

AP English Language and Composition: Tokay High School Summer Reading Assignment 2019-2020

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Here's your first AP close reading assignment: be sure to read this explanation carefully so you do not have to email me with questions that are already answered here (which is both irritating to me and a rather negative reflection of your reading abilities), though of course you may email me for questions not addressed here or to clarify. Copies of this assignment may also be obtained on our Tokay website. Walk into class on the first day of the 2019 school year having completed (1) your active reading, (2) your online discussion, and (3) your hand-written reflections. No late work will be accepted for points, so if you cannot attend on the first day, send your work in with someone. Your first (of many!) in-class, timed writing assessment will be based on your chosen text. On the first day remember to bring your book with its rainbow of post-its.

Materials: To paraphrase Francis Bacon, some books are meant to be tasted, others swallowed, and some few are meant to be chewed, savored, and digested (I love food metaphors!). For your summer reading, I expect you to chew, savor and digest your choice of John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* (available for check out from Tokay's library; this option is for you "serious" readers who want a beautifully written classic of academic merit—it's not hard to understand but long and, considering that it's set during the Great Depression, rather dismal in mood), Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* (my all-time favorite, also available in the library, or consider buying David Shapard's annotated version to help you understand older prose and nineteenth century conventions), or Markus Zusak's *The Book Thief* (which must be purchased if you make this choice, though our library has a few copies; I noticed Amazon has some for a penny plus 3.99 shipping. This choice is for those of you who want a book like you've never read—narrated by Death, very stylish and engaging but young adult reading level, perhaps not "academic merit" by CollegeBoard standards; many of my past smart cookies have told me this is the best book they've ever read). Before choosing, consider reading online reviews of the books and/or chatting with my former students about their experiences with these books—you'll find fans of all three and may be able to borrow a copy. Or be a glutton and consume all three offerings on my menu. Perhaps watch a movie version of all three then read the one that most appeals to you. Plot is least important for this process, so knowing the story will not hurt but rather allow you to focus on what matters more for our purposes: the author's language style. Your summer reading should allow you to digest delicious diction and savor stylish syntax (look at the alliteration worthy of Dr. Seuss!). For your repast you need your text, three different colors of sticky notes/post-its, and access to the Internet. Specific directions for each color of post-it follow, but know that you should explain on each post-it what your thoughts are in choosing to mark that spot; thus, those typical three-inch square post-its are probably best.

Active Reading: As you read, marvel. Use the brightest color post-it you can find to mark instances of stunning writing—the types of sentences in which the author shows he's an artist. Every writer forms sentences in ways that have NEVER been written exactly in that way before: sentences with engaging syntax or diction, sentences with vivid images, sentences that sound like music, sentences that surprise and satisfy. Find such lines. Mark them with your WOW colored post-its on which you note what you find striking about the author's STYLE. As all three authors are oh-so-stylish, I expect LOTS of bright post-its. This one is the real practice for what we will be doing all year, so the more time you spend practicing with post-its, the better your essays and your own precise use of language should be.

As you read, wonder. Use another color post-it to write questions that occur to you and at least one possible answer for each question; these questions may be plot related (e.g. Why is the narrator talking about colors?), vocab related (e.g. What does ----- mean?), or "text to world" related (e.g. Does California still have the appeal

it did in the 1930s?). At least ten questions should occur to an active reader in the course of a book. Of course, you might want to go online to post your questions on Ning and dig around for answers to your questions.

As you read, analyze. Use a third color post-it to mark/note how the author reveals his/her tone, or attitude, toward family—in other words, how does the author feel about families. For example, Steinbeck portrays family as crucial for survival, Austen shows how different can be members of the same family, and Zusak shows the driving need for family that allows one to build new family connections. Pay careful attention to the particular words the author uses for characterization, the particular details s/he chooses to convey; out of a world of words and events, the author makes specific choices, perhaps subconsciously but more likely intentionally, that show how s/he feels about his subject. Find, note, analyze.

Online Discussion: As you read, collaborate. Sign up at dougish.ning.com, my online classroom. Once I've approved your Ning application (I'll check a couple of times each week, though you might have to send me a reminder if I'm enjoying my summer too much to remember to check), click on Forum along the horizontal menu at the top, then click on the appropriate Summer Reading discussion. Make sure you're carefully posting in the right place; misplaced posts will be deleted; look for the book you're reading with the word Beginning, Middle, or End only. This is the place to post your questions and hopefully get some answers. At least six times while read, post thoughts, questions, replies, but not mere summaries. We're all reading the same books and know what happens, so no need to retell the plot. Be considerate not to post spoilers—details about what will happen in later chapters. Postings that receive full credit usually comprise at least four lines of text each. Be sure to reply to your peers' postings (these count as part of your six total)—use the forum as a classroom to gain insights and share ideas courteously. Know that I will close the discussions at 8:00 p.m. on the night before school (it's always good to get a good night's sleep!).

Reflective Writing: When you've finished chewing and hopefully savoring the text, review your post-its and reflect on your experience. Write (in ink, not typed) at least three pages (one side, not front and back) of what I'll call "fluency" practice about the text: discover something original to say for our beginning of the year discussion about the role of family in characters' lives and ours. Write an especially engaging hook and powerful final sentence. Play with language to express precisely and elegantly your questions/comments/insights. Again, do not merely summarize the text. You may use these reflections as well as your book on the first day for an in-class essay.

Prepare: You're expected to already be in control of language mechanics (grammar, spelling, etc.) If you feel like you need to brush up, consider finding a copy of *Woe is I* or another grammar book to review usage; you might also practice with various online tutorials Freerice.com lets you practice vocab or you can change subjects for grammar (as well as SAT prep) and earn free rice for developing countries. You're also welcome to check out the jargon and vocab roots you'll need on Quizlet.com (search [ndougish](http://dougish) and click on "user"). Does spelling give you (or your readers) indigestion? Find and practice "commonly misspelled words" online—Quizlet probably has lists to practice.

In choosing to enroll in an Advanced Placement course, you, as a high school student, have undertaken college-level rigor for reading, writing, and oral participation. This necessitates that you be prepared: read carefully not cursorily, annotate your texts, question, discuss, discover. Finally, keep in mind Friar Laurence's admonition in *Romeo and Juliet*: "they stumble that run fast" (Iiii94). Give yourself time and the right mindset to enjoy this challenge, time to do let your abilities shine. Do not try to rush this assignment in the last days of summer: such a performance will not do you justice

10 bonus points for students who turn in this sheet stapled atop your 3 page written reflections with "extended metaphor" defined just below this and a list of the words I've used throughout this handout to extend a food metaphor .