

May 16 2011

Dear New AP Student,

Advanced placement language is not for the faint at heart. AP Language will push you, nearly to your breaking point. This class will refine your use of rhetoric, comprehension, and your voice as a writer. By the end of the year you will be capable of reading Thoreau without a single tear. In this class you will do a large amount of annotating and discussing works which are diverse yet related. If you dislike Socratic Circles, I don't advise you to take this class. Also, there will be a lot of writing, mostly essays. These essays will vary in type and may appear challenging at first. Don't fret, Mrs. B is not trying to kill you, she just wants you to gain your college credit for passing the AP Test at the end of the year.

AP Language was my very first AP class so it was a huge reality check. I didn't understand either of the novels we were required to read over the summer. During Socratic Circles I was scared to speak out in fear of being wrong. Those few that did speak up during discussions intimidated me. Looking past the feeling of failure and loss, I persisted on. My grade barely broke the surface at an 82. In the past, I usually have a high A in any literature class. Having a B woke me up; maybe I have some room to learn. Pushing even further past my arrogance, I learned that procrastination was not the solution in avoiding assignments. Here's a great tip: refrain from being the quiet one. Your class WILL call you out and embarrass you. Just talk. It's not that bad. Promise.

The recipe for reaching success in AP Language is simple. First you mold your bowl; this tool should be made out of solid faith and confidence. Without having faith or being confident in yourself, how did you ever decide to throw yourself into an advanced course in the first place? Now let's move along to the ingredients. There are four main ingredients for success; determination, passion, patience, and persistence. These four are baked together at 5 million degrees and make the most beautiful literary cake. You must be determined initially, if you aren't determined to pass the course, you won't. Simple as that. Hopefully you are passionate about literature and writing, because if you aren't, this year may drag by. The most important ingredient is patience. You WILL get frustrated. You WILL get mad at Momma B. But if you listen to her advice and push on, it will all be worth the effort. Persistence is like the sister of patience. Being persistent to do better, without giving up, WILL make you stronger. I know you'll go into this class thinking that a cupcake is sufficient, but by the end, you'll want your cake and eat it too.

Sincerely,

Susan Saxon