



Mira Costa High School

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Dear Future AP **Language and Composition** Students:

Congratulations on your decision to enroll in our Advanced Placement English **Language and Composition (11th Grade)** program next year. You will be expected to do a great deal of reading and writing in AP English, and the summer reading assignment is tailored to prepare you for this rigorous college-level course.

Here is your summer assignment. In total, you will read **TWO** texts.

- **Non-fiction (Rhetoric):** **ALL** students will read the book *Words Like Loaded Pistols: Rhetoric from Aristotle to Obama* by Sam Leith. [Here is the link](#) to the Amazon listing for the book, which provides additional information about the text. Students will take an objective test assessing their knowledge of the rhetorical ideas presented in the book. We recommend that students take notes on the content in the book since it will lay a foundation for future rhetorical analysis.

- **Fiction:** Students must also choose **ONE OF THE FOLLOWING** novels to read over the summer:
 - [Americanah](#) by Chiminanda Ngozi Adichie (2014). Here is the Amazon description of the novel: “Ifemelu and Obinze are young and in love when they depart military-ruled Nigeria for the West. Beautiful, self-assured Ifemelu heads for America, where despite her academic success, she is forced to grapple with what it means to be black for the first time. Quiet, thoughtful Obinze had hoped to join her, but with post-9/11 America closed to him, he instead plunges into a dangerous, undocumented life in London. Fifteen years later, they reunite in a newly democratic Nigeria, and reignite their passion—for each other and for their homeland.”

 - [Behold the Dreamers](#) by Imbolo Mbue (2016) Here is the Amazon description of the novel: “Jende Jonga, a Cameroonian immigrant living in Harlem, has come to the United States to provide a better life for himself; his wife, Neni; and their six-year-old son. In the fall of 2007, Jende can hardly believe his luck when he lands a job as a chauffeur for Clark Edwards, a senior executive at Lehman Brothers. Clark demands punctuality, discretion, and loyalty - and Jende is eager to please. Clark’s wife, Cindy, even offers Neni temporary work at the Edwardses’ summer home in the Hamptons. With these opportunities, Jende and Neni can at last gain a foothold in America and imagine a brighter future. However, the world of great power and privilege conceals troubling secrets, and soon Jende and Neni notice cracks in their employers’ façades. When the financial world is rocked by the collapse of Lehman Brothers, the Jongas are desperate to keep Jende’s job - even as their marriage threatens to fall apart. As all four lives are dramatically upended, Jende and Neni are forced to make an impossible choice.”

- [*The Book of Unknown Americans* by Cristina Henríquez \(2014\)](#) Here is the Amazon description of the novel: “A boy and a girl who fall in love. Two families whose hopes collide with destiny. An extraordinary novel that offers a resonant new definition of what it means to be American. Arturo and Alma Rivera have lived their whole lives in Mexico. One day, their beautiful fifteen-year-old daughter, Maribel, sustains a terrible injury, one that casts doubt on whether she’ll ever be the same. And so, leaving all they have behind, the Riveras come to America with a single dream: that in this country of great opportunity and resources, Maribel can get better. When Mayor Toro, whose family is from Panama, sees Maribel in a Dollar Tree store, it is love at first sight. It’s also the beginning of a friendship between the Rivera and Toro families, whose web of guilt and love and responsibility is at this novel’s core. Woven into their stories are the testimonials of men and women who have come to the United States from all over Latin America. Their journeys and their voices will inspire you, surprise you, and break your heart.”

- [*The Joy Luck Club* by Amy Tan \(1989\)](#) Here is the Amazon description of the novel: “In 1949 four Chinese women—drawn together by the shadow of their past—begin meeting in San Francisco to play mah jong, invest in stocks, eat dim sum, and “say” stories. They call their gathering the Joy Luck Club. Nearly forty years later, one of the members has died, and her daughter has come to take her place, only to learn of her mother’s lifelong wish—and the tragic way in which it has come true. The revelation of this secret unleashes an urgent need among the women to reach back and remember...”

- [*There There* by Tommy Orange \(2018\)](#) Here is the Amazon description of the novel: “Among them is Jacquie Red Feather, newly sober and trying to make it back to the family she left behind. Dene Oxendene, pulling his life together after his uncle’s death and working at the powwow to honor his memory. Fourteen-year-old Orvil, coming to perform traditional dance for the very first time. Together, this chorus of voices tells of the plight of the urban Native American—grappling with a complex and painful history, with an inheritance of beauty and spirituality, with communion and sacrifice and heroism. Hailed as an instant classic, *There There* is at once poignant and unflinching, utterly contemporary and truly unforgettable.”

We suggest that you annotate the novel of your choice in preparation for assessments during the first week of school. Assessments may include analytical writing, literature circle, and/or other summative activities.

You must have read your two books by the **first day of school**.

Sincerely,

The Mira Costa English Department