

SUMMER READING ASSIGNMENT 2020-2021 AP ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION

Welcome to AP English Language and Composition! This is a college-level course focused on the writing process and on analyzing nonfiction texts. This class requires you to delve deeply into true-life readings, to question the writer's intention and bias, and to grapple with complex, contemporary issues. Please note that some of the titles in this course depict mature and/or controversial topics appropriate to college-level discourse.

This summer reading assignment (adapted from some online sources) is designed to give you an introduction to the type of reading and thinking you will experience throughout the course. You can acquire your books from the Mahwah Public Library, Barnes and Noble, Amazon, or another bookstore. If there are concerns about obtaining the books, please contact your current English teacher before the end of the school year.

Over the summer, students entering AP Language will complete the following:

1. **Read *Outliers* by Malcolm Gladwell.** In this book, Gladwell challenges our belief of the “self-made man.” He argues that superstars “are invariably the beneficiaries of hidden advantages and extraordinary opportunities and cultural legacies that allow them to learn and work hard and make sense of the world in ways others cannot.”
2. **Read *In Cold Blood* by Truman Capote.** First published in 1966 after six years of work, this true story details the events leading up to, including, and following the 1959 murders of four members of the Clutter family. Set in the small farming community of Holcomb, Kansas, this book is often considered to be the first nonfiction novel.
3. **Annotate the texts while you are reading** in preparation for upcoming assessments. Your annotations may be directly on the pages (if you own the book), on Post-its, or in the notebook (digital or hard copy) you plan to use in class in September (include corresponding page numbers). Make note of anything you find interesting, confusing, or significant. Also make notes on the following topics as they will be the basis of discussions and assignments once the year begins:
 - How does each author define success and failure?
 - How do characters cope with adversity?
 - What is the author's overall argument and what evidence does he use to support himself?
 - How does the author organize his ideas? More specifically, how and why does the author use any of the following organizational structures at different points: examples, cause/effect, description, narration, and/or comparison/contrast?
 - Who is the author's intended audience? How do you know?
 - What rhetorical devices (diction, syntax, tone, figurative language, etc.) is the author using? Why? What is the effect of these devices at different moments in the text?
 - When and why does the author use appeals to logos (logic), ethos (credibility), and/or pathos (emotion) to enhance his argument?

Once the school year begins, students will use the above analysis questions and direct evidence from the texts to complete the following:

- INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS/LESSONS THROUGHOUT THE MONTH OF SEPTEMBER
- A GRADED SOCRATIC SEMINAR
- AN ESSAY
- A BOOK TEST

Your reading is due on Friday, September 11. It is highly recommended that you finish reading the texts prior to the start of the school year as we will be beginning right away with additional assignments/texts. If you have any questions or concerns about the assignments, please email Ms. Cording directly at ecording@mahwah.k12.nj.us. Happy reading!