

AP English Language & Composition
Summer Reading Assignment and Options 2021-2022

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In preparation for a rigorous semester of thinking, reading, and writing, students enrolling in AP English Language and Composition are expected to complete the following summer reading assignment which consists of reading **two required texts** and selecting **one additional text** (or more!) to read from the list provided (pages 2-3 of this document). Students will also be expected to complete an argument analysis and opinion/reaction response for each which are described on pages 4-5 of this document.

Grading: Summer Reading assignments will be graded for completion and are meant to give students an advantage or boost at the beginning of the course. There is no way to do the assignment poorly or in a wrong manner. The purpose of summer reading is to encourage students to keep their academic minds engaged over the summer break and to give the instructor a sense of their writing skills, proficiencies, and challenges at the beginning of the course.

Scheduling: There will be two sections of this course, one fall semester and one spring semester. Students in both sections of the course (fall and spring) should turn in summer reading assignments **on or before August 9, 2021** (first ½ day of school) and **no later than 11:59 p.m. September 7, 2021**, for full credit. Assignments may be submitted in person (paper/printed) or electronically by sharing a Google document with me at the email address above. Any summer reading assignments turned in after September 8 for either section of the course will earn partial credit. *For students in the Fall semester course, no summer reading assignments will be accepted after September 30, 2020. For students in the Spring semester course, no summer reading assignments will be accepted after January 31, 2022.*

***Book 1 (required):** Each student is expected to read *The Crucible* by Arthur Miller.

The Crucible, published in 1953, is a dramatized and partially fictionalized story of the Salem witch trials that took place in the Massachusetts Bay Colony during 1692–93. Miller wrote the play as an allegory for McCarthyism, when the United States government persecuted people accused of being communists.

***Book 2 (required):** Each student is expected to read *A Raisin in the Sun* by Lorraine Hansberry

A Raisin in the Sun debuted on Broadway in 1959. The title comes from the poem "Harlem" (also known as "A Dream Deferred") by Langston Hughes. The story tells of a black family's experiences in south Chicago, as they attempt to improve their financial circumstances with an insurance payout following the death of the father. The New York Drama Critics' Circle named it the best play of 1959, and in recent years publications such as *The Independent* and *Time Out* have listed it among the best plays ever written.

Anyone with an objection to either of the required texts should contact the instructor for an alternative assignment.

Book (personal choice): Each student should **select at least one text** from the list provided (pages 2-3). The extensive list of choices on the following page represents some of the finest literature in the non-fiction genres--biography and autobiography, memoir, social commentary, nature and science writing, history, etc. I will give you credit for reading and writing about one of these books, but I invite you to read above and beyond the minimum assignment

* Ackerman, Diane. **The Zookeeper's Wife: A War Story**. 2007. This is the true story of a Polish couple who saved over 300 people from the Nazis by hiding refugees in empty animal cages in their zoo.

*Angelou, Maya. **I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings**. 1969. This memoir, now considered a classic, traces the author's childhood from a small Southern town to St. Louis to San Francisco as well as her journey to heal from abuse, to love herself, and to accept the kindness of others.

Asinof, Eliot. **Eight Men Out: The Black Sox and the 1919 World Series**. 1963. It's all here: the players, the scandal, the shame, and the damage the 1919 World Series caused America's national pastime, baseball.

*Bissinger, H. G. **Friday Night Lights: A Town, a Team, and a Dream**. 1990. This book documents a season in the life of the Permian Panthers of Odessa, Texas—the winningest high-school football team in Texas history.

Brown, Dee. **Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee: An Indian History of the American West**. 1970. There's another side of America's western expansion: the one seen through Native American eyes.

Capote, Truman. **In Cold Blood**. 1965. In 1959, four members of the Clutter family in Holcomb Kansas were brutally murdered for no apparent cause or reason. Truman Capote reconstructs the murder, the investigation that led to the capture of the killers, their trial and execution in this classic of American true crime writing.

Carson, Rachel. **Silent Spring**. 1962. This landmark book gave birth to the environmental movement by alerting a large audience to the environmental and human dangers of indiscriminate use of pesticides. The book spurred revolutionary changes in the laws affecting our air, land, and water.

*Coates, Ta-Nehisi. **Between the World and Me**. 2015. Written as a letter to his adolescent son, Ta-Nehisi Coates, a journalist for *The Atlantic*, offers his struggle to understand our nation's history and current situation as well as his place in it as an American man of African heritage. Coates shares the story of his awakening through a series of personal experiences.

Gladwell, Malcom. **Outliers: The Story of Success**. 2008. This book takes readers on an intellectual journey through the world of "outliers"—the best and the brightest, the most famous and the most successful. Gladwell asks the question: what makes high-achievers different?

*Griffin, John Howard. **Black Like Me**. 1960. This book is a memoir of what happened to Journalist John Howard Griffin when he decided to use medication to darken his skin and exchange his life as a privileged Southern white man for the disenfranchised world of an unemployed black man, making his way through the segregated Deep South

Hawking, Stephen. **A Brief History of Time: From the Big Bang to Black Holes**. 1988. Cosmology becomes understandable as the author discusses the origin, evolution, and fate of our universe.

Hersey, John. **Hiroshima**. 1946. Six Hiroshima survivors reflect on the aftermath of the first atomic bomb.

Junger, Sebastian. **The Perfect Storm: A True Story of Men Against the Sea**. 1997. Haunting premonitions didn't save seven fishermen from the ferocious and deadly power of the sea.

*Krakauer, Jon. **Into the Wild**. 1996. In April 1992, Christopher McCandless gave away all his money and most of his possessions, hitchhiked to Alaska, and walked alone into the wilderness just north of Mt. McKinley to make a new life for himself. Four months later, his decomposed body was found by a hunter. This is his story.

*Krakauer, Jon. **Into Thin Air**. 1997. This book documents the terrifying story of one man's journey to climb Mount Everest—his adventure as well as the losses he endured and the permanent affect the trip had on his personal life.

*Larsen, Erik. **The Devil in the White City: Murder, Magic, and Madness at the Fair that Changed America**. 2003. This book combines the true story of the 1893 World's Fair in Chicago and the story of the cunning serial killer who used the fair to lure his victims to their deaths.

*Lewis, Michael. **The Blind Side: Evolution of a Game**. 2006. Lewis's book tells the story of Michael Oher, who was born to a crack-addicted mother with twelve other children, and his journey to the NFL after being adopted by a rich, white, Evangelical family.

*McBride, James. **The Color of Water**. 1996. This is a memoir in the form of a tribute to McBride's own mother who put twelve children through college. She "passed" as black or "light-skinned" but really she was born in Poland, the daughter of a rabbi, raised in the American South, moved to Harlem, NY, and married a black man.

Sacks, Oliver. **Awakenings**. 1973. Awakenings is the remarkable story of a group of patients who contracted sleeping-sickness just after World War I. Frozen for decades in a trance-like state, these men and women were given up as hopeless until Dr. Oliver Sacks gave them the then-new drug L-DOPA, which had an astonishing, explosive, "awakening" effect.

Shetterly, Margot Lee. **Hidden Figures: The American Dream and the Untold Story of the Black Women Mathematicians Who Helped Win the Space Race**. 2016. *Hidden Figures* follows the interwoven accounts of Dorothy Vaughan, Mary Jackson, Katherine Johnson and Christine Darden, four African American women who participated in some of NASA's greatest successes.

*Skloot, Rebecca. **The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks**. 2010. Henrietta Lacks was a poor tobacco farmer whose cells were taken without her knowledge in 1959. Those same cells, known to the scientists who used them only as "HeLa" became one of the most important tools in medicine, vital for developing the polio vaccine, cloning, gene mapping, and more.

Strayed, Cheryl. **Wild: From Lost to Found on the Pacific Crest Trail**. 2012. At twenty-two, Cheryl Strayed thought she had lost everything. With no experience or training, driven only by blind will, she would hike more than a thousand miles of the Pacific Crest Trail from the Mojave Desert through California and Oregon to Washington State—and she would do it alone.

Thoreau, Henry David **Walden; or, Life in the Woods**. 1854. In 1845 Thoreau built a cabin on the shores of Walden Pond in order to live "deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life . . . and learn what it had to teach." The book compresses the time he spent there into a single calendar year and uses passages of four seasons to symbolize human development.

Thomas, Lewis. **The Lives of a Cell: Notes of a Biology Watcher**. 1974. These essays offer an optimistic scientist's view of a wide variety of subjects. Lewis, a physician and cancer researcher, shares his personal observations on the uniformity, diversity, interdependence, and strange powers of the earth's life forms.

Wolf, Tom. **The Right Stuff**. 1979. This book is about the pilots engaged in research with experimental rocket-powered, high-speed aircraft as well as documenting the stories of the first [Project Mercury astronauts](#) selected for the [NASA](#) space program. Wolfe wrote that the book was inspired by the desire to find out why the astronauts accepted the danger of space flight.

Yousafzai, Malala. **I Am Malala: The Story of The Girl Who Stood Up for Education and Was Shot by the Taliban**. 2013. Malala Yousafzai became the youngest recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize for a reason. She stood up for her right for education, defended her fellow women, and refused to be silenced, despite the threats, despite the violence, and despite the fact she was shot by the Taliban

*** Books on this document indicated with an asterisk are available in limited quantities to check out from the FHS English department.** Please contact Ms. Abbott via the email address above if you would like to check out a book. Your local branch of the Public Library is also an excellent source for finding copies of these books. If you are interested in purchasing books, the following local booksellers may have what you need: McKay's Used Books (230 Papermill Drive), Union Avenue Books (517 Union Ave), Barnes & Noble (Suburban Plaza), and Books-a-Million (Walker Springs Plaza). **Litening to an unabridged audio version is an acceptable alternative to reading.**

Argument Analysis and Opinion Response Format

One of the concepts of AP English Language and Composition is that everything is an argument. We will be examining the tools of rhetoric--how writers and speakers use words, sentences, and writing structures to present information, to make arguments and claims, and to support those arguments and claims in order to convince, persuade, and otherwise affect readers.

Argument Analysis: The books you read for summer reading have embedded in them many arguments. For the argument analysis portion of your assignment, examine one of the arguments presented in your text(s). Do your best to summarize the overall position the author seems to take, and support your analysis with at least one and no more than three excerpts from the text. You may choose to write about the book's main argument or another argument the author makes along the way. If you are struggling to understand what/where the argument is, examine any claim the author makes at all or any claim that you can infer based on the information presented by the author. You can also think about what you may have learned from reading the text. If you have learned something, the author has been able to persuade you of something.

The following are examples of arguments made in three of the summer reading books: Climbing Mount Everest is a dangerous endeavor that should not be attempted by a great number of people. (*Into Thin Air*, Jon Krakauer) Using a person's biological material for the advancement of science without compensating her for her contribution is criminal, if not racist. (*The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*, Rebecca Skloot) Healing from abuse takes time, patience, and finding the ability to love oneself. (*I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, Maya Angelou)

Opinion Response: After examining one of the arguments in the work, respond to the author's claims with a response that indicates your opinion about the author's argument. Do you agree? To what extent? Do you disagree? Why? What did you take away from reading the author's argument? What questions do you still have?

The Argument Analysis and Opinion/Response template (below) will help you structure your responses. You may use it very closely and "fill in the blanks" with your own words as indicated, or you may use it as a model of the kinds of information and criteria your analysis and responses should include. Your argument analysis and opinion response should be written in complete sentences, should use specific references from the text(s), and should represent the best of your thinking and writing skills.

Argument Analysis

One of the arguments made by author's name (last name is sufficient--do not use first name only) in her/his work, Title, is that _____ (state in brief, general terms at least one of the arguments the author presents in the text). More specifically, X (author's last name) argues that _____ (give a more detailed, focused account of the author's claim/position). She/he writes, " _____." (Choose a passage from the text that illustrates the author's position.) In this passage, X is suggesting that _____. (restate, paraphrase, or explain in your own words what the author is saying or what we are to understand about the author's point.) She/he goes on to say, " _____," (another piece of textual support for the author's claim identified at the beginning) which indicates _____. (your understanding of the author's point). (You may continue to do this--present textual evidence and explain or comment on it as much as you need until you feel the argument has been thoroughly examined.) In conclusion, X's belief is that _____.

Opinion/Reaction

X is wrong/right, because _____ (explain how you connect or disagree with the author in general terms) . More specifically, I believe that _____ (dig a little deeper into the reasons behind your reaction). For example, _____ (present an example from your experience or something else you've read/seen/heard that matches up with or challenges the author's ideas). Although X might object that _____ (identify the way the author might disagree or differ from your perspective), I maintain that _____ (explain the way you see things). Therefore, I conclude that _____ (identify the way the author's argument is resolved in your mind, one way or another).