

Advanced Placement Language and Composition Summer Reading 2026

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The AP Language and Composition course is designed to substitute for a college composition course; therefore, you will be required to read complex texts with understanding as well as to enrich your prose in order to communicate your ideas effectively to mature audiences. You will learn how to analyze and interpret exemplary writing by discerning and explaining the author's use of rhetorical strategies and techniques, eventually applying many of these techniques to your own writing. In order to prepare for our seminars, you are required to complete the assignments explained below.

All assignments are due on the first day of class.

Assignment One:

1. Students should choose ONE of the following books from the following list. Please note that these books have been suggested for AP Language and Composition class and not all books are suitable for all students. Please read reviews and conduct research on your choices before making a final choice. You may not choose a book that you have previously read.

Black Angels: The Untold Story of the Nurses who Helped Cure Tuberculosis by Maria Smilios

Born a Crime: Stories From a South African Childhood by Trevor Noah

Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants by Robin Wall Kimmerer

The Boys in the Boat: Nine Americans and Their Epic Quest for Gold at the 1936 Berlin Olympics by Daniel James Brown

Fast Food Nation: The Dark Side of the All-American Meal by Eric Schlosser

Friday Night Lights: A Town, A Team, A Dream by H.G. Bissinger

The Glass Castle: A Memoir by Jeanette Walls

Grace Will Lead us Home: The Charleston Church Tragedy and the Hard Inspiring Journey to Forgiveness by Jennifer Berry Hawes

The Hiding Place by Corrie ten Boom

Hidden Figures: The American Dream and the Untold Story of The Black Women

Mathematicians who Helped win the Space Race by Margot Lee Shetterly

Killers of the Flower Moon by David Grann

I am Malala: The Girl who Stood up for Education and was shot by the Taliban by Malala Yousafzai, with Christina Lamb

I'm Glad my Mom Died by Jennette McCurdy

Into the Wild by Jon Krakauer

Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption by Bryan Stevenson

The Nickel Boys by Colson Whitehead

The Other Wes Moore: One Name, Two Fates by Wes Moore

The Radium Girls: The Dark Story of America's Shining Women by Kate Moore

As you read the book:

1. Highlight/ annotate specific passages that seem important or add context in terms of theme, message, and author's purpose.

After you read the book: (this assignment should be hand-written on notebook paper)

1. Choose TEN of your annotations and explain why each was important. What did you glean from the annotated passage? How did each contribute to the author's message? What theme(s) did the passage support? Be sure to include the passage and the page number for each.
2. Write a one paragraph critique of the book. What did you like and why? What did you dislike and why? Did the book change you or change your way of thinking? Explain. Critique the author's writing style. You should provide specific examples from the text to support your statements.
3. Non-fiction books are primarily written to take a stand on a specific topic. Consider the topic that is being argued. What does that argument suggest about the human condition? For example, when we read *Educated*, we recognized that one of Westover's arguments was that families should be kinder to one another. Through this argument, she touches upon the human conditions of isolation, delusion, and forgiveness. What arguments are being made in your book and what are the human conditions attached to that argument? Below is a list of human conditions to consider.

Universal Ideas and the Human Condition

Addiction	Fantasy	Poverty
Alienation	Fate	Power
Ambition	Fear	Predestination
Anarchy	Fidelity	Pride
Anarchy	Freedom	Progress
Apostasy	Friendship	Purity

Atonement	Gluttony	Race
Beauty	Grace	Reality
Belonging	Greed	Rebirth
Betrayal	Growth	Redemption
Brotherhood	Hate	Regret
Change	Heresy	Renewal
Chaos	Heroism	Revenge
Community	Hope	Salvation
Companionship	Humility	Savagery
Conformity	Identity	Secrecy
Corruption	Imagination	Sloth
Courage	Immorality	Solidarity
Curiosity	Individuality	Solitude
Death	Infidelity	Stability
Defiance	Innocence	Struggle
Desire	Jealousy	Submission
Destruction	Justice	Success
Dishonesty	Judgment	Suppression
Disobedience	Knowledge	Survival
Disbelief	Life	Sustainability
Dominance	Longing	Temptation
Doubt	Loyalty	Tradition
Duty	Lust	Tragedy
Dystopia	Madness	Trust
Ego	Materialism	Truth
Empathy	Maturation	Vanity
Encouragement	Mortality	Vengeance

Enlightenment	Obligation	War
Eternity	Obsession	Work
Failure	Patriotism	
Faith	Peace	
Family	Perseverance	

Note: You are encouraged to read the same book as others in the class (up to three per book). If you choose to work with others, you may also include the group's thoughts as a whole and any differing opinions that you may have encountered.

Assignment Two:

Find a podcast and listen to at least five episodes. The podcast should have something to do with current events or real-world situations. You are encouraged to read reviews before committing to the podcast. Additionally, do not feel that you have to commit to one. If you start to listen and realize it just isn't "your thing," stop listening and find another one better suited to your interests. Suggestions include:

- American Icons
- Criminal
- Dear Hank and John
- The Daily
- ESPN 30 for 30
- Harry Potter and the Sacred Text
- How I Built This
- Imagined Life
- Lore
- Part-Time Genius
- Radio Lab
- Song Exploder
- Stuff You Missed in History Class
- TED Talks Daily
- This American Life
- This I Believe
- Unscured with Aaron Mahnke
- Views with David DeBrik and Jason Nash
- Wait, Wait Don't Tell Me

Please feel free to do additional research and find a podcast that works for you. Remember, the podcast should be educational and should have something to do with the real-world or current events.

For each episode, write **(hand-written on notebook paper)** a two-paragraph response. In the first paragraph, provide a brief overview of the episode. What was the topic, the title? Who were the narrators? How long was the episode? What episode number was it? Was this a sequel? Prequel? Stand-alone? Your second paragraph should be a personal response. What did you learn after listening to the podcast? How was listening to a story different from reading a story? Provide your opinions on the topic. What were your thoughts going into the episode? What were your thoughts after the episode? You might consider writing this paragraph like a review.

Assignment Three:

Watch a documentary. If you Google “best documentaries,” you will be given many to choose from. You can also use this link to find some documentaries best-suited for teenagers: <https://www.common sense media.org/lists/best-documentaries>. The documentary must be a full-length format (not one that comes out in separate episodes) and should be about a topic you are interested in but not familiar with.

Once you have watched the documentary, you should write a reflection that includes:

- The title of the documentary.
- The platform on which you watched the documentary.
- A brief summary of the documentary.
- Write briefly about what you think the purpose of the documentary is? What led you to this conclusion?
- What did the makers of the documentary do to attempt to convince the audience to change their minds or behaviors?
- Rate the documentary in your own terms. Did you like it? Why or why not?