

McKinley Technology High School
AP Language and Composition

Summer Reading/Writing Assignment

Welcome to AP Language and Composition! This class prepares you for the national Advanced Placement English Language and Composition exam in May and for college-level courses. We explore a wide variety of non-fiction texts, particularly essays, throughout the school year. Enjoy your summer, and we look forward to seeing you next school year, prepared and ready to engage critically in the course.

Materials:

The students are expected to do the summer assignment. The assignment is available on the school website, at the school front desk, from a school administrator/counselor, or by emailing the teacher for an electronic copy.

Read the following text:

Postman, Neil. *Building a Bridge to the 18th Century: How the Past Can Improve Our Future*. Vintage Books, 1999. (ISBN# 978-0-375-70127-6) (non-fiction)

Pick up a copy of the book at the *DC Library*, or secure one from a local bookstore or *Amazon*. I recommend *Amazon* for used copies. **Strongly recommended: purchase your copy. Note that an eBook is also available on the McKinley Tech school website. Click [here](#) for the eBook.**

Requirements:

- Complete all reading and writing assignments on time.
- Work must be of acceptable quality.

Part I (1): Read the Book

As you read Neil Postman's *Building a Bridge to the 18th Century*, pay close attention to how Postman develops his argument about the value of 18th-century ideas in addressing modern societal and educational challenges. Analyze how he uses rhetorical strategies—such as historical references, philosophical arguments, illustrative examples, and critiques of contemporary culture—to convey his perspective. Notice how he contrasts past and present values, and how his tone, structure, and use of evidence help clarify his vision for education, literacy, and public discourse.

Part II (2): Annotate the Book

Read *Building a Bridge to the 18th Century* carefully and take detailed notes for each chapter in preparation for the in-class assessment when you return to school. As you read, use the annotation template to capture your thinking:

- 1) Identify and define the key concepts and philosophical terms Postman introduces.
- 2) Summarize the main idea of each chapter.
- 3) Determine Postman's rhetorical purpose in that section.
- 4) Note specific rhetorical choices he makes (such as historical references, contrasts between centuries, critiques of technology, and philosophical arguments);

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- 5) Analyze how he uses logos to structure reasoning about history and education, ethos to establish credibility as a cultural critic, and pathos to evoke concern or nostalgia.
- 6) Record your own questions, inferences, predictions, and reactions to his arguments.
- 7) Complete each section of the template thoughtfully, using specific evidence from the text.
- 8) Conclude with a rhetorical précis that synthesizes Postman’s argument, purpose, and methods in that chapter.

Use the AP Language Annotation Template to write quick notes as you read. Capture the main idea, one key piece of evidence, important vocabulary, and your own reaction. Keep your notes short but clear so you can use them later in class for discussions and assignments. Make sure each annotation helps you understand the text and connect it to what we’re learning. Use the annotation for every chapter. Click [here](#) to download it. **Make sure to type your annotations** clearly so they are easy to read and useful for class discussions and assignments.

Part III (3): Due Dates

You must complete reading and annotating *Building a Bridge to the 18th Century* on **August 28, 2026**. Your annotations and chapter notes will help prepare you for the in-class assessment. All completed annotations will be uploaded to Canvas at the beginning of the school year—**No later than 11 September 2026**. Be sure your notes are thorough, organized, and ready to support your understanding of the text.

Part IV (4): Evaluation:

Your first major assessment (worth 28 points and placed in the Practice and Application category, which counts for 50% of your overall grade) will now be an in-class, three-paragraph timed analytical writing response based on your reading of *Building a Bridge to the 18th Century*.

Part V (5): Necessary Materials

Necessary Materials:	
1) 3-Ring 2 Inch Binder dedicated to the course	5) Blue, Black, and Green Pens
2) Dividers	6) Pencils
3) Paper	7) Orange, Pink, and Yellow Highlighters
4) Sticky Notes	8) DCPS One Drive Account

When do I need these materials? Please have the required materials by **August 30, 2026**.

Arrange the 3-ring binder in 5 sections: (1) Warm-Ups, (2) Class Notes, (3) Composition, (4) Assignments/Rubrics, and (5) Other Materials (syllabus, Contract, Graded Papers).

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Student-Friendly Annotation Scoring Guidelines (28 Points)

Category	4 Points (Strong)	3 Points (Good)	2 Points (Developing)	1 Point (Beginning)	0 Points
Key Words & Vocabulary Identify and define a minimum of ten Tier 2 words.	Identifies at least 10 key concepts or unfamiliar words/phrases and defines each clearly.	Identifies at least 10 key concepts or unfamiliar words/phrases; most are defined correctly and clearly.	Identifies fewer than 10 terms, or several definitions are partially correct, vague, or copied without understanding.	Identifies very few terms; definitions are mostly incorrect, copied, or missing.	No keywords identified.
Main Idea Clearly identify the main idea of each section and support it with evidence.	Clearly identify the main idea of each section and support it with evidence.	Identifies the main ideas; includes some evidence.	Some ideas were identified but were not clear or supported.	Minimal attempt to state main ideas; sentences are confusing, off-topic, or unsupported by the text.	No main ideas identified.
Rhetorical Purpose Explain the overall purpose of the chapter in one clear sentence with a strong verb, active voice, and present tense.	Clearly and accurately explains Postman's overall purpose in one focused sentence that uses a strong verb, active voice, and present tense; the purpose reflects both what he argues and why.	Explains Postman's purpose mostly accurately; uses present tense and active voice most of the time, though the sentence may be slightly wordy or vague.	Attempts to explain purpose, but the statement is partially inaccurate, too broad, or mostly summary rather than purpose; language may be weak or inconsistent.	Minimal or unclear attempt at stating purpose; sentence does not capture what Postman is trying to do in the chapter.	No purpose statement written.
Rhetorical Choices Record at least four notable rhetorical moves and explain their effect and impact on the argument.	Identifies at least 4 specific rhetorical moves; clearly explains for each how it affects the reader and how it strengthens, complicates, or limits Postman's argument.	Identifies at least 4 rhetorical moves; explanations of the effect on the reader and impact on the argument are mostly accurate but may lack depth or precision.	Identifies 2–3 rhetorical moves or mixes rhetorical moves with a general summary; explanations of effect or impact are partial, vague, or repetitive.	Identifies 1 rhetorical move or confuses rhetorical choices with topic/content; little or no explanation of effect or impact.	No rhetorical choices identified or explained.
Appeals & Reasoning (Logos, Ethos, Pathos) Identify and explain how appeals function in the argument.	Clearly identifies and explains at least one example each of logos, ethos, and pathos; accurately paraphrases or cites evidence; explains how each appeal functions in Postman's reasoning and how it influences the reader's response.	Identifies logos, ethos, and pathos with generally accurate examples; explanations show some understanding of how appeals support the argument, though analysis may be uneven.	Identifies some appeals but may mislabel them or rely on weak examples; explanations show limited understanding of how the appeals function.	Minimal or inaccurate attempts to identify appeals; explanations are mostly summary with little analysis of effect or function.	No rhetorical appeals identified or explained.

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<p>Questions, Inferences, & Reactions Write 2 analytical questions, 1 inference or prediction, and 1 meaningful reaction.</p>	<p>Writes 2 insightful, analytical questions that go beyond surface details; provides 1 thoughtful inference or prediction about where Postman’s argument is leading; offers 1 meaningful, text-based reaction that clearly explains what is convincing or questionable and why.</p>	<p>Writes 2 relevant questions that show some analysis; provides a reasonable inference or prediction; offers a clear reaction connected to the text, though explanation may be brief.</p>	<p>Questions are basic or mostly about facts; inference/prediction is vague or only loosely tied to the chapter; reaction is present but not well explained.</p>	<p>Minimal or unclear questions; inference/prediction and reaction are very weak or not clearly connected to the text.</p>	<p>No questions, inferences/predictions, or reactions written.</p>
<p>Rhetorical Précis Write four clear sentences per chapter that capture the main meaning, using strong verbs and active voice in the present tense. Click here for the guidelines</p>	<p>Writes a complete four-sentence rhetorical précis that accurately captures the central claim, key supporting moves, purpose, and intended audience/tone; uses strong verbs, active voice, and present tense consistently; sentences are clear and concise.</p>	<p>Writes four sentences that mostly follow the rhetorical précis pattern and accurately represent the chapter; present tense and active voice are used most of the time; minor gaps or repetition may appear.</p>	<p>Writes 2–3 sentences or loosely follows the rhetorical précis structure; some important elements (claim, support, purpose, audience/tone) are missing or unclear; language may be wordy or inconsistent.</p>	<p>Minimal attempt at a précis; sentences are confusing, incomplete, or mostly summary without rhetorical focus.</p>	<p>No summaries written.</p>

Total Score is _____/28 points.