

AP Language and Composition Close Reading Assignment

Your close reading assignment consists of the following, described in detail below:

1. Fully annotate your book (on each page)
2. Read one text and complete a rhetorical journal on your selected book
3. Complete a 3-page rhetorical analysis essay on your selected book

All of these assignments are a **requirement** for AP Language and Composition and will be logged in as an assessment grade. Additionally, you will have a test on these assignments at the beginning of the school year, and you will be assigned several extension activities throughout the year.

Close Reading Assignment Part 1: Annotating the Text

You need to read **one** of the following:

- 1) *The Kingdom of Speech* by Tom Wolfe
- 2) *The Things They Carried* by Tim O'Brien*
- 3) *The New Jim Crow* by Michelle Alexander

As you are reading, pay close attention to the questions listed on the rhetorical analysis reading guide. These questions will prepare you for the close reading and analysis we will be doing this year.

Close Reading Assignment Part 2: Rhetorical Analysis Journal

While reading each work, you must complete a rhetorical journal on your selected book. Your rhetorical journal must answer each of the questions listed on the critical reading guide. For each question,

- Rewrite the numbered question
- Write a brief answer which includes at least one specific, relevant quotation from the text.
- Be sure to explain how the quotation you selected to include supports the way you answered the question.
- You DO NOT have to work on these questions in order. Rather, when you notice an element of the book that fits into a critical reading question, do that question next. Just be sure to present your answers in number order upon completion and submission.
- Each response should be a minimum of 5-8 sentences.

Rhetorical Analysis Journal Questions

When you are asked to do a “rhetorical analysis” of a text, you are being asked to apply critical reading skills to break down the text into its “parts.” You determine what the writer is trying to achieve, and what writing techniques he/she is using to achieve it.

Reading critically means more than just being moved, informed, influenced, or persuaded by a piece of writing. Reading critically also means analyzing and understanding how the work has

achieved its effect. The following is a list of the rhetorical journal questions you must complete to analyze your selected book:

1. What is the thesis (the overall point)? How does the thesis comment on the subject?
2. What is the tone of the text? What specific words contribute to that tone?
3. What is the writer's purpose? (To explain? To inform? To persuade? To motivate? To amuse?) Is there more than one purpose? Does the purpose shift at all throughout the text?
4. How does the writer arrange his/her ideas? (What are the patterns of arrangement? General to specific? Specific to general? Spatial? Chronological?)
5. What is the sentence structure like in the text? Does the writer use fragments or run-ons? Declarative? Imperative? Interrogative? Exclamatory? Are they simple? Compound? Complex? Compound-complex? Short? Long? Loose? Periodic? Parallel? Are there any patterns in the sentence structure? Can you make any connections between the patterns and the writer's purpose?
6. How does the writer use diction? Is it formal? Informal? Technical? Jargon? Slang? Does the language change throughout the piece? How does the language contribute to the writer's purpose?
7. Is there anything unusual in the writer's use of punctuation? What punctuation or other techniques of emphasis (italics, capitals, underlining, ellipses, parentheses) does the writer use? Is punctuation over- or under used? Which marks does the writer use when, and for what effects? (Dashes to create a hasty breathlessness? Semi-colons for balance or contrast?)
8. Are important terms repeated throughout the text? Why?
9. Are there any particularly vivid images that stand out? What effect do these images have on the writer's purpose?
10. Does the writer use devices of humor? Puns? Irony? Sarcasm? Understatement? Is the effect pleasure? Ridicule? Comic relief?

Close Reading Assignment Part 3: Rhetorical Analysis Essay

Your next task is to type a 3-page rhetorical analysis paper based on your selected summer reading book (Shakur/ Ehrenreich). Use your answers from the rhetorical journal to aid you in this task. Select two or three of the questions you answered that you feel could use elaboration and discussion. Remember that a rhetorical analysis focuses **less on WHAT** point the author is communicating, and **more on HOW** an author communicates that point.

Your essay must include:

- A thought-provoking title
- An Introduction with a thesis statement (the purpose the author conveys)
- 2-3 Body Paragraphs that discuss the rhetorical strategies used and gives specific examples from the text. (Each topic sentence MUST include a new rhetorical strategy that the author uses—you may need to look some up)

- Include some direct quotes and some paraphrases from the novel (**use correct MLA parenthetical documentation**) Example: “This is the sentence from the novel that is in my paper” (Smith 23).
- A Conclusion that re-states the thesis and transcends beyond a summary of what you have said

AVOID PLOT SUMMARY

Parts Two and Three need to be typed and printed. Please adhere to MLA guidelines in regards to formatting.

Due Date: This will need to be completed and turned in the second Monday (August 13th) of the first semester.

A Quick This and That

This project is entirely independent. As always, students are held to all academic integrity guidelines. Working together on this project is not only in direct violation of that policy, but is also disrespecting your instructor, your classmates, and your own education.

- Schoology: Schoology will be a huge part of our class next year, so if you are not familiar with the process, this summer will be a great opportunity to do so. Please create an account immediately.

My message to you:

We know this seems like a lot of work, but please be aware that this assignment will aid you in a great deal of what we will be working on next year. We'll never give you more than you can handle and we'll certainly never give you anything that we not willing to assist you with. If you have any questions about this assignment please contact any of us. We will do our best to help you as soon as is possible

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Tim O'Brien's book uses harsh language. Viewer discretion is advised