

AP Language and Composition
Summer Assignment 2021

SUMMER WORK IS DUE ON THE FIRST DAY OF CLASS. LATE WORK WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.

Greetings! One of the goals in AP Language is to help you develop your voice as a writer. Once the course officially begins in August, we will be diving into various texts analyzing the “language moves” the writers make to develop their argument. We will also spend quite a bit of time developing our own arguments, incorporating some of those same “language moves” we see in our reading. We will be casting aside the dreaded 5-paragraph essay and replacing it with writing that is more flexible and nimble - writing that allows the writer’s own voice to come through on the page. We will begin that journey with the summer assignment. Choose ONE of the options below for your summer assignment.

Option 1: Travel Writing

For this assignment you will read a book that deals with the writer traveling to a new place, or at least traveling to a place with fresh eyes, then writing a travel narrative of your own. NOTE: It will be much more beneficial to read your chosen book prior to, or at least during, your own travels. For those of you going on a vacation some place this summer, this might be a great option for you. The details:

1. **Read one of the following nonfiction travel books:**
 - a. *Travels with Charley: In Search of America* by John Steinbeck (Charley is his dog)
 - b. *Wild* by Cheryl Strayed
 - c. *A Walk in the Woods* by Bill Bryson
 - d. *In a Sunburned Country* by Bill Bryson
 - e. *Eat. Pray. Love.* by Elizabeth Gilber
2. As you read the book, write **four typed, full-page reader responses**.
 - a. The reader responses **SHOULD NOT** be summaries. I don’t care if you can summarize something you read. What I care about is what you **THINK** about what you’ve read. A reader response is a *reaction*. What are your thoughts on what the author has claimed, observed, described, etc. If you were there with the author, would you react similarly to the way he/she does or not? Why? Are there connections to what the writer has written and your own experiences? Is there something interesting about the writing choices the author has made? React!
 - b. Don’t try to respond to all of the above questions for each response. You get to choose what you found interesting in what you’ve read.
3. Write a **one-page, typed reflection** on what you have learned from the book about travel writing. What techniques do you see the writer using? Cite examples. Is there anything the writer has done in his/her approach to writing this book that you could use in writing your own travel narrative (see more about writing your own travel narrative in step 6)?
4. Embark on your own journey. This should be a journey of some length - days, not hours. Ideally, it would be a place you haven’t been before, but as Steinbeck reveals in *Travels with Charley*, one can travel a familiar place and still see it fresh.

5. During your travels, keep a notebook/journal where you can write down observations you make, feelings you have, descriptions of people you meet and places you see. The content of this notebook can take whatever form you want it to - a series of notes, full-blown journals, etc. - but it should be a hard copy, not something done on a smartphone.
6. Once you get back home, take your notes/journals and turn it into a **1000-word travel narrative**. Here are some notes for how to do this:
 - a. Consider how you want to begin - Should you start at the beginning of the journey? Before you have even left? Could you start in the middle of the journey and flashback to the beginning? Be creative. Have fun.
 - b. Don't worry about MLA formatting for this. I don't want this to look like a typical English paper with the MLA heading in the corner, no personal pronouns, and other such "rules." Instead, make your own design choices. Such choices might include:
 - i. Font style
 - ii. Spacing - single-space or double-space
 - iii. Pictures - feel free to include pics if you feel they will heighten the work
 - c. Narrative writing tends to include the following aspects, try to incorporate them as best you can:
 - i. Characters and dialogue
 - ii. Meaningful description (check out how Truman Capote goes about describing Holcomb, Kansas in the first few paragraphs [here.](#))
 - iii. A clear beginning, middle, and end.
7. **Here is what you will turn in by the assigned due date:**
 - a. The four reader responses on the book (Step 2)
 - b. The final reflection on the book (Step 3)
 - c. The notebook you kept during your travels (Step 5)
 - d. Your travel narrative (Step 6)

Option 2: Book Club

Note: This assignment will require coordination among classmates.

Choose a book from **Reading List 2** (you will need obtain your own copy) and create a book club for a discussion of the book. Your book club should have no less than 3 members and no more than 5. If you have six people, that should be broken up into two groups. If you have less than 3, you will need to choose a different option.

1. **Read a book** from the attached list.
2. As you read, you should create a series of notes and questions for the book club meeting.
3. As you read the book, you should also write **four reflections** (one for roughly each quarter of the book). As you read, you should also create a series of notes and questions for the book club meeting.
4. Form a group (3-5 members) who also read the book.
5. For the book club meeting:
 - a. Arrive at the book club (location of your choice) with your notes and questions you have created for the discussion.

- b. Record (visually, not just audio) your book club meeting and post it to *YouTube*. If you wish to restrict access to the video that is fine, but make sure I am able to access the video. Provide me the link to your videos with your essay (See step 6). Only one person in the book club needs to post the video, but in the video's description, please include the names of all the members present.
 - c. Take notes as to what other people in the group say. These will come in handy when you write your final paper; you'll also be turning these in.
6. Write a **1000 word review/analysis of the book** you read in which you address the ideas in the book and the ideas of the other book club members. The review should be **in MLA format (You do not need a works cited page, but you should follow the other formatting rules for this. See formatting guidelines [here](#).)**. Within the review/analysis, you should do the following:
 - a. Give a clear, yet brief, summary of the book. This should not be any longer than 200 words.
 - b. What seem to be the main arguments/claims/ideas the book presents? Are they compelling? If so, why? If not, why not? How well does the author support those ideas? Include specific examples. (This is a place where you could include comments from those in your book club).
 - c. Are there perspectives, facts, circumstances, etc. that the writer could have considered more thoroughly that challenge or complicate some of the arguments made in the book?
 - d. Which sections seem more persuasive and powerful than others? Identify both the strong and weak parts of the text.
 - e. Assess the writing of the book. Did the writer make an effort to draw in the reader? If so, how? What made the book enjoyable/unenjoyable to read? (This is a place where you could include comments from the book club discussion)
 - f. End with a final statement on the book. Would you recommend it? If so, would you recommend it to anyone, or is there a specific group/demographic that this book might appeal to?
 - g. At the very end, after your final paragraph, include the link to the *YouTube* video of your discussion.

Each of the above letters does not necessarily need to be its own paragraph. You may combine elements where appropriate.

7. **Here is what you should turn in for this project by the assigned due date:**
 - A. The notes and questions you created prior to the book club. (Step 2).
 - B. Four reflections (Step 3).
 - C. The notes you made from the book club. (Step 5).
 - D. The review/analysis essay of the book, **including a link to the *YouTube* video of your book club's discussion. (Step 6).**

You can find sample book reviews [at the New York Times web site](#). When reading these, bear in mind that your review may likely be more extensive than what you see here, but they should give you a good idea of what a real discussion of a book's ideas looks like.

Option 3: Choose Your Own Adventure

For this option, you will choose a book from **Reading List 3** (you will need to obtain your own copy), complete some reading journals, and then choose some aspect of the book that interests you enough to do some further research. Your tasks are below:

1. Choose any book you wish from **Reading List 3**.
2. As you read, complete **four typed, full-page reading journals**. The reading journals should be completed as you read, do not wait until you are done reading the entire book before writing them. You should also space them out, completing one as you read each quarter of the book.
 - a. The reader responses **SHOULD NOT** be summaries. I don't care if you can summarize something you read. What I care about is what you **THINK** about what you've read. A reader response is a *reaction*. What are your thoughts on what the author has claimed, observed, described, etc. If you were with the author, would you react similarly to the way he/she does or not? Why? Are there connections to what the writer has written and your own experiences? Is there something interesting about the writing choices the author has made? React!
3. Once finished with the book, complete a **final reflection (one page, typed)**. The final reflection should:
 - a. Reflect on what the main argument of the book seemed to be. What was the author trying to convey or argue? What statement was the author trying to make?
 - b. Evaluate the argument. How well does the author convey his/her statement/argument? What are some things the author did well? Are there any areas that you felt were weaker than others?
 - c. Make a recommendation. Would you recommend the book? Why or why not?
4. Choose some element/aspect/topic/subject of the book that you found interesting and complete a small research project on it. This does not have to be the main subject/topic of the book. It could be something the author spends a good deal of time discussing, or it could be something the author mentions almost in passing. Whatever you choose from the book, it should be something you find interesting. The research project will have two major parts:
 - a. **Sources:** Find **two sources about your subject**. The sources can take the form of two articles, web sites, or videos that deal with your chosen subject. The sources should be credible, legitimate sources - people who have a good deal of expertise or are writing for a credible institution. For example, if you were researching the music business, avoid *YouTube* videos of random people talking about how much they like music, or some particular band, or railing against high ticket prices for concerts, etc. However, an interview with a musician talking about how the music business works and how it has changed over time would be completely acceptable. **NOTE:** *When choosing sources, don't just pick them randomly. Be selective. You will be asked in the next section to discuss the sources you've chosen. Make sure you've chosen sources that you find compelling for one reason or another, so you have something to say about them.*

- b. Write an **850-word essay** about your chosen topic in **MLA format**. The essay should do the following:
- i. Explain what your topic is and why you chose it, making a clear connection to the topic you chose and the book you read.
 - ii. Summarize the findings of your research and provide commentary and analysis of the information from the source. What did you learn from the source material? What did you find interesting? Were you surprised by anything you read/viewed? You kind of have free rein here to write about whatever aspects of the sources you want – just don't simply summarize and move on.
 - iii. Close by addressing why this topic is significant - why does it matter, what is its impact, etc. The significance could be on a personal level or on a societal level or both. For example, if I chose to investigate a bit more about woodworking (not exactly a change-the-world topic), I might explain that my grandfather, who passed away a number of years ago, was an avid woodworker and that I too have taken up the hobby and am trying to learn new things about it. This isn't a huge societal issue, but I am still able to explain why the topic is significant, even if it is only significant on a personal level.
 - iv. Include a works cited page that includes an MLA citation from the two sources you've used. You can go to the OWL web site for instruction on writing [citations](#) and to see a [sample works cited page](#). You can also try using [Easybib](#), but bear in mind that Easybib doesn't always automatically find the information for the citations. You may need to go back to your source and look for what is missing.

5. Here is a list of what you will turn in for this project:

- a. Four reading reflections.
- b. One final reflection.
- c. 850-word essay with works cited page.

READING LIST 1 - THE TRAVEL NARRATIVE

1. *Travels with Charley: In Search of America* by John Steinbeck
2. *Wild* by Cheryl Strayed
3. *A Walk in the Woods* by Bill Bryson
4. *In a Sunburned Country* by Bill Bryson
5. *Eat. Pray. Love* by Elizabeth Gilber

READING LIST 2 - THE BOOK CLUB

1. *David and Goliath: Underdogs, Misfits and the Art of Battling Giants* by Malcolm Gladwell
2. *I Am Malala* by Christine Lamb and Malala Yousafzai
3. *Wild* by Cheryl Strayed
4. *The Up Side of Down: Why Failing Well Is the Key to Success* by Megan McArdle
5. *Days of Destruction, Days of Revolt* by Chris Hedges and Joe Sacco
6. *Eating Animals* by Jonathan Safron Foer
7. *The Overachievers: The Secret Lives of Driven Kids* by Alexandra Robbins
8. *Soldier Girls: The Battles of Three Women at Home and at War* by Helen Thorpe
9. *The Sixth Extinction: Unnatural History* by Elizabeth Kolbert

READING LIST 3 - CHOOSE YOUR OWN ADVENTURE

Survival and Adventure

Into Thin Air by Jon Krakauer | Pages: 337

A harrowing tale of the Mt. Everest disaster. Krakauer recounts the men and women involved, their bad luck, worse judgment, and heart breaking heroism.

Alive by Piers Paul Read | Pages: 318

An adventure of survival, insurmountable odds, and what people will do to survive, *Alive* tells the tale of sixteen men whose plane crashes in the Andes.

Into Harm's Way: The Sinking of the U.S.S. Indianapolis by Doug Stanton | Pages: 384

A best-selling account of a WW II naval disaster, it is a classic tale of war, survival, and extraordinary courage.

In the Heart of the Sea: The Tragedy of the Whaleship Essex by Nathaniel Philbrick | Pages: 238

Philbrick's book is a fantastic saga of survival and adventure, steeped in the lore of whaling, with deep resonance in American literature and history. Philbrick uses little-known documents and vivid details about the Nantucket whaling tradition to reveal the chilling facts of this infamous maritime disaster.

The Endurance: Shackleton's Legendary Antarctic Expedition by Caroline Alexander | Pages: 224 OR
Endurance: Shackleton's Incredible Voyage by Alfred Lansing | Pages: 288

Sir Ernest Shackleton's daring attempt to cross the South Pole comes to life. It is an exhilarating account of the men who lived the extraordinary Antarctic adventure, one of the greatest episodes in the history of polar exploration and survival.

Environmental Issues

Plastic by Susan Freinkel | Pages: 336

Plastic built the modern world. Where would we be without bike helmets, baggies, toothbrushes, and pacemakers? But a century into our love of plastic, we're starting to realize it's not such a healthy relationship. Plastics draw on dwindling fossil fuels, leach harmful chemicals, litter landscapes, and destroy marine life. Journalist Susan Freinkel offers a balanced, engaging, and eye-opening book.

The Omnivore's Dilemma by Michael Pollan | Pages: 451

Pollan offers insight into modern food consumption, explaining how an abundance of unlimited food varieties reveals the responsibilities of consumers to protect their health and the environment.

Silent Spring by Rachel Carson | Pages: 378

The outcry that followed its publication spurred revolutionary changes in the laws affecting our air, land, and water. Carson's passionate concern for the future of our planet reverberated powerfully throughout the world, and her eloquent book was instrumental in launching the environmental movement. It is without question one of the landmark books of the twentieth century.

History

Is Paris Burning? by Larry Collins and Dominique Lapierre | Pages: 385

Hitler's death sentence to the city of Paris in 1944 nearly happened. An extraordinary series of events saved the city from what Hitler wanted to leave "nothing but a field of ruins." The dramatic story of the liberation of Paris is exciting, emotionally charged history, impeccably researched and written.

The Devil in the White City: Murder, Magic, and Madness at the Fair by Erik Larson | Pages: 447

Erik Larson imbues the events surrounding the 1893 Chicago World's Fair with drama. Larson tells the stories of two men: Daniel H. Burnham, the architect responsible for the fair's construction, and H.H. Holmes, a serial killer masquerading as a charming doctor.

Sports

Eight Men Out by Eliot Asinof | Pages: 336

The headlines proclaimed the 1919 fix of the World Series and attempted cover-up as "the most gigantic sporting swindle in the history of America!" Eliot Asinof has reconstructed the entire scene-by-scene story of the fantastic scandal in which eight Chicago White Sox players arranged with the nation's leading gamblers to throw the Series in Cincinnati.

King of the World by David Remnick | Pages: 330

On a night in 1964 that Muhammad Ali (then Cassius Clay) stepped into the ring with Sonny Liston. Six rounds later Ali was the new world heavyweight champion: He was "a new kind of black man" who would shortly transform America's racial politics, its popular culture, and its notions of heroism.

Seabiscuit by Laura Hillenbrand | Pages: 452

Sports biography of a great American race horse in Depression era America.

True Crime

Columbine by Dave Cullen | Pages: 360

Ten years in the making and a masterpiece of reportage, "Columbine" is an award-winning journalist's definitive account of one of the most shocking massacres in American history. It is driven by two questions: what drove these killers, and what did they do to this town?

The Lynching of Emmett Till by Christopher Metress | Pages: 360

In 1955, 14 year old Emmett Till, visiting from Chicago, was abducted from his great-uncle's cabin in Mississippi. When his corpse was found three days later and two white men were arrested for his murder, Till's death became the spark that set off the civil rights movement. With a collection of more than one hundred documents, Metress retells Till's story in a unique and daring way.