

AP Language & Composition (2020-21) Summer Reading Information

Welcome to AP Lang! Our focus in AP Lang will be to foster your abilities to read, think, and write. This is *not* a content-driven course. Over the course of the year, you will read widely, exploring essays, speeches, letters, and even a few works of fiction. You will not read these texts *passively*. Instead, you will analyze and discuss each text. You will hone literacy skills that can be applied to future texts you will encounter. It will be challenging, but we look forward to a year of learning and growing for all of us.

- Please sign up for Remind by texting @20langrhs to 81010. You can ask questions through Remind or by email.
- To indicate that you have received this information, students are asked to complete this Google Form (log into RCS Google account): <https://forms.gle/hhcuSPgtQkpAe8tq6>

Your recommended tasks this summer:

1. Become an independent learner. Seek your own cultural enrichment. Make a commitment to watch or read the news of the world. You must realize the importance of becoming a global citizen in today's world. Watch documentaries. Discuss current events with your family and friends. Develop opinions and support them. Become confident in the fact that your ideas have value!

2. READ. It is particularly helpful in AP Lang for you to become accustomed to reading non-fiction. Read a memoir by someone you admire. Try a new genre that is outside of your comfort zone. Think of a time or event in history that interests you and become an expert! To be an interesting person, you simply must have interests. Cultivate them.

3. Think. In addition to understanding "what" the author's message or purpose is in a given text, you must also attend to how the author crafts this message and why. Why did that *specific* author make use of that *specific* rhetorical choice for that *specific* audience given that *specific* message/purpose? Why does the text unfold in the *order* in which it does, and why or how does it *shift* in focus, tone, or strategy? We will **discuss** what we've read in the fall, so prepare (flagged sections, written notes, etc.) in a way that makes you feel comfortable to participate. Your voice is valued in our classroom community. Please share your thoughts.

Below is a list of recommended non-fiction texts that you *might* choose from. In years past, we required that students read three books for summer reading and complete an accompanying assignment. This year, please read in good faith and without restriction or grade attached.

Note that some books may contain content or language that you or your parents are not comfortable with, so please exercise choice and feel free to reach out to one of us if you have questions. However, also consider this message from the College Board related to controversial texts in this class: "*The best response to controversial language or ideas in a text might well be a question about the larger meaning, purpose, or overall effect of the language or idea in context. AP students should have the maturity, skill, and will to seek the larger meaning of a text or issue through thoughtful research.*"

Memoirs:

Born a Crime: Stories of a South African Childhood by Trevor Noah
Brain on Fire: My Month of Madness by Susannah Cahalan
Hillbilly Elegy: A Memoir of a Family and Culture in Crisis by J.D. Vance
A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier by Ishmael Beah
On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft by Stephen King

Other selected non-fiction:

Any book by Bill Bryson
Any book by Malcolm Gladwell
Behind the Beautiful Forevers: Life, Death, and Hope in a Mumbai Undercity by Katherine Boo
Between the World and Me by Ta-Nehisi Coates
Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption by Bryan Stevenson
Stiff: The Curious Lives of Human Cadavers by Mary Roach

Writing Guides:

Thank You for Arguing by Jay Heinrichs
How to Read Nonfiction Like a Professor: Critical Thinking in the Age of Bias, Contested Truth, and Disinformation by Thomas C. Foster

* **Note:** These books are grouped for your convenience when choosing what might interest you and not due to any ranking or requirement.

In addition to the books above, **speeches, essays, and op-eds are short-form rhetoric that you will likely encounter in the media this summer.** These are other rich opportunities for you to read and engage widely across subject matter and genre. Consider, too, **documentaries, political cartoons, and other forms of visual rhetoric ubiquitous in pop culture and social media.** What do you notice about how and why the argument is being depicted?

In the “real world,” you will become attuned to the rhetoric of government officials, business leaders, entertainers, and many others. You will even begin to “accidentally” analyze the rhetoric of the latest Netflix show, song, or TikTok video.

This summer, you will begin your preparation toward the dual goals of “college success” and “intellectually responsible civic engagement” as outlined in the College Board’s official course description for AP Lang. In service of these goals, it is our hope that you will embrace the challenges of fostering your own authentic curiosity, thinking critically about the world around you, and reading widely with an open mind.

We look forward to meeting you in the fall!

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