

AP English Language and Composition Summer Reading and Writing Assignment 2017

NOTE: THIS ASSIGNMENT REQUIRES THAT YOU HAVE THE BOOKS READ AT LEAST TWO TO THREE WEEKS BEFORE YOU COMPLETE THE WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT.

IN OTHER WORDS: DON'T PROCRASTINATE!

ALSO, PLEASE READ THE WHOLE ASSIGNMENT CAREFULLY.

The Texts:

Fick, Nathaniel. *One Bullet Away: The Making of a Marine Officer*

Jacobs, A.J. *The Year of Living Biblically: One Man's Humble Quest to Follow the Bible as Literally as Possible*

Troost, J. Maarten. *Lost on Planet China: The Strange and True Story of One Man's Attempt to Understand the World's Most Mystifying Nation or How He Became Comfortable Eating Live Squid*

The Theme:

Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote, "All life is an experiment. The more experiments you make the better." From Ben Franklin's experiment in moral perfection through Nate Fick's experiences at Officer Candidate School, in the Basic Recon Course, and in Afghanistan and Iraq, the authors we'll be reading this year sought to challenge assumptions about themselves and the world and find ways to actively live their lives that pushed their own and the world's expectations for them. They wanted to know and *show* who they were, and they knew that one sure way to find out was to step outside their individual comfort zones. Tour China with Maarten Troost. Engender a nation with the Founding Fathers. Live in the woods with Thoreau. Experiment to find out who you are!

The Challenge:

Fick, Jacobs, and Troost all have one thing in common: They set out to take on the significant challenge of self-discovery. Each author explains the nature of that challenge in the early chapters of his book, and each creates a framework for measuring, recording, and surviving and/or thriving while on this journey of self-discovery. In the case of Jacobs, he actually codifies the rules by which he'll live, while Troost has a more organic approach to discovering himself while in China. Fick's efforts at self-discovery are defined to a degree by his military training but also broadened in unexpected ways by the experience of war. Whatever the case, these authors embrace the idea that they can learn something significant—about themselves, about the people in their lives, about the world at large—through deliberate, thoughtful confrontation of a challenge or experiment in living.

For your Summer Writing Assignment 2017, you're going to do precisely what these authors did, only on a less grandiose scale.

1. Read the three books. Consider as you read each author's approach to his respective journey of self-discovery. What rules does he put into place for himself? What expectations does he have going into the challenge? How does he set up his living arrangements, etc., to maximize the potential for learning throughout the challenge? How do his experiences live up to or disappoint his stated expectations? Is he successful or unsuccessful in meeting the challenge(s)?
2. Define a challenge in your own life that you wish to confront or overcome. You're going to undertake an attempt on the challenge/experiment for the span of seven days, so pick a challenge/experiment that is substantial enough to last you a week. Choices for this challenge /experiment are virtually endless and entirely individual. Whatever you choose as your challenge, make sure you know why you're doing it because you have to be able to offer a rationale and then discuss the success or failure of confronting the challenge based on how it fulfilled the rationale. **NOTE: You MAY NOT use a pre-designed challenge. If someone else has designed the challenge or defined its objectives for you (eg. a specific athletic challenge like a camp or event, an immersion or service experience, EMPLOYMENT at a camp, etc.) it**

**does not count. Please do not use a family vacation unless you define a SPECIFIC set of goals and challenges for yourself.**

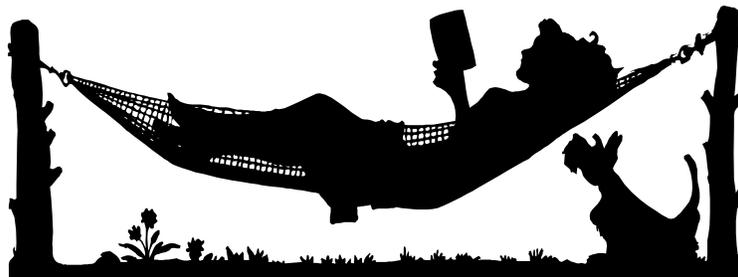
3. Undertake an attempt to discover new things about yourself while confronting the life experiment you've designed. For seven days and nights, keep a notebook or journal of your daily experiences. Be as detailed as possible in taking notes, as you will need these for the final written project.
4. Write an account of your attempt at self-discovery through personal experiment that includes ALL of the following elements:
  - a) An explanation of the nature of the challenge: What are you challenging yourself to do, be, and/or think? Why did you choose this particular experiment in self-discovery? Be as specific and detailed as possible in laying out what your challenge means to you. (1 page minimum, 2 pages maximum)
  - b) Highlights of your daily journal or notes during the course of the week of self-discovery. (2 pages minimum, 3 pages maximum)
  - c) A reflection on what you learned about yourself from undertaking your life challenge/experiment. How did it go? Did it turn out the way you'd planned, or were there impediments to your success? Did you learn what you expected from attempting the challenge/experiment? What surprised you about the experience of undergoing the challenge/experiment? What disappointed you? Will you continue the attempt, or will you do it again sometime? (2 pages minimum, 3 pages maximum)

#### The Nitty-Gritty

- You should hand in a total of five to eight pages.
- ALL assignments should be typed, double-spaced, in Times New Roman 12-point font, with one-inch margins on all sides.
- Assignments will be graded for adherence to the assignment, grammar and mechanics, structure (where appropriate), content, creativity, thoughtfulness, and care with which the assignment was done.
- All questions about the assignment can be directed to Dr. Kimmel at [kimmel@canisiushigh.org](mailto:kimmel@canisiushigh.org).

#### The Due Date

This assignment is worth TWO essay grades in the first quarter. It must be completed and handed in on **Tuesday, 5 September 2017**. Failure to hand in this assignment or failure to complete it satisfactorily will result in your dismissal from AP English Language and Composition. There are NO EXCEPTIONS to this policy. Do the assignment or don't take the class. There will also be a summer reading test worth two test grades (date to be announced).



*When I get a little money I buy books; and if any is left I buy food and clothes. --Erasmus*