

AP Language and Composition Summer Reading Assignment

Assignment: Understanding Rhetorical Choice

In English classes thus far, you have undoubtedly studied choices that writers make. Your teachers might have called them stylistic choices, or literary devices, but when an author uses these tools to persuade his audience of something, they are called *rhetorical choices*. Writers employ these choices to heighten the effectiveness of the messages. This summer you will be studying the argumentative tips, tricks, terms, and techniques (like alliteration!) of rhetorical masters through your reading of Jay Heinrich's *Thank You for Arguing*.

Jay Heinrich's *Thank You for Arguing*: *Thank You for Arguing* is your master class in the art of persuasion, taught by professors ranging from Bart Simpson to Winston Churchill. The time-tested secrets the book discloses include Cicero's three-step strategy for moving an audience to action as well as Honest Abe's Shameless Trick of lowering an audience's expectations by pretending to be unpolished. But it's also replete with contemporary techniques such as politicians' use of "code" language to appeal to specific groups and an eye-opening assortment of popular-culture dodges.

As you read through the book, be sure to complete the attached study guide to help guide your understanding of rhetorical concepts. Once you have finished reading the book you are to apply your newfound knowledge to the attached Argument Construction Scenarios. You will bring in your study guide and your Argument Construction Scenarios, which will count as a combined test grade.

Your Argument Construction Scenarios should follow MLA format (heading, page number, double spaced).

If you have any questions over the summer, please feel free to contact Mrs. Bowden.

Thank You For Arguing - Summer Assignment AP Language & Composition

Part 1: Secure a copy of *Thank You for Arguing* (TYFA) by Jay Heinrichs

Assignment: Students will read the Preface through Chapter 19 and complete the attached study guide. Keep in mind that some of the topics Heinrichs uses for examples are just that: examples. Additionally, it is imperative that students read the chapters in their entirety, as we will be working with these concepts for the remainder of the school year.

Part 2: Argument Construction

Assignment: You will select **ONE** of the following scenarios and write a short (350-500 word) argument, using the tools found in *Thank You for Arguing*. You will be graded on your use of the tools from *Thank You for Arguing* and on your ability to tailor your argument to the audience and the situation provided in each scenario. Use of the tools provided in the specific chapters given in each scenario must be evident in your argument to receive full credit.

Fair Warning: This assignment should be fun! AP English is a time to put the boring 5-paragraph essay behind you, and to branch out and explore other styles of writing. This assignment is an opportunity to play games with language. You should, of course, take the assignment seriously and tailor your writing to each situation, but don't be afraid to try something new or interesting. These aren't formal essays. In *Thank You for Arguing*, Jay Heinrichs is clearly enjoying himself as he explores and explains the basics of argument. As you construct your argument, try to enjoy yourself. You'll probably be more persuasive.

Scenario 1. Your parents forbade you from attending a party. They then saw photos on Instagram proving that you lied to them and attended the party anyway. Using the tools presented in Chapters 2 and 3, minimize your culpability and the punishment which you receive (in other words, make it less your fault and try for as small a punishment as possible). You will need to consider the mood, mind, and willingness of your audience, and will need to move the argument from blame to choice.

Scenario 2. You would like to have a pet (dog or cat - a real pet, not some nonsense like a dragon), but your parents are reluctant to entrust you with this responsibility. Using Chapters 5 and 6, construct an ethos-based argument that will persuade your parents to give you a pet. You will need to consider how to build the proper decorum for your audience, and ensure that you build your virtue in their eyes.

Scenario 3. You wish to start a new club at RHS (you may choose its focus), but are having trouble finding a faculty sponsor—nobody wants to put in the extra work sponsoring a club. Using the tools found in Chapters 7 and 8, construct an argument which will convince a teacher to sponsor you. Demonstrate your practical wisdom, and convince your audience of your disinterest in the matter.

Scenario 4. For some reason, you are volunteering for a hamster rescue, which takes in unwanted or abused hamsters, or hamsters which have been victims of hamster trafficking, and finds loving homes for them. Using the tools in Chapter 9, construct a pathos-based argument that will effectively solicit donations from your classmates. Consider which emotions will most effectively persuade your audience to act, then choose the appropriate tools to create them.

Scenario 5. You have borrowed your parents' car to take a date to the drive in movie theater in Warwick, NY. On the way back, your date asks to test-drive the car, and, wanting to please them, you switch seats. Your date then immediately jumps a curb and hits a mailbox, damaging the car. Your parents are furious. Using the tools in Chapter 10, calm them down and get both of you out of trouble. Don't overplay your hand - too much humor or the wrong use of the passive voice or the wrong backfire might land you in even worse trouble.

Scenario 6. A good friend lends you \$50, with the expectation that you will pay back the loan with money from your summer job. However, you never get the job and have no money to pay him back. Your friend completely refuses to budge and demands the money. Using the tools of Chapters 11 and 12, identify a commonplace shared with your friend, then redefine the issue and/or terms in such a way that your friend will be persuaded to no longer wish to be repaid. You AREN'T convincing your friend that you don't owe him money - you're convincing him that he doesn't want to be paid back.

Some teacher advice:

- Remember, your argument is to be typed and printed, and must be 350-500 word words.
- All assignments will be collected within the first week of school. We will be using the summer assignment to complete additional assignments in class, including analysis of your arguments and presentations to the class. Be prepared and be thorough.
- This is a lengthy assignment. Doing it the week before school starts will not only be difficult and stressful for you, but it will also drastically lower the quality of your work. Read or write a little bit every week, and you will produce much better work.
- REVISE. Your first draft is just that—a first draft. It is not and should never be your finished product. Put your work aside for a few days, then return to it with fresh eyes and look for places that could be improved.