**Position Paper Assignment: AP Language and Composition[[1]](#footnote-1)**

Our world is a complicated place, and combing thorough the news is a daunting task. Deciphering fact from fiction and bias from truth is one of the most important skills one can have in a world where we are saturated with media. By taking a stance on complicated issues, you own your perspective. It’s one thing to speak what you feel, but can you validate your ideas?

**Over the course of the first semester you will each write 5 position papers. These papers will be written on a focused, complicated question—one that does not have a singular answer.**

The Process:

1. Each question will begin with a discussion in class and some time to think.
2. You will then have time to research and write on your own.
3. The completed position paper should be finished on the date it is due. See the guidelines below.
4. On the due date, 5 students will read their paper to the class. A discussion will ensue based on what is read. Each student will only read to the class on one occasion. The readers will be announced before the due date.
5. All papers will be collected and scored holistically based on the rubric.
6. Each student will edit and revise a position paper to be included in the quarter II portfolio.

Each paper should:

1. Be composed of two (2) complete pages, typed and double spaced
2. Written in paragraph form
3. A complete and focused response on the question posed
4. Include two (2) sources, cited according to MLA guidelines *see the library website for information on Noodle Tools and MLA citations*

The Questions Due Dates

1. Is there a limit to free speech? September 26/27
2. What is happiness? October 24/25
3. Can science go too far? November 21/22
4. Without religion would people become   
   more, less, or be equally morally corrupt? December 12/13
5. Choice January 15/16

**Additional advice: Try not to think about the questions posed above in terms of pro vs. con or yes vs. no. A strong position paper speaks to an issue posed by the question, not a generalized argument. Consider what the question means to you and tackle the idea on your own terms, not with generalizations.**

**D** or an **F** is given if the essay:

* Does not present a clear idea / argument
* Is not structured properly / as described in assignment specifications
* Does not fulfill the requirements of the assignment (for example, if a one-page essay is handed in when the assignment requires a two-page essay).
* The writer does not cite any sources in the argument.

**C**: average assignment

* Fulfills the assignment (genre of writing, length requirement, MLA format, sources and research where appropriate, etc.).
* Presents a basic central idea and provides some evidence to support this idea.
* Has grammatical and syntactical (sentence structure) mistakes, but they do not interfere with communication.
* Citations are present, but the works cited is incomplete.

**B**: goes beyond the standards of a C essay

* The evidence used is specific, and it is directly related to the support of the thesis statement.
* The essay goes beyond the basic requirements of the assignment.
* The essay reveals a clear understanding of the importance of diction, logical structure, style, and proper grammar.
* Along with presenting a clear idea, a more challenging or complicated topic may be addressed.
* The works cited page is complete and thorough. Sources are cited according to MLA guidelines. There may be errors in the citations, but the works cited page is still complete.

**A**: goes beyond the standards of a B essay

* The idea presented in the thesis statement may go beyond the perspective most readers have; it may even change the way a reader looks at the subject altogether.
* Underlying assumptions, values, and the use of evidence are carefully examined, rather than taken at face value.
* The essay’s structure, diction, choice of evidence, grammar, syntax and spelling are perfect—or quite close to it.
* There is a variety of sources present, all of which are appropriately cited according to MLA guidelines. There are no errors in the citations.

1. Position Papers are due IN CLASS; the midnight rule does NOT apply to this assignment. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)