

AP English Language and Composition for Juniors and Seniors

Summer Reading Assignment 2020

There are **TWO** required summer reading assignments set forth below. In addition, we strongly recommend that you keep up with current events and social issues. This will improve your performance in the class, and on the AP exam in May.

Assignment I - Reflections on Pop Culture/Essay Playlist

Read and analyze four essays (linked below). These texts and the accompanying requirements are typical of what you will encounter in AP Language and Composition. We will use these texts for in-class activities at the start of the year.

Assignment II: Contemporary Work of Literary Merit

Read a full-length text **chosen from the list** (which appears at the end of this document) and respond to the assigned questions in a short video argument.

Assignment I - Analysis: Reflections on Pop Culture/Essay Playlist

This assignment requires you to consider a topic, in this case pop culture, explore several texts related to the topic, and express your thinking about each of those texts through annotation. For each text, identify what the author communicates to the reader and the choices he or she makes to establish that point. Draw your own conclusions about the topic and reveal them in your annotations. In class, we'll examine a text together, and you will participate in a class discussion about the central question below:

Central Question:

How does pop culture reveal who we are both individually and collectively?

1. Read and annotate the "Pop Culture Introduction" below.
2. Read and annotate four of the essays linked below (two are required, two are free choice). For each text, use the **Guiding Idea** to inform your reading. **Annotate For** indicates which writing strategies to identify and analyze as you read. Remember that the choices have to work toward establishing the **Guiding Idea**. If your close reading skills are rusty, check the suggestions that follow.
3. Your annotations must be completed in a format that can be shared electronically.
4. Please refer to the [EXAMPLE](#), as well as the [Annotations Rubric](#), to guide you.

Pop Culture Introduction:

Popular culture is a term that once characterized mass-produced or lowbrow culture: pop music, potboilers and page-turners, movies, comics, advertising, radio, and television. Its audience was the masses. Opposite popular culture were highbrow forms of entertainment: opera, fine art, classical music, traditional theater, and literature. These were the realm of the wealthy and educated classes.

Today, the line between high and pop culture has blurred. Pop culture is often at the leading edge of what will become established culture. For example, the 1980s graffitiist [Jean-Michel Basquiat](#) is considered a leading figure in contemporary art.

Popular culture moves through our world at warp speed. Rap music and mash-ups sample and remix current and past albums. Celebrity gossip in the morning is the talk-show host's monologue at night. Homemade videos are posted on the Internet, become cultural phenomena overnight, and are just as quickly forgotten. Albums and movies are exchanged on peer-to-peer networks months before they are officially released. What does this onslaught of entertainment and information mean?

These days, most people realize that pop culture asks many of the same questions that high culture does: Does it say something new? Does it tell us about ourselves? Popular culture also spawns new questions: What is pop? Should pop culture respect its roots? What is the relationship among pop culture, politics, and commerce? Do commercial interests control what is offered to the public, or does old-fashioned word of mouth still tell us what's hot and what's not?

Adapted from: Shea, Renée Hausmann, Lawrence Scanlon, and Robin Dissin Aufses. *The Language of Composition: Reading, Writing, Rhetoric*. Second ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martins, 2013. Print.

Pop Culture Essays:

These two essays are REQUIRED:

<i>Text</i>	<i>Guiding Idea</i>	<i>Annotate For</i>
Hip-Hop Planet (James McBride)	<i>Cultural FOMO</i>	<i>Imagery, Cultural Allusion</i>
Corn-Pone Opinions (Mark Twain)	<i>Conformity vs. Individuality</i>	<i>Tone, Exemplification</i>

Choose TWO texts from the following list:

<i>Text</i>	<i>Guiding Idea</i>	<i>Annotate For</i>
from Show and Tell (Scott McCloud)	<i>Comics as an art form</i>	<i>structural choices, comparison/contrast</i>
High School Confidential (David Denby)	<i>Teen movies as illusion?</i>	<i>diction, tone</i>
An Image a Little Too Carefully Coordinated (Robin Givhan)	<i>Fake celebrity image</i>	<i>imagery, criticism</i>
Watching TV Makes You Smarter (Steven Johnson)	<i>Is TV better for us than we think?</i>	<i>irony, authoritative voice</i>
Celebrity Bodies (Daniel Harris)	<i>Dangerous celebrity beauty standards</i>	<i>anecdote, simile/metaphor</i>
Emily Dickinson and Elvis Presley in Heaven (Hans Ostrum)	<i>America as cultural beacon</i>	<i>diction, allusion, imagery</i>
My Zombie, Myself (Chuck Klosterman)	<i>Popular television reflecting viewer anxieties</i>	<i>metaphor, informal voice</i>
Bring on the Female Superheroes! (Christopher Bell)	<i>Representation in the superhero genre</i>	<i>anecdote, rhetorical questions, tone</i>

Tips for Close Reading and Annotation:

- **Diction** (word choice - denotation/connotation) - Why did the author choose those specific words and not others with similar meaning?
- **Figurative language** (metaphor, simile, irony, paradox, hyperbole, understatement, etc.) - What connections is the author trying to make indirectly through comparison? What tone is being set here?
- **Imagery** (appeals to the senses) - What mood is being created?
- **Allusions** - What references does the author make to other works or to historical events?
- **Structure** - How is the writing structured and organized? Consider the structure of sentences, paragraphs, chapters, or the entire work.
- **Purpose** - As you make your observations, try to connect them to the author's purpose. What does the author want us to think, feel, or do after reading this piece? How does the author use language to make that happen?

Assignment II - Contemporary Work of Literary Merit: Create a Video Argument

Note: We strongly recommend you choose from the fiction list because our curriculum is nonfiction-focused, and your other summer reading is too. However, the suggested list includes a large selection of well-regarded nonfiction to choose from.

Directions: After reading your text (list of choices appears at the end of this document), prepare a two-minute video presentation.

Prompt

- Argue the author's most effective choice in the text. Define and identify where the choice occurs and explain how it impacts the author's overall purpose.

Guidelines

- You will deliver your discussion via recorded video. This must be in a format that can be uploaded or linked to Schoology (further directions will be given in the fall).
- Talk to the camera rather than reading from a pre-written script. If you are reading from a paper, or the screen, you will lose points. Practice your ideas!
- Consider staging purposeful items in the shot, choosing a meaningful location to film, or perhaps having some light background music.
- This video will act as a first impression. **SHOW OFF YOUR SKILLS!**
- Model videos - these videos offer different approaches to the assignment.
- [Sample 1: Lincoln in the Bardo](#); [Sample 2: The Fisherman](#)

Rubric

Presentation Skills

- Does the video demonstrate a purposeful, practiced delivery? _____/3
- Do you avoid merely reading from a script or computer? _____/3

Complex and Original Thinking

- Do you deconstruct and evaluate what you read rather than summarize? _____/3
- Do you share fresh ideas that others may not have considered? _____/3

Evidence-Based

- Do you make use of well-selected text to demonstrate and support your thinking? _____/3

List of Possible Texts

Most of the following texts were nominated for major literary awards in the last three years (** indicate winners). Some are specific teacher recommendations.

Choose a fiction or non-fiction text to read from the list below. Overwhelmed by the choices? Check [a few blurbs by the AP Language and Composition course instructors](#).

FICTION OPTIONS

Elliot Ackerman, *Dark at the Crossing*
Chris Bachelder, *The Throwback Special*
Elif Batuman, *The Idiot*
****Paul Beatty**, *The Sellout***
Karen E. Bender, *Refund*
Jamel Brinkley, *A Lucky Man*
Graeme Macrae Burnet, *His Bloody Project*
****Susan Choi**, *Trust Exercise***
Hernan Diaz, *In the Distance*
Jennifer Egan, *Manhattan Beach*
Kali Fajardo-Anstine, *Sabrina & Corina: Stories*
Joshua Ferris, *Then We Came to the End*
Angela Flournoy, *The Turner House*
Emily Fridlund, *History of Wolves*
Myla Goldberg, *Feast Your Eyes*
****Andrew Sean Greer**, *Less***
Lauren Groff, *Fates and Furies*
Lauren Groff, *Florida*
Mohsin Hamid, *Exit West*
Brandon Hobson, *Where the Dead Sit Talking*
****Marlon James**, *A Brief History of Seven Killings***
Marlon James, *Black Leopard, Red Wolf*
Barbara Kingsolver, *Unsheltered*
Lisa Ko, *The Leavers*
Laila Lalami, *The Other Americans*
Min Jin Lee, *Pachinko*
Ben Lerner, *The Topeka School*

Deborah Levy, *Hot Milk*
Karan Mahajan, *The Association of Small Bombs*
Rebecca Makkai, *The Great Believers*
Tom McCarthy, *Satin Island*
Ottessa Moshfegh, *Eileen*
Fiona Mozley, *Elmet*
****Viet Thanh Nguyen**, *The Sympathizer***
****Sigrid Nunez**, *The Friend***
Chigozie Obioma, *The Fishermen*
Michael Ondaatje, *Warlight*
Tommy Orange, *There, There*
Ann Patchett, *Commonwealth*
Ann Patchett, *The Dutch House*
Julia Phillips, *Disappearing Earth*
****Richard Powers**, *The Overstory***
Sunjeev Sahota, *The Year of the Runaways*
****George Saunders**, *Lincoln in the Bardo***
Ali Smith, *Autumn*
Anne Tyler, *A Spool of Blue Thread*
Madeleine Thien, *Do Not Say We Have Nothing*
****Jesmyn Ward**, *Sing, Unburied, Sing***
****Colson Whitehead**, *The Nickel Boys***
****Colson Whitehead**, *The Underground Railroad***
Jacqueline Woodson, *Another Brooklyn*
Hanya Yanagihara, *A Little Life*

NON-FICTION OPTIONS

Svetlana Alexievich, *Second-hand Time* (translated by Bela Shayevich)
Louise Aronson, *Elderhood: Redefining Aging, Transforming Medicine, Reimagining Life*
Clare Barron, *Dance Nation*
Jonathan Bate, *Ted Hughes: The Unauthorised Life*
****David Blight**, *Frederick Douglass: Prophet of Freedom***
****Anne Boyer**, *The Undying: Pain, Vulnerability, Mortality, Medicine, Art, Time, Dreams, Data, Exhaustion, Cancer, and Care***

****Sarah M. Broom**, *The Yellow House***
****Ta-Nehisi Coates**, *Between the World and Me***
Tressie McMillan Cottom, *Thick: And Other Essays*
Christopher de Bellaigue, *The Islamic Enlightenment: The Modern Struggle Between Faith and Reason*
****Matthew Desmond**, *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City***
John Donvan and Caren Zucker, *In a Different Key: The Story of Autism*

Erica Armstrong Dunbar, *Never Caught: The Washingtons' Relentless Pursuit of Their Runaway Slave, Ona Judge*

Frances FitzGerald, *The Evangelicals: The Struggle to Shape America*

Carolyn Forché, *What You Have Heard is True: A Memoir of Witness and Resistance*

****James Forman Jr.**, *Locking Up Our Own: Crime and Punishment in Black America***

****David France**, *How to Survive a Plague***

Masha Gessen, *The Future Is History: How Totalitarianism Reclaimed Russia*

****Greg Gradin**, *The End of the Myth: From the Frontier to the Border Wall in the Mind of America***

****David Grann**, *Killers of the Flower Moon: The Osage Murders and the Birth of the FBI***

Suzy Hansen, *Notes on a Foreign Country: An American Abroad in a Post-American World*

Arlie Russell Hochschild, *Strangers in Their Own Land: Anger and Mourning on the American Right*

Margo Jefferson, *Negroland: A Memoir*

Kapka Kassabova, *Border: A Journey to The Edge of Europe*

****Ibram X. Kendi**, *Stamped from the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America***

Robert Macfarlane, *Landmarks*

Nancy MacLean, *Democracy in Chains: The Deep History of the Radical Right's Stealth Plan for America*

Sally Mann, *Hold Still: A Memoir with Photographs*

Hisham Matar, *The Return: Fathers, Sons and the Land In Between*

Micki McElya, *The Politics of Mourning: Death and Honor in Arlington National Cemetery*

Daniel Mendelsohn, *An Odyssey: A Father, A Son and An Epic*

Sy Montgomery, *The Soul of an Octopus: A Surprising Exploration into the Wonder of Consciousness*

Viet Thanh Nguyen, *Nothing Ever Dies: Vietnam and the Memory of War*

Mark O'Connell, *To Be A Machine: Adventures Among Cyborgs, Utopians, Hackers, and the Futurists Solving the Modest Problem of Death*

Carla Power, *If the Oceans Were Ink: An Unlikely Friendship and a Journey to the Heart of the Quran*

Richard O. Prum, *The Evolution of Beauty: How Darwin's Forgotten Theory of Mate Choice Shapes the Animal World - and Us*

Andrés Reséndez, *The Other Slavery: The Uncovered Story of Indian Enslavement in America*

****Philippe Sands**, *East West Street***

Simon Schama, *Belonging: the Story of the Jews, 1492-1900*

Heidi Schreck, *What the Constitution Means to Me*

Laurence Scott, *The Four-Dimensional Human: Ways of Being in the Digital World*

****Steve Silberman**, *Neurotribes: The Legacy of Autism and How to Think Smarter About People Who Think Differently***

Emma Sky, *The Unravelling: High Hopes and Missed Opportunities in Iraq*

Tracy K. Smith, *Ordinary Light: A Memoir*

Samanth Subramanian, *This Divided Island: Stories from the Sri Lankan Civil War*

Heather Ann Thompson, *Blood in the Water: The Attica Prison Uprising of 1971 and Its Legacy*

David Treuer, *The Heartbeat of Wounded Knee: Native America from 1890 to the Present*

****Joby Warrick**, *Black Flags: The Rise of ISIS***

Alfred Woodfox, *Solitary*