



AP English Language and Composition
2011 Reading and Essay Assignments
Mr. Mactagone/Mr. O'Keeffe/Ms. Ray
General Instructions (Please read carefully):

Both of the following compositions are due beginning the third week of the 2011-2012 school year. Unless there are any school-wide schedule changes, that means all work is due **TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 6TH, 2011** (the first school day following Labor Day). All essays must be **typed** using **12-point Times Roman or Arial font**, must be **double or 1.5-spaced**, and must be printed in legible **black or dark blue ink**. Cover sheets aren't necessary, but your full name and an appropriate essay title must appear at the top of the first page. **Page numbering is also required**. Late essays will be accepted **up to one week past the due date**, at a **grade penalty of ten points per each successive school day**. No handwritten submissions will be accepted. *Plagiarized (i.e. copied or stolen) essays will receive an automatic grade of zero without any possibility of makeup.*

Rhetorical Analysis Essay

Required Text:

Schlosser, Eric. *Fast Food Nation: The Dark Side of the All-American Meal*. New York: Harper Perennial, 2001. Print. [A limited number of books is available for checkout over the summer (see Mr. O'Keeffe in Room 207). Portions of the book can also be viewed online at <http://books.google.com>.]

Assignment:

Select any **single** chapter of *Fast Food Nation* (i.e. Chapters 1-10; do not use the introduction, epilogue, or afterword as your focus-text) and write a two-to-four page essay in which you analyze the strategies Eric Schlosser uses to reveal his views. "Rhetorical analysis" means discussing the author's specific techniques and the intended effect of these techniques on the reader. It also means identifying the author's overall thesis or "big idea" and explaining it in your own words. Often the thesis centers on a recurring theme or concept such as those listed below. Consider some of the possibilities below (but do not limit yourself to these):

Themes/Big Ideas

- the American dream
- corruption
- migration
- iconoclasm
- science and technology
- change and "progress"
- etiology

Rhetorical Devices/Techniques

- figurative language
- irony and paradox
- organization
- primary sources and secondary sources
- analogies/detailed comparisons
- facts and statistics
- anecdotes and narratives

Your essay should strive to answer three questions using **specific examples**, occasional **direct quotes** from the text, and citing **specific page numbers** for every direct quote:

1. What is the author attempting to persuade us of in this particular chapter?
2. How effectively does his argument persuade the reader?
3. What specific strategies does the author use to persuade?



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Persuasive Essay

Using the opinion page of a leading news periodical (see the list below), choose a *professionally written* editorial essay on a **current cultural, social, or political controversy** and write a two-to three-page essay of your own which *defends* (agrees with, adding more of your own detail and analysis), *challenges* (disagrees with), or *qualifies* (analyzes both sides of the issue and then takes a firm position) the editorial essay you choose, occasionally quoting from the editorial directly. Be careful not to confuse news stories with editorials; you are expected to recognize the difference as part of the assignment, and failure to do so will be counted against your grade. **Online "blogs" and letters to the editor do not qualify as professional editorial writing.**

Choose your editorial from one of the following sources, all of which are available in the Hanks library or through the research databases to which Hanks subscribes:

The New Yorker

The New York Times (Sunday Edition)

The Wall Street Journal

Atlantic Monthly

The Economist

Time

Newsweek

USA Today

Dallas Morning News

Austin American-Statesman

Washington Post

Washington Times

Opposing Viewpoints Database (accessed through the Hanks library web page)

See Ms. Waltmon, the Hanks librarian, for information on how to access research databases from your home. Please include the **author**, **title**, and **date** of the editorial you selected in your essay. Your selected editorial *cannot have been published before January 1st, 2011.*

If you have questions, you may contact Mr. Mactagone, Mr. O'Keeffe, or Ms. Ray at the addresses below throughout the summer:

Mr. Mactagone: gmactagone@yisd.net

Mr. O'Keeffe: jokeeffe@yisd.net

Ms. Ray: mray@yisd.net