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Dear New AP Student,

AP Language is a class unlike any other. Unorthodox, perhaps. There's no reading from textbooks or taking notes from PowerPoint slides or cut and dry answers to questions. It's a subjective class, driven by personal interpretations and ideas. Group discussion is the meat of the class. You will be in more Socratic Circles than you have ever been in your entire life, I guarantee you. While some main focuses are writing choices and rhetoric, since it is a Language class after all, identifying the message of a text is just important and prepares you for the next class up: AP Literature. Everything you read has significance, and don't you dare whine about not "liking" it if you're not prepared to be given a patented Buchanan look of disapproval (you'll know it when you see it).

I have to admit, the thought of being in class discussions all the time was daunting to me at first, but after stumbling around in the first couple Socratic Circles, I tended to look forward to discussions either to hear other people's viewpoints or because I was determined to make my own point about a subject. The first quarter is when you might feel overwhelmed. It's a culture shock—books to read, articles to annotate, questions to answer, people to get to know—but it all gets better. Certainly in the quarter before winter break you will have gotten a handle on things. You might feel like a buffoon or a dolt, but stay calm. That's what first quarters are for.

I can definitely say that I've grown from being in AP Language. I am, without a doubt, a stronger writer, reader, and student. I found and began to cultivate a voice: truly a miracle if you know me at all. I am a naturally passive person. I don't like confrontation, interrupting people, or speaking up. Really I'd rather sink into my chair than actually speak out, but I learned in this class that keeping your mouth doesn't get you anywhere. Staying quiet is only hurting yourself, not benefitting others. I'm still working on fully embracing this concept, but it's one of the most important lessons a class has ever introduced to me.

The best thing you could ever bring to AP Language is a good attitude. You need to be willing to buckle down and do the work and Get. Things. Done. This is not a class where you can slack. This is not like any language class you've ever been in before. This is AP. This is Buch-land and you will not be babied. Step up to the plate and shoulder the responsibility, and you'll be golden.

Sincerely,

Katherine Grace La Mantia