



Bishop McGuinness  
English Department  
Summer Reading Assignment

**COURSE:** Advanced Placement Literature and Composition (AP English IV)

**TEACHER NAME:** Ms. Kathy Judge [kjudge@bmchs.org](mailto:kjudge@bmchs.org)

**REQUIRED READING:** This summer you are asked to read two books. One that I have chosen and one that you will. **For both of those novels**, you will complete the **Book Writing Assignment** as outlined below.

- I. Each student will be reading *1984*. You can procure the text at a local library or a book store.
- II. Select and read one text from the following list. You can procure the text at a local library, book store, or online.  
Naturally, I also think you should read the entire Harry Potter series as well;)

**Book List:** Note this list differs from senior English classmates: this is in order to tailor reading to the AP Free-Response question and to allow for writing assignments we will complete during the school year.

1. *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald (If you are coming from Ms. Miller's class, this is not an option.)
  2. *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen (This title is available to download for free online)
  3. *The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison
  4. *A Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood
  5. *Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini
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## **Assignments:**

### **1. Book Writing Assignment:**

- a. Make copies of your three favorite or meaningful passages from the novel. This means they are photocopied. Pick one passage each from the beginning of the book, the middle, and toward the end. Annotate each passage and bring these copies to the first day of class. (I expect five- to- seven elements/author techniques annotated per page.)
- b. Be ready to do an in-class writing exercise or activity within the first week of school pertaining to the summer reading.

### **2. College Essay (Personal Narrative) - Instructions on the school website under Summer Reading. .**

#### **Submission Requirements:** \_\_\_\_\_

1. **Book Writing Assignment: Bring to this the first day of class: printed, annotated copies of your chosen three passages. If you bought a copy of the book, bring it as well.**
2. **College Essay: Bring hard copy to the first day of class and be able to access it digitally through Google.**

**Due Date:** First day of class (for both assignments)

**Assessment:** Be prepared for a writing exercise within the first few days of school.

**Attachments:** College Essay Instructions/Topics/Tips

**Other information:** Please contact Ms. Judge ([kjudge@bmchs.org](mailto:kjudge@bmchs.org)) with questions about the summer reading assignments for English Literature.

**\*\*\*Note:** Students must be aware that if they drop a class within the 1st week of school, they must have read the required summer reading for their 2nd choice, because there will still be that assessment.

**Summer Writing Assignment: Senior College Essay**  
(otherwise known as the  
**Make-Your-Parents-Happy-You're-Writing-Application-Essay-Already Essay**)

**Directions:**

- Choose 1 of the 5 prompts to develop into a thoughtful essay.\*
- Format: Printed hardcopy *and* Google Doc:
  - Type your essay and bring a printed hardcopy to turn in the 1<sup>st</sup> day of school.
  - Create a Google Doc entitled “Rough Draft Common App Essay” to share with your English teacher on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of school, you will submit through Google Classroom; so really wait until the first day of school.
- 250 word minimum length – 650 word maximum length
- MLA heading – include the word count here as the last entry in the heading
- Due: 1<sup>st</sup> day of class in August 2021.

**Essay Prompts—These are copied and pasted from the Common App website.**

An essay prompt can't erase the loss and anxiety of the last 12 months, but it can validate the importance of gratitude and kindness. We hope students see the new prompt for what it is intended to be: an invitation to bring some joy into their application experience.

Below is the full set of essay prompts for 2022-2023.

1. Some students have a background, identity, interest, or talent that is so meaningful they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, then please share your story.
2. The lessons we take from obstacles we encounter can be fundamental to later success. Recount a time when you faced a challenge, setback, or failure. How did it affect you, and what did you learn from the experience?
3. Reflect on a time when you questioned or challenged a belief or idea. What prompted your thinking? What was the outcome?
4. Reflect on something that someone has done for you that has made you happy or thankful in a surprising way. How has this gratitude affected or motivated you?
5. Discuss an accomplishment, event, or realization that sparked a period of personal growth and a new understanding of yourself or others.
6. Describe a topic, idea, or concept you find so engaging that it makes you lose all track of time. Why does it captivate you? What or who do you turn to when you want to learn more?

7. Share an essay on any topic of your choice. It can be one you've already written, one that responds to a different prompt, or one of your own design.

IF YOUR FIRST CHOICE IS A COLLEGE /UNIVERSITY THAT IS NOT A COMMON AP SCHOOL: You may write an essay based on one of that school's prompts but the length must meet the same requirement of 250-650 words.

- **Do NOT work on this essay with anyone else or read essays online.**
  - This should be totally your work, thoughts, ideas, story, experiences, and writing voice.
- **Do NOT send/submit this first rough draft to Common App until after the required editing and revision process is completed in English class.**
- **Please do not email this essay to your prospective English teacher and ask them to read it and make comments.**
  - We will be crafting the essay together during the first few weeks of school.
- **Read the following tips for some helpful advice on writing your Common App Essay.**

### **Top 6 Common Application Essay Tips:**

**Parents and students often ask us for our most valuable Common Application essay tips, so our savvy team of advisors compiled a list of simple, effective tricks to use as guidelines while you navigate the tricky waters of college essay writing. Try to use them for good and not for evil.**

**1. Think small:** When writing the Common Application essay, too many students feel compelled to try and squeeze their entire life story into 650 words. This, friends, is impossible. It is almost always better to think small first. Find a story or event in your life that really meant something to you. Did you win a competition at the last second? Was your family stranded on vacation with no power for five days? Have you read something recently that blew your mind? Now ask yourself- are any of these stories representative of my larger, most valuable qualities? The perfect essay topic showcases your personality, passions and/or ambitions without trying to do too much at once. Talking about your family's adoption of a three-legged dog and how your pet's perseverance and quirky attitude influenced the way you live your life, will make a better essay than a super general diatribe on why you like dogs, for example. If you find yourself getting lost while writing, ask: what am I trying to say about myself, and am I using a specific, compelling example to tell my story?

**2. Write first, edit later:** When it comes to writing, we are almost always our own worst critics. So many students want and expect themselves to produce pure, uninhibited brilliance the first time their fingers hit the keys, but that is almost never the way good essay writing works. Writing a compelling essay is a process, and the best writing can often be plucked from our stream-of-consciousness efforts. Don't edit yourself before you allow your creativity to warm up and pour onto the page. Never judge your writing until you have a few paragraphs written down first. You can always cut what doesn't work and it is much easier to work with an overabundance of words and ideas than nothing at all.

**3. Kill those clichés:** We're not going to *beat around the bush* here: clichés really *get our goats*. When you take that *trip down memory lane*, telling us about the time you were a *mover and a shaker* putting your *nose to the grindstone* it makes our *blood boil*. We're content and grammar snobs, so we find clichés to be extra unappealing, but we also have enough confidence in your creativity to know that you can do better. Admissions essay readers know it too, and expect you to *think out of the box* without using phrases like "think out of the box." So strike those tired sentences from your essay and do it now. *Never put off tomorrow what you can do today*. It actually hurt us to write that.

**4. It's all in the details:** What is the difference between these two sentences? 1. My favorite activities included fishing and cooking my daily catch. 2. My friends and I woke up early every morning to catch bass on Lake Michigan, cooking our spoils with herbs picked from a local farm. In the first sentence, we understand that you enjoyed certain activities. In the second, yes, we know you like fishing but we also understand your commitment to an activity you engaged in every day and recognize that your fishing trips are a social effort. There is a sense of time and place- we can see the setting, smell the herbs. With a few extra words, sentence two tells us much more about your fishing experience. Many students have a tendency to skew generic in the telling of their personal stories. What makes an essay memorable is often the sum of the little things. If you can paint a clear picture for your reader by providing details, you are much more likely to lodge a marker in their memories.

**5. If Nothing Else, Entertain:** Imagine you're a college essay reader at an upstanding academic institution and it is your job to read dozens of essays a day, every day, for weeks on end. Ninety percent of the essays that pass your desk are stone-cold boring, and maybe ten percent break through the fuzz and force you to pay attention. As an

applicant, you want your essay to shine a bright light in the face of that oft-bored reader. No matter what your subject, serious, uplifting, sentimental or pithy, your essay should aim to entertain. This will require many elements working together in harmony. You will need a compelling subject, a direct and powerful narrative, impeccable grammar and a memorable style. A little laughter never hurts either. It is often hard to know whether an essay is truly entertaining until the end stages of writing, but when you are reading over your drafts, the question should always be in the back of your mind: Is this essay fun to read? Some students achieve entertainment value by being controversial. Others load their pieces with comic relief. Some are able to describe events in such detail that a reader simply must get to the end of the essay. No matter what tactics you end up using, your goal should be effortless and compelling readability.

**6. Brand yourself:** In order for your essay to be truly effective, a reader should be able to summarize your subject in a simple sentence. You accomplish this self-branding by choosing a creative topic (or a creative twist on a common topic), and writing about it with enough detail to burn an image of yourself in the reader's brain. When it comes down to you and another similarly qualified candidate, you want an admissions officer to be able to stand up with your application in his/her hand and say, "I like the girl who performed trapeze in the circus," or "How about the girl who saved her grandfather's life?" It will be much harder to remember "the girl who practiced the trapeze, and was also good at riding bikes, and who got an A on every test and who generally worked very hard," or "the girl who really loved her late grandfather and who feels like she embodies a lot of his core characteristics." Focus your story. When you finish writing your first draft, do a branding test- try to label yourself based on your essay and see what you come up with. If you can't easily narrow it down to a punchy description, you probably need to alter or simplify your essay.