

## AP English Vocab

- 1. audience** The listener, viewer, or reader of a text. Most texts are likely to have multiple audiences. *Gehrig's audience was his teammates and fans in the stadium that day, but it was also the teams he played against, the fans listening on the radio, and posterity—us.*
- 2. concession** An acknowledgment that an opposing argument may be true or reasonable. In a strong argument, a concession is usually accompanied by a refutation challenging the validity of the opposing argument.
- 3. connotation** Meanings or associations that readers have with a word beyond its dictionary definition, or denotation. Connotations are usually positive or negative, and they can greatly affect the author's tone. Consider the connotations of the words below, all of which mean "overweight." *That cat is plump. That cat is fat. That cat is obese.*
- 4. context** The circumstances, atmosphere, attitudes, and events surrounding a text. *The context for Lou Gehrig's speech is the recent announcement of his illness and his subsequent retirement, but also the poignant contrast between his potent career and his debilitating disease.*
- 5. counterargument** An opposing argument to the one a writer is putting forward. Rather than ignoring a counterargument, a strong writer will usually address it through the process of concession and refutation.
- 6. ethos** Greek for "character." Speakers appeal to ethos to demonstrate that they are credible and trustworthy to speak on a given topic. Ethos is established by both who you are and what you say. *Lou Gehrig brings the ethos of being a legendary athlete to his speech, yet in it he establishes a different kind of ethos—that of a regular guy and a good sport who shares the audience's love of baseball and family. And like them, he has known good luck and bad breaks.*
- 7. logos** Greek for "embodied thought." Speakers appeal to logos, or reason, by offering clear, rational ideas and using specific details, examples, facts, statistics, or expert testimony to back them up. *Gehrig starts with the thesis that he is "the luckiest man on the face of the earth" and supports it with two points: (1) the love and kindness he's received in his seventeen years of playing baseball, and (2) a list of great people who have been his friends, family, and teammates.*
- 8. occasion** The time and place a speech is given or a piece is written.
- 9. pathos** Greek for "suffering" or "experience." Speakers appeal to pathos to emotionally motivate their audience. More specific appeals to pathos might play on the audience's values, desires, and hopes, on the one hand, or fears and prejudices, on the other. *The most striking appeal to pathos is the poignant contrast between Gehrig's horrible diagnosis and his public display of courage.*
- 10. persona** Greek for "mask." The face or character that a speaker shows to his or her audience. *Lou Gehrig is a famous baseball hero, but in his speech he presents himself as a common man who is modest and thankful for the opportunities he's had.*
- 11. polemic** Greek for "hostile." An aggressive argument that tries to establish the superiority of one opinion over all others. Polemics generally do not concede that opposing opinions have any merit.