

# AP English Language and Composition

## *Summer Reading Assignment*



Welcome—and congratulations on signing up for AP English Language and Composition! This course, which emphasizes nonfiction, is designed to build upon your skills as critical readers, analytical thinkers, and effective writers. For most of you, this emphasis on nonfiction means that you must get used to a “different” kind of English course, one that involves less reading and writing about fiction than you may be used to.

Over the summer, we would like you to immerse yourselves in two, full-length nonfiction works.\* **YOU MUST SELECT ONE BOOK FROM LIST #1 AND ONE BOOK FROM LIST #2.** Please do not use Spark Notes, Cliff Notes, GradeSaver, etc. We want to know what YOU think. This class, in fact, will involve a great deal of thinking, reading, discussing, and writing, so it is imperative that you be prepared for class each day—including DAY ONE. To succeed in this class, the simplest and most efficient step is this: Read. Read frequently and attentively. Read different kinds of writing. Read different authors.

We look forward to working with you this year to learn more about how authors use language to create meaning and to develop their arguments.

Enjoy! See you in September!

*Mrs. Wagner and Mrs. Festa*

**Note:** These reading materials can be found at the Islip Public Library or at a bookstore such as Barnes and Noble.

**READING LIST # 1:** Choose one of the works listed below. Read the book, and then complete the **Book Review** below. In September, you will be asked to provide a **Visual Presentation** of your book. (Specific instructions will follow in September; basically, you will be asked to provide three visual images that reflect the content of your book.)

- *The Overachievers: The Secret Lives of Driven Kids* by Alexandra Robbins
- *Fast Food Nation* by Eric Schlosser
- *Nickel and Dimed* by Barbara Ehrenreich
- *Freakonomics: A Rogue Economist Explores the Hidden Side of Everything* by Steven D. Levitt and Stephen J. Dubner
- *Outliers: The Story of Success* by Malcolm Gladwell
- *The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference* by Malcolm Gladwell
- *unSpun: Finding Facts in a World of Disinformation*  
by Brooks Jackson and Kathleen Hall Jamieson
- *A Whole New Mind: Why Right Brainers Will Rule the Future* by Daniel H. Pink
- *How Starbucks Saved My Life* by Michael Gates Gill
- *Into the Wild* by Jon Krakauer

### **Research Book Review**

Answer the following questions in regard to the book that you selected to read. Respond to each question in a short paragraph comprised of 3-5 sentences. (Of course, you may write a lengthier response!) You will be assessed on the quality and thoughtfulness of your responses. Please type (or write) the questions above each response.

1. What is the significance of the title, and what can we conclude from the title before opening the text?
2. What is the goal of this book?
3. Do you agree with the author's argument? Do you see any holes in the author's argument? Explain your answers.
4. What types of evidence does the author provide to support his/her claims?
5. How does the author establish credibility?
6. What is an important event or passage in the book and why?
7. What dominant themes permeate the book?
8. What questions do you have after reading the book?
9. Would you read another book by this author? Why or why not?
10. What effect does the book have on your beliefs, thoughts, and/or theories? Explain.

**READING LIST # 2:** Choose one of the works listed below. Read the book, and then complete the **Book Review** below. In September, you will be asked to write an **essay** based on the following quotation:

*“Adversity has the effect of eliciting talent which in prosperous circumstances would have lain dormant.” - Horace*

(In preparation for this essay, you may want to take some notes regarding the role that adversity plays in the development of your book’s protagonist.)

- *Angela’s Ashes* by Frank McCourt
- *The Glass Castle* by Jeannette Walls
- *Hunger of Memory* by Richard Rodriguez
- *Growing Up* by Russell Baker
- *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek* by Annie Dillard
- *Seabiscuit: An American Legend* by Laura Hillenbrand
- *Reading Lolita in Tehran: A Memoir in Books* by Azar Nafisi
- *A Walk in the Woods* by Bill Bryson
- *This Boy’s Life* by Tobias Wolff

### **Biography/Memoir Review**

Answer the following questions in regard to the book that you selected to read. Respond to each question in a 1-2 paragraph response. (Of course, you may write a lengthier response!) Incorporate quotations from the book to support your response. You will be assessed on the quality and thoughtfulness of your responses. Please type (or write) the questions above each response.

1. How well do you feel that you know the subject of this book after having read about her/him? Explain your answer, using evidence from the text.
2. What about this book makes you like or dislike the person? Justify your impression by incorporating quotations that reveal the subject’s personality.
3. What did you learn from this reading experience?
4. What did you make of the book’s ending? Was it a hopeful or bitter vision, for example?
5. What is the author’s style of writing? How does the style affect the effectiveness of the book?