

AP English Language and Composition Summer Reading Assignment 2018

Advanced Placement English Language and Composition is a course about how to most effectively employ the English language to get across your point of view, persuade someone to agree with you, and/or analyze someone else's argument for strengths and weaknesses. One of the best ways to develop your own facility with English is to read anything and everything you can.

Contrary to popular opinion, summer reading is not a punishment, nor is it an attempt to ruin what would otherwise be a relaxing holiday for you. Reading is a skill you should not only master but also enjoy; both mastery and enjoyment can be fostered by the act of reading.

With this in mind, I have selected eight works of non-fiction that I have read and enjoyed. They are from various genres and span a wide array of subjects, authorial voices, and writing styles. You should be able to find one book in this modest selection that appeals to you. You may choose any format (ebook, paperback, hardcover) that you prefer, but I strongly suggest that you buy a physical copy of the book (all of which can be picked up used). It will aid you in retaining what you read and will make your in-class work on the book easier come September.

Please read ONE of the following works, annotating the text itself and taking separate notes on it. Spend real time with it.

- Do not skim it at the last minute so that you can “pass the test.” (You can't pass the test by skimming.)
- Do not watch the movie hoping it will give you what you need. (It won't.)
- Do not hope that Sparknotes will save you. (#sparknoteswillnotsaveyou)

Aczel, Amir D. *The Jesuit and the Skull: Teilhard de Chardin, Evolution, and the Search for Peking Man*. (biography)
ISBN: 978-1594483356

Bradley, Major Rusty and Kevin Maurer. *Lions of Kandahar: The Story of a Fight Against All Odds*. (war memoir)
ISBN: 978-0553386165

Druett, Joan. *In the Wake of Madness: The Murderous Voyage of the Whaleship Sharon*. (historical true crime)
ISBN: 978-1565124356

Least Heat Moon, William. *Blue Highways: A Journey into America*. (travel narrative)
ISBN: 978-0316353298

Murphy, Dervla. *Full Tilt: From Ireland to India with a Bicycle*. (travel narrative)
ISBN: 978-1906011413

Perry, Michael. *Visiting Tom: A Man, a Highway, and the Road to Roughneck Grace*. (memoir)
ISBN: 978-0061894466

Philbrick, Nathaniel: *In the Heart of the Sea: The Tragedy of the Whaleship Essex*. (history)
ISBN: 978-0141001821

Zak, Dan. *Almighty: Courage, Resistance, and Existential Peril in the Nuclear Age*. (biography)
ISBN: 978-0735212312 (Note: Dan Zak is a Canisius High School Class of 2001 alumnus.)

Then, write a thoughtful, detailed, specific reflection essay that answers the following question:

Considering three central lessons, themes, or morals imparted by the work you have read, how do you see those lessons, themes, or morals reflected in your own life?

In answering the question, please use passages from the book that illustrate the lessons, themes, or morals you have chosen, and provide specific, detailed examples from your own life to support your observations. Do not engage in manure-shoveling. Your essay must show that you have read the book carefully and thoughtfully and that you have taken time to think about the question and your answer before sitting down to write your essay. Please proofread for spelling, punctuation, grammar, and syntax.

Essay Specifications:

- You may use the first person voice (I) to answer the question, but please maintain a reasonably formal tone and consider your audience when writing.
- Please use Times New Roman 12-point font and one-inch margins.
- Please write a minimum of two to three pages but no more than five.
- Please have a hard copy of the essay in class on the first full day of classes. You will be instructed at that time how to submit an electronic copy for Turnitin.

Please note that in addition to this essay assignment, there will be other in-class work and further assessments to determine whether or not you have actually read your chosen book. Do not start AP English Language on the wrong foot by failing to read the one book that you have been assigned for the class.