



Dear future AP Lang students and parents/guardians:

You are receiving this letter because you have registered for AP English Language and Composition, and I look forward to August with great anticipation to learn alongside you in this rigorous, college-level course.

The DCHS English department believes that the practice of a summer reading assignment improves learning outcomes and fosters literacy. Summer reading sets the tone for upcoming English courses, establishes a habit of self-guided reading and time management, creates a shared literary experience with peers, and allows students to anticipate the texts and themes that will be explored in the upcoming academic year. We also hope that it revives an appreciation for reading and for expanding their cultural and global mindedness! There is much to be learned about the world through our reading of literary and nonfiction texts. There is power in language and in story.

I recommend that you purchase your own copy of your selected text so you can annotate and write directly in it, but you can also check out a book from the school or local library.* [Annotation instructions](#) are included in the following pages.

Most importantly, please pick a text that will challenge, engage, and interest you! Do not just pick a book your friend picked, as you may not enjoy it, and it will be of little help to you, as the work you complete in class will be independent. **I highly encourage parents, guardians, and/or family to be involved in the book choice as well.** Each option is non-fiction, as the focus of this course is non-fiction and rhetoric.

When Breath Becomes Air by Paul Kalanithi

The Devil in the White City by Erik Larson

Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil by John Berendt

Between the World and Me by Ta-Nehisi Coates

Salt Sugar Fat by Michael Moss

Quiet by Susan Cain

Educated by Tara Westover

Lab Girl by Hope Jahren

The Glass Castle by Jeannette Walls

The New Jim Crow by Michelle Alexander

During the first few weeks of school, you will **complete a writing assignment and/or other assessment based on their reading and annotations.** This summer assignment is an in-depth task and should be completed over the course of the summer, **not at the last minute.** We expect depth of thought, time, and effort in the work you complete; the more effort and intentionality you put into critically reading and thinking about your chosen text, the more you benefit and the more prepared you will be for this course.



***NOTE:** If you are unable to purchase a text due to financial constraints, please contact our librarian Mo Olson @ molson1@dcsdk12.org. Titles may also be available at Douglas County Public Libraries. You may use a library copy and annotate on sticky notes or in a notebook. (Record page numbers and copy direct quotations if you use a notebook.)

Thank you! I look forward to seeing you in the fall!

Mrs. Kelsey Faletra

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Annotating NONFICTION TEXTS & RHETORIC

Purpose & Intended Outcomes

Annotating a text engages your whole brain in the process of reading and necessitates that you are actively involved with the text. It's like having a conversation with the text, making it more accessible, relevant, and meaningful. **The more attentive we are to a text, the more we learn from it.** Annotating makes reading accessible to students of all learning styles and reading abilities!

Deep exploration of literature allows us to **deliberate life's most intriguing themes and perplexing, questions.** Critical readers can discuss and debate moral & ethical dilemmas, engage in the issues and discourse that surrounds us, and learn about human nature. Language and literature are a mirror and lens through which we see ourselves and the world more clearly; if we choose not to look closely, we do ourselves a disservice and miss out on vital wisdom and knowledge.

- **Tip 1:** You do not have to have an annotation on every page, and **annotations should not be so frequent that it wholly disrupts the fluency of your reading or your understanding of the text.**
- **Tip 2:** Annotations should capture **the conversation you're having with the text (your thoughts, reactions, responses, and interpretations),** as well as the things you notice about the words on the page, like **diction, figurative language, sentence structure, and other authorial choices.**
- **Tip 3:** Analysis of nonfiction and rhetoric is framed around **author, message, purpose, and tone.** Consider the acronym **SPACECAT: Speaker, Purpose, Audience, Context, Exigence, Choices, Appeals, and Tone.** (See the handout on the third page for an explanation of this acronym.)

Questions to ask yourself for more meaningful annotations:

- **What** is the **purpose** and **message** of this text?
- **Why** did the author(s) write it?
- **What** are the **key questions** the author is trying to answer or address?
- How does the author create a particular **tone** or **mood**?
- What stylistic, rhetorical, and literary choices are being made, and **why**
- What **effects** do their choices have on the **audience**?
- **How** do the author's choices **affect** the meaning of the text as a whole?

Quality annotations essentially capture a conversation with the text!

- **offer an analysis or interpretation** of what is happening in the text.
- **identify rhetorical/stylistic techniques** the author uses, like organizational structures, repetition, imagery, figurative language, description, diction, perspective, tone, and syntax (sentence structure)
- **consider and analyze the effects** of those techniques on the intended audience
- **ask specific questions** about what you don't understand.
- **make connections** to other parts of the book, to other texts & stories, & to your own life and experiences
- **trace and track symbols, motifs, repetition,** etc.
- **take note of personal reactions**

S.P.A.C.E.C.A.T Notes

WHAT IS SPACECAT?

SPACECAT is an acronym! This means that each letter of this word stands for a different word. In this case, each letter stands for one element of rhetoric, or one element of a text that we should consider when conducting a rhetorical analysis.

WHAT IS RHETORICAL ANALYSIS?

Rhetorical analysis is what we do when we examine *what* authors are saying, AND *how* they are saying that thing. When authors write, they take into consideration the time and place in which they are writing, their intended audience, their own background, different logical and emotional appeals, etc. When we as readers break down and look at these different elements, we are doing a rhetorical analysis! We want to figure out *HOW* the author is doing what they are doing and *HOW* they are getting their message across.

S peaker	This is the voice that is 'telling' us this story. It may be the same as the author, or it may be someone else.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who or what is the voice that is telling this story? Is the speaker the same as the author, or is it a fictional character? What do we know about the speaker? What are they an expert in? What are their experiences or beliefs?
P urpose	This is the overall goal of the text, or the reason that it was written.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What did the author hope to accomplish by writing this text? What does the speaker want the audience to think, believe, or do?
A udience	This is who the text was intended for. Who the author wanted to read it.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To whom is the speaker telling this narrative or story? Does the speaker directly address one specific group or person? Who do you think would benefit from reading this?
C ontext	This is the background environment, setting, time period, etc. in which the text was written.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What was going on in the time and location in which this was written? Does this text reflect the attitudes of that time and place, or go against them?
E xigence	This is the OCCASION , or the event that compelled the author to write this text.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What current event or issue was going on at the time that made the author want to write this text? Is his text a celebration of something or a critique of something? What question or issue was the author attempting to answer?
C hoices	These are the choices that the author makes when they write their text.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How does the author organize their text? What genre is this? A speech, a letter, a cartoon, an article, an essay, a fictional story? What words are used? What comparisons are made? Is there any figurative language being used?
A ppeals	These are the three rhetorical appeals! Ethos, Logos, and Pathos!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What emotions does the author want to make us feel? How is the author using their own ethos to build credibility? What logical reasons or arguments are presented in the text?
T one	This is the attitude of the author towards their subject and the reader.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How does the author feel towards what they are writing about? What emotions would the text evoke if it were read aloud? What details are included that evoke a specific emotional response?