

Schaumburg High School
AP Language and Composition Summer Reading Assignment

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Rhetors,

Welcome to AP Language and Composition! In this class, you will grow as a thinker, reader, and writer. We have created a summer reading assignment to help you succeed in the class and on the AP test.

Part 1: *Fast Food Nation* by Eric Schlosser

Assignment 1: Read and annotate the book.

Assignment 2: Complete a precis for each chapter of the book. See the attached handouts on rhetorical precis structure and specific chapter prompts. We expect you to follow this format. Please type your precis and have printed copies for submission.

Part II: *Their Eyes Were Watching God* by Zora Neale Hurston

Assignment 1: Read the book. Annotate dutifully to aid your comprehension and retention. We may collect your texts to check your annotation.

Assignment 2: Be prepared for an in-class, open-book assessment upon your return to school.

Please email us or contact us through our Schoology group with any questions you may have over the summer. We look forward to meeting you all next year!

RHETORICAL PRÉCIS*

A rhetorical précis differs from a summary in that it is a less neutral, more analytical condensation of both the content and method of the original text. If you think of a summary as primarily a brief representation of what a text says, then you might think of the rhetorical précis as a brief representation of what a text both says and does. Although less common than a summary, a rhetorical précis is a particularly useful way to sum up your understanding of how a text works rhetorically (*Reading Rhetorically*, 62).

► THE STRUCTURE OF A RHETORICAL PRÉCIS

Sentence One: Name of author, genre, and title of work, date in parentheses; a rhetorically active verb; and a THAT clause containing the major assertion or thesis in the text.

Sentence Two: An explanation of how the author develops and supports the thesis.

Sentence Three: A statement of the author’s apparent purpose, followed by an “in order to” phrase.

Sentence Four: A description of the intended audience and/or the relationship the author establishes with the audience.

► RHETORICAL PRÉCIS SENTENCE STARTERS

Sentence One (Who/What?)

_____ in the _____, _____,
(Author) (A) (Title)
 _____ that _____
(B)
 _____.

Sentence Two (How?)

_____ supports his/her _____ by _____
(Author’s Last Name) (B) (C)
 _____.

Sentence Three (Why?)

The author’s purpose is to _____
(D)
 _____ in order to / so that _____
 _____.

Sentence Four (To Whom?)

The author writes in _____ tone for _____
(E) (audience)

Word Bank – some possibilities

A	B	C	D	E
article, book review, essay, column, editorial	argues, argument, asserts, assertion, suggests, suggestion, claims, questions, explains, explanation	comparing, contrasting, telling, explaining, illustrating, demonstrating, defining, describing, listing	show, convince, suggest, inform persuade	formal, informal, sarcastic, humorous contemptuous

Précis Examples

- A. Sheridan Baker, in his essay "Attitudes" (1966), asserts that writers' attitudes toward their subjects, their audiences, and themselves determine to a large extent the quality of their prose. Baker supports this assertion by showing examples of how inappropriate attitudes can make writing unclear, pompous, or boring, concluding that a good writer "will be respectful toward his audience, considerate toward his readers, and somehow amiable toward human failings" (58). His purpose is to make his readers aware of the dangers of negative attitudes in order to help them become better writers. He establishes an informal relationship with his audience of college students who are interested in learning to write "with conviction" (55).
- B. Toni Morrison, in her essay "Disturbing Nurses and the Kindness of Sharks," implies that racism in the United States has affected the craft and process of American novelists. Morrison supports her implication by describing how Ernest Hemingway writes about black characters in his novels and short stories. Her purpose is to make her readers aware of the cruel reality of racism underlying some of the greatest works of American literature in order to help them examine the far-reaching effects racism has not only on those discriminated against but also on those who discriminate. She establishes a formal and highly analytical tone with her audience of racially mixed (but probably mainly white), theoretically sophisticated readers and critical interpreters of American literature.
- C. Sandra M. Gilbert, professor of English at the University of California, Davis, in her essay "Plain Jane's Progress" (1977), suggests that Charlotte Brontë intended *Jane Eyre* to resemble John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* in that Jane's pilgrimage through a series of events based on the enclosure and escape motif eventually lead toward the equality that Brontë herself sought. Gilbert supports this conclusion by using the structure of the novel to highlight the places Jane has been confined, the changes she undergoes during the process of escape, and the individuals and experiences that lead to her maturation concluding that "this marriage of true minds at Ferndean – this is the way" (501). Her purpose is to help readers see the role of women in Victorian England in order to help them understand the uniqueness and daring of Brontë's work. She establishes a formal relationship with her audience of literary scholars interested in feminist criticism who are familiar with the work of Brontë, Bunyan, Lord Byron and others and are intrigued by feminist theory as it relates to Victorian literature.
- D. In her article "Who Cares if Johnny Can't Read?" (1997), Larissa MacFarquhar asserts that Americans are reading more than ever despite claims to the contrary and that it is time to reconsider why we value reading so much, especially certain kinds of "high culture" reading. MacFarquhar supports her claims about American reading habits with facts and statistics that compare past and present reading practices, and she challenges common assumptions by raising questions about reading's intrinsic value. Her purpose is to dispel certain myths about reading in order to raise new and more important questions about the value of reading and other media in our culture. She seems to have a young, hip, somewhat irreverent audience in mind because her tone is sarcastic, and she suggests that the ideas she opposes are old-fashioned positions.
- E. Douglas Park, in his essay "Audiences" (1994), suggests that teaching audience is an essential but elusive aspect of teaching writing. Park develops this idea by exploring different definitions of audience, looking at how a text itself can delineate audience, and then discussing specific strategies writers can use to create contexts for audience. His purpose is to help teachers of writing understand and teach the different aspects of audience in order that they can help students improve the sense of audience in their writing. Park establishes an informal relationship with teachers who are interested in strengthening their students' weak writing.

Summer Reading Assignment Prompts for *Fast Food Nation*

Read Eric Schlosser's award-winning critique of the American food industry, *Fast Food Nation*--introduction through afterword. Answer each of the following questions in a rhetorical précis.

Introduction: Readers must trust the good character, fairness, and reliability of the writer before they are willing to accept his arguments. The philosopher Aristotle called this quality ethos. Analyze the ways Eric Schlosser establishes his ethos, helping the audience to trust the writer and see the importance of his investigation of the fast food industry

Book One: The American Way

- Chapter 1: The Founding Fathers p. 13-29
 - Question: How does Schlosser use titles to achieve his purpose in chapter 1?
- Chapter 2: Your Trusted Friends
 - How does the tone of chapter 2 help Schlosser achieve his purpose?
- Chapter 3: Behind the Counter
 - How does Schlosser create his argument regarding the effects of the fast food industry on communities?
- Chapter 4: Success
 - How does Schlosser use different types of evidence to argue against the current models of franchising?

Book Two: Meat and Potatoes

Now that you have written five total rhetorical précis, you have free rein. Write one rhetorical précis on whatever you think is Schlosser's most important argument in each chapter and how he develops that argument for his specific audience. Use the titles as guides. Have fun!

- Chapter 5: Why the Fries Taste Good
- Chapter 6: On the Range
- Chapter 7: Cog in the Great Machine
- Chapter 8: The Most Dangerous Job
- Chapter 9: What's in the Meat
- Chapter 10: Global Realization

Epilogue and Afterword

Yes; we expect you to read these. Seriously; they're important. An epilogue is actually a conclusion, which, generally, looks to the future from where a book ends. An afterword is included to provide additional information after the initial publication of the book. Because these sections are wide-ranging, we're providing some specific prompts to guide your final two responses.

- Epilogue: Have it Your Way
 - How is the content of this chapter an appropriate conclusion to Schlosser's criticism of the fast food industry?

- Afterword: The Meaning of Mad Cow
 - Why would this additional information be relevant to his argument? Discuss how the content of this chapter helps bolster, or discredit Schlosser's ethos, particularly the section titled "wrong wrong wrong".