

Independent Summer Reading

AP Language and Composition

AP Language and Composition is a rigorous, college-level course. We cover a lot of material throughout the year and feel that the more background knowledge you bring to the course, the greater your chances of success. With that in mind we ask that in preparation you do some summer reading. The books listed below have been selected based on their relevance to course content, the likelihood of their (or a similar works') inclusion on the AP Language test, and their intellectual merit.

Basic Requirement: **Actively read** one of the books on the list and **annotate** it using the strategies for close reading that you learned in Pre-AP World Literature and Composition (for more on this, please see the “Annotating a Text” handout on the back of this sheet). Then **write** a 900-1200 word essay in response to your book. Respond to **all three** of the following prompts in your essay:

1. Identify one or two major themes from the book. What do you think the author’s purpose was in writing this book? What is he/she saying about the human condition?
2. What did you notice about the author’s style or writing techniques? Consider elements such as tone, diction (word choice), figurative language, evidence, statistics, anecdote, imagery and narrative perspective. Describe several techniques that you identified and what the effect of those techniques is in terms of the way they cultivate the author’s ethos (credibility), logos (logical reasoning), or generate pathos (emotion) in the audience.
3. How did reading the text impact you personally? What was your opinion of the quality of the text in terms of the importance of its theme(s), the quality of its prose, and the effectiveness of its rhetorical appeals? What did you learn from reading the text?

Additional Enrichment: We will read selections from most of these authors in class this year, and many of them (or similar selections and authors) will show up on the AP Language Test. For those of you wishing to get off to a strong start next fall, we suggest that you read and annotate as many of these texts as possible over the summer. **You only need to write one essay, regardless of the total number of books that you read and annotate.** If you choose to annotate more than one book, just turn all of them in next fall with the annotations included to earn the extra points. E-readers are fine if they have a comment feature and you are willing to hand them in to me or if you write the notes on a separate sheet (with relevant page numbers so I know which part of the book you are referring to!).

Grade: This is a 100 point assignment for the first book (50 pts.) and the essay (50 pts.). Each additional annotated text beyond the first will earn 25 points extra credit, (up to two additional books – 50 points total – or approximately 4% added to your total final grade for the class) to help get you off to a solid start in AP Language and Composition. Grading is rigorous in this class, and there are not many extra credit opportunities, so we encourage you to take advantage of this one!

Book List:

Into the Wild by Jon Krakauer

The Autobiography of Malcolm X by Malcolm X as told to Alex Haley (+10 pts. extra credit)

Girl, Interrupted by Susanna Kayson

Freakonomics by Levitt & Dubner

Educated: A Memoir by Tara Westover

Outliers by Malcolm Gladwell

Slaughterhouse Five by Kurt Vonnegut

Annotating a Text

Annotation is a key component of close reading. Since we will continue to annotate texts all semester, you need to develop a system that works for you (within the following guidelines). The techniques are almost limitless. Use any **combination** of the following:

- Make brief comments in the margins. Use any white space available – blank space at the end of story, random blank pages, back side of story, etc.
- Make brief comments between or within lines of the text. Do not be afraid to mark within the text itself. In fact, you must.
- Circle or put boxes, triangles, or clouds around words or phrases.
- Use abbreviations or symbols - brackets, stars, exclamation points, question marks, etc.
- Connect words, phrases, ideas, circles, boxes, etc. with lines or arrows.
- Underline – CAUTION: Use this method sparingly. Underline only a few words. **Always combine** with another method such as comment. Never underline an entire passage. Doing so takes too much time and loses effectiveness. If you wish to mark an entire paragraph or passage, draw a line down the margin or use brackets.
- *Highlight – See *underline*. You cannot write with a highlighter so you will still need a pen.
- Use post-it notes if you have exhausted all available space or if it is a library book.
- Write notes on a separate sheet of paper – be sure to write the **page number** to which each comment refers!

A thoroughly annotated book will usually have **some evidence of engagement on every page**. If there are sections which are less important then you should make up for that in other sections which are more thoroughly annotated – long (5 or more pages) sections of untouched pages will be considered evidence that you didn't engage/annotate that part of the book and will result in partial credit.

Close Reading:

What should you annotate? Again, the possibilities are limitless. Keep in mind the reasons we annotate—to help you with deeper engagement of the text, to encourage better understanding of a text, and to help you remember the information you read. Your annotations **must** include comments. I want to see evidence of thinking.

- Have a conversation with the text. Talk back to it.
- **Ask questions (essential to active reading).**
- Comment on the actions or development of a character. Does the character change? Why? How? What is the result?
- Comment on something that intrigues, impresses, amuses, shocks, puzzles, disturbs, repulses, aggravates, etc.
- Comment on lines/quotations you think are especially significant, powerful, or meaningful.
- Express agreement or disagreement.
- Summarize key events. Make predictions.
- Connect ideas to each other or to other texts.
- Note anything you would like to discuss or do not understand.
- Note how the author uses language.

Note the significance of any of these:

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| • Effects of word choice (diction) | • Tone/mood |
| • Sentence structure or type (syntax) | • Irony (Which of the 3 types?) |
| • Point of view and reliability of narrator | • Imagery |
| • Repetition of words, phrases, actions, events | • Contrasts/contradictions/juxtapositions |
| • Patterns and motifs or clusters of ideas | • Allusions/setting/historical period |
| • Narrative pace/time/sequence of events | • Figures of speech or literary devices |