

May 15, 2011

Dear New AP Student,

So you're in AP Language? Big deal. But that's just it, AP Language is a big deal. No longer can you breeze through English class or do your homework in the period beforehand; lunch studying is pointless and reading Spark Notes is equivalent to shooting yourself in the foot. AP Language isn't some class you can wiz your way through with vocab know-how and past procrastination practices. It takes hard work; AP Language is a big deal.

You're excited and ready to face the challenge, but you're also scared. I know, I've been there. Step one: pause, and take a deep breath. Everything is going to be fine. Mrs. B is an angel and always going to be there for you. The first 9 weeks are going to be a culture shock. Before this you've been able to skate by, but now you actually have to study, and for a lit class! Absolutely preposterous you proclaim! But it's necessary. Do the summer work, study the vocab, and read the novels. Always read the novels. You'll be completely lost without them. You may feel like you're suffering at times, like Mrs. B has deliberately picked a novel to watch you suffer and squirm through its pages without an ounce of understanding, but I promise she didn't. There is a reason behind every novel and they are never as complicated as you think. Just push through it and read. And when you get to the second semester, write the essays. Don't complain, don't procrastinate, write. You'll be grateful when the AP test rolls around, because this test isn't like WHAP. This test is fully dependent upon you and your abilities, you and your creativity. So write the essays, welcome them as opportunities to grow. If you see a style you like, try it. Don't ever feel like you're writing is good enough, because it can, and will, if you practice, be breath-taking.

So read the novels, write the essays, because you're always apt to learning something new. Different thoughts and reactions, it's always interesting to learn how people think. That's what you do in Mrs. B's class. You think, listen, and learn. One of the most important lessons I learned in room 402 is that everyone's opinion matters. You may disagree with it, believe that there is no proof behind it, and the reasoning is fallible, but none of those things matter. We as people are meant to have opinions, and how we form them is our own choice. It's the acceptance of them that is the true test of character. So listen. Listen and learn.

Success isn't the word I would associate with leaving AP Language. Success makes is seem tangible and concrete, but it's not. The AP test is an accomplishment, a numerical value placed on the knowledge you gain in this classroom, but it's more than that. Leaving AP Language is sad; leaving AP Language is hard, because after Socratic circles and Buchmaster speeches, open discussions and everything else, Mrs. B's class is a family. Thriving in that room and developing that kind of bond is dependent upon one thing, you. As a future AP student you need to do the work. You need to read the novels, you need to know the vocab, you need to write the Socratic circles and write the essays. You need to listen, to Mrs. B and everyone else in there. And have I stressed reading the novels enough? Honestly, you won't make it without them.

But overall, enjoy this class, because once it's over you'll realize it went too fast. Talk up, speak your mind, and never back down. Listen to others and consider their point of view. Change your opinions, or don't, just realize that there are different ways. You're going to love this class and you're going to love Mrs. B. Good Luck!

Sincerely,

Emily Chizmar