II. Why Use It?

“SOAPS” is a technique developed by the College Board and is used to analyze a text. It is designed to help you to understand the rhetorical situation of a specific text; that is, how the interaction among speaker/writer, reader/audience, and subject determine the form the text will take.

This is essentially Joliffe’s rhetorical flow chart in a nutshell. The “SOAPS” model is your training wheels until you graduate to bigger and better things this year. Once we have mastered the basics of the text’s general exigence, then we can move on to analyze elements of style (including diction, tone, imagery, syntax, organization/structure, figurative language, etc…)

As you are already aware, AP Language & Composition requires you to learn, see and understand not only identification of everything listed above, but how it FUNCTIONS. This requires “active reading” in which you ask questions about the reading. Ask “why” and “how” questions instead of “what?” The exercises we will do in class will emphasize this skill. As you become more comfortable and proficient with this skill, we will move on to organizing and defending your findings in timed writes and extended papers.

III. Expectations:

The following are expectations that you will meet for EVERY SOAPS model completed in this class throughout the year. Remember, once you have proven yourself capable of analyzing each of the acronym’s elements thoroughly and accurately, we will be able to forego this process in writing. HOWEVER, you are always expected to mentally complete the SOAPS process when you read pieces from August through May.

1. Provide the title and author of the text to be analyzed in the top margin.
2. Identify and label each letter of the acronym -- stay organized with this!
3. Provide three pieces of textual/outside reference in your analysis of each element.
4. Reference your power verb list (hard copy provided; also on website) for every element of the SOAPS (particularly “purpose”). Understand that “describe”, “show”, and “explain” are not effective when discussing the purpose of a text. These obvious observations that do not require an in-depth look at a text.