Dear Future 11AP 1 Students at Troy High School: 2020

We are pleased that you have made the commitment to challenge yourself in 11AP I. This course will introduce you to the skills necessary for analyzing complex readings and creating well-developed written responses. Emphasis is placed on becoming skilled readers of American prose written in a variety of periods, disciplines, and rhetorical contexts, and becoming skilled writers who compose complex and rich pieces that effectively communicate with mature readers.

#1 Summer Reading Book Choices--Fiction

Read two of the following novels:

You may substitute a different work from one of these authors. Descriptions of all of these books can be found on Goodreads.

Chopin, The Awakening
DeLillo, White Noise
Diaz, Drown
Doerr, All the Light We Cannot See
Ellison, Invisible Man
Erdrich, Beet Queen
Eugenides, Middlesex
Faulkner, The Reivers
Flagg, Fried Green Tomatoes: The Ballad of the Sad Café
Foer, Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close, Everything is Illuminated
Frank, Alas, Babylon
Frazier, Cold Mountain
Gaines, A Lesson Before Dying
Griffin, Black Like Me
Gruen, Water for Elephants
Harbach, The Art of Fielding
Heller, Catch-22
Hemingway, The Old Man and the Sea– Ernest
Irving, The World According to Garp
Kingsolver, The Bean Trees
McBride, The Color of Water
McCarthy, All the Pretty Horses, The Road
McDougall, Born to Run
Morrison, Beloved, The Bluest Eye
Nguyen, The Sympathizer
O’Brien, In the Lake of the Woods, The Things They Carried
Plath, The Bell Jar
Salinger, Catcher in the Rye
Smith, On Beauty
Tan, The Joy Luck Club
Twain, The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn
Vonnegut, Slaughterhouse-Five
Walker, The Color Purple
Wright, Native Son
Using the prompt below, please complete a typed response of approximately 500 words for one of your novels (works of fiction).

Prompt:

Throughout the first semester, we will in some way unpack the relationship between American literature and the progression of American thought. This is a great time to consider this macro-idea, since you are fresh off a year of American history study. So, for this response, consider the ways in which one of your summer reading novels* reflects the American experience (i.e. how is this text a representation of American ideals, shared values, culture, etc.). You may approach this prompt in any way you wish but be specific and detailed. It would be a great idea to quote specific passages from the novel you choose.

*Remember that by definition, a novel is a lengthy work of fiction.

#2: Nonfiction Book Choices

*The below works are linked for your perusing pleasure. Be aware some of these works contain mature themes. Choose two to read.

Amoruso, #Girlboss
Angelou, I Know why the Caged Bird Sings
Ansari, Modern Romance
Bayoumi, How does it feel to be a Problem?: Being Young and Arab in America
Boo, Behind the Beautiful Forevers: Life, Death, and Hope in a Mumbai Undercity
Brown, The Boys in the Boat
Capote, In Cold Blood
Cain, Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can’t Stop Talking
Coates, Between the World and Me
Demick, Nothing to Envy: Ordinary Lives in North Korea
Ehrenreich, Nickle and Dimed: On (Not) Getting by in America
Fey, Bossypants
Fink, Five Days at Memorial: Life and Death in a Storm-Ravaged Hospital
Gladwell, Blink, David and Goliath, Outliers
Gourevitch, We wish to inform you that tomorrow we will be killed with our families
Hillenbrand, Unbroken
Kingston, The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood Among Ghosts
Krakauer, Missoula: Rape and the Justice System in a College Town, Into the Wild, Into Thin Air
Lamott, Bird by Bird
Levitt & Dubner, Freakonomics, Think Like a Freak
Lewis, Moneyball: The Art of Winning an Unfair Game
McCourt, Angela’s Ashes, Teacher Man
Nafisi, Reading Lolita in Tehran
Obama, Dreams from My Father
Rawlence, City of Thorns: Nine Lives in the World’s Largest Refugee Camp
Schlosser, Fast Food Nation: The Dark Side of the All-American Meal
Sedaris, Me Talk Pretty One Day
Shetterly, Hidden Figures: The True Story of Four Black Women and the Space Race
Skloot, The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks
Smith, Ordinary Light
Stevenson, Just Mercy
Thuy Le, The gangster we are all looking for
Please write a response for one of your nonfiction books using the prompt below. Your response should be typed and approximately 500 words.

Prompt: As we read nonfiction throughout our course, you will often hear us ask, "What is the author's purpose?" More specifically, we'll ask you to consider how a writer uses language to achieve a specific purpose. So let's focus our attention on author's purpose in our summer reading nonfiction selections. Choose the nonfiction book you read. Write a response that states the author's purpose and analyze his or her use of language. Specifically, choose a brief passage from the book and explain how it achieves the author's purpose through specific language choices (i.e. diction, syntax, figures of speech, etc.). Remember that an author might be achieving multiple purposes in any given work. There are innumerable ways to respond to this prompt, so feel free to explore.

#3: Top Ten Stories of the Summer of 2020

The AP Language and Composition Exam does not require studying. It requires preparation. Your preparation for this exam did not begin with an honors English class at Troy High or before but whenever you first started to use rhetoric as a means to achieve your ends. It was probably something like pointing to your bottle or a toy accompanied by a powerful cry to emphasize to mom or dad (your audience) that you really wanted it.

You’ve grown since then. Perhaps now you even marshal proper English and an army of rhetorical strategies to ensure that you always get your way.

In 11 AP, your ability to assess and employ rhetoric will be developed. Consider the AP Lang exam to be a marathon. Running a marathon—or taking this exam—does not just happen, at least not if you want to perform your best. You need to train. You need to log hundreds of miles. You need to prepare a body of work from which you can draw when the big day comes.

Reading and writing is essential training. Do both as often as possible. Read all different genres. Write poems, journals, essays, tweets, letters.

The training for this summer assignment concerns something with which you may not associate with English class. We'll call it being aware.

The readers of the AP Language and Composition Exam, when asked what message they would give to teachers to help students improve, wrote:

“Encourage students to read and learn about the world beyond their immediate sphere of action. Students who know more about the arts, history, science, politics, economics, law, and philosophy do better on the argument question because they have reserves of knowledge to draw from in formulating a response. Students should keep up with news developments around the world.”

The book list for your summer reading has been developed to give you exposure to new knowledge and current ways of thinking. The goal of this assignment is to further generate these “reserves of knowledge” and to develop a habit: being aware.
Throughout the summer, read good newspapers, magazines, and/or websites and create a Top Ten Events of the Summer of 2020 list. Keep a log of citations, headlines, and storylines. You may pick one story from the world of sports and one story from the world of entertainment, but the rest should come from the issues of domestic, international, environmental, economic, etc. concern.

For each of the ten stories you select, write a brief paragraph that demonstrates why you feel it is one of the top ten stories of summer. Make sure you do not merely summarize the event but evaluate the implications of it.

Suggested Resources

Information has never been more accessible. Use whatever works for you. We suggest checking in daily with blogs, link aggregators, and standard news sites. An easy way to consolidate all of these would be to follow some of your favorites on Twitter, but do whatever works best for you. Be advised that the world (and the internet that reports on it) can be a big, unfamiliar, scary place. We don’t endorse offensive world events or author opinions over which we have no control, nor do we wish to manipulate your beliefs other than, of course, you having beliefs and the ability to defend them. Be open-minded.

Here are some sources you may look to in your quest for knowledge:

The Browser (thebrowser.com) collects quality articles from reputable sources around the internet. There is a pay-wall after a certain number of views, but the location of the article is always listed in the description.

Arts and Letters Daily (aldaily.com) collects news items, essays and reviews from around the internet. It also links you to many national and international newspapers, magazines, and review journals.

Medium (medium.com) also collects articles and publishes their own.

Drudge Report (drudgereport.com) collects articles from around the internet.

Marginal Revolution (marginalrevolution.com). Economics blog, great for its daily links post (all topics, not just econ).

If you have a library card, you can access Zinio and get free, current downloads of hundreds of magazines.

What to turn in after we return to school (assignments will be due by the end of the second week of school).

In addition to your fiction response and nonfiction response, bring your typed Top Ten Events of Summer List. You can order them by importance or not—it’s up to you. Title each event and write a paragraph that demonstrates its importance. You may wish to include quotes from articles that you have read that can speak powerfully for the event. If you need a guide as to what should be in this paragraph, consult the descriptions found at The Browser.

Be sure to properly cite the resources you use. Evidence directly pulled from sources must be cited in quotes with an in-text citation. It would be to your benefit (for this assignment and beyond) to read a variety of articles on a given topic.