent and dependent clauses and discuss the relationship between the parts of the sentence. Students then write their own sentences to practice what they have just read and discussed. (Skills 7.A, 7.B, 8.A, 8.B).

AP Classroom

Practice: Complete **Personal Progress Check MCQ** for Unit 8.

Practice: Complete **Personal Progress Check FRQ** for Unit 8.

Assessment

Complete painting analysis essay.

Complete *The Great Gatsby* essay.

Texts

Speeches: “The New American Dream” by Courtney E. Martin (TED Talk); *Gatsby’s American Dream: Reading The Great Gatsby Critically, Chapter 1* by John Green (YouTube)

Letters and Op-Eds: Letter: F. Scott Fitzgerald to Willa Cather and Cather’s answer; “My Zombie, Myself: Why Modern Life Feels Rather Undead” by Chuck Klosterman

Essays and Book Excerpts: “An Image a Little Too Carefully Coordinated” by Robin Givhan; “High School Confidential: Notes on Teen Movies” by David Denby; “Hogarth” from *English Humorists of the 18th Century* by William Makepeace Thackeray

Biography/Autobiography: “A Miserable Merry Christmas” from *Autobiography of Lincoln Steffens* by Lincoln Steffens

Science and Technology: “Learning Through Visuals: Visual Imagery in the Classroom” by Haig Kouyoumdjian

Visuals: “Finding the Story Inside the Painting” by Tracy Chevalier (TED Talk); cartoon: From *Show and Tell* by Scott McCloud; Hogarth’s paintings “Marriage a la Mode: The Marriage Contract” and “Marriage a la Mode: The Toilette.”

Other Texts: *The Great Gatsby*; “To – ” by Percy Bysshe Shelley (poem); *Everyday Use: Rhetoric at Work in Reading and Writing* by Hephzibah Roskelly and David A. Jolliffe. **CR2**

Unit Nine: The Power of Winning

Topic: Sports

Big Ideas: Claims and Evidence

Skills: 3.C, 4.C

Activities:

1. Students view the cartoon, “The 12th Player in Every Football Game” and then read “Can Science Solve Football’s Concussion Crisis?” by Ryan Blasen and “What Happens to the Brain During a Concussion?” by Richard Smayda. They explain the ways that Blasen and Smayda qualify their claims through modifiers, counterarguments, and alternate perspectives (Skills 3.C). **CR5**
2. Students choose a controversial topic from the field of sports, possibly including pay inequity between the genders, paying college athletes, young people and injuries, or any other topic that interests them. They then choose two articles they find on the internet; the articles should present two sides of the chosen controversy. They create a thesis statement and outline an essay; they choose one paragraph to write, in which they qualify their claim using modifiers, counterarguments, or alternate perspectives (Skill 4.C). **CR6**

AP Classroom

Practice: Complete **Personal Progress Check MCQ** for Unit 9.

Practice: Complete **Personal Progress Check FRQ** for Unit 9.

Assessment

Complete sports essay draft.

Texts

Speeches: Lou Gehrig’s Farewell Speech; another student-chosen speech given by an athlete or coach, showing quality of thought and organization

Letters and Op-Eds: “Paying Students to Play Would Ruin College Sports” by Cody J. McDavis

Essays and Book Excerpts: “Barbaro” by Jane Smiley; “The Silent Seasons of a Hero” by Gay Talese; “The Four Horsemen” by Grantland Rice

Biography/Autobiography: From *How I Learned to Ride the Bicycle* by Frances Willard

Science and Technology: “Can Science Solve Football’s Concussion Crisis?” by Ryan Blasen; “What Happens to the Brain During a Concussion?” by Richard Smayda

Visuals: “The 12th Player in Every Football Game,” cartoon, 1897 *New York World*; “Yes!” 1999 *Sports Illustrated*

Other Texts: “Ex-Basketball Player” by John Updike (poem)