

May 10, 2022

Dear Incoming AP English Language and Composition Student,

Your successful completion of AP Literature or American Literature will serve you well as you make the leap to AP English Language and Composition, otherwise known as the wonderful world of *rhetoric*! AP Language is the study of...well, language. If you understand that every writer writes for a specific audience, for a specific purpose, and because of a specific motivating factor, then you can determine whether or not that writer uses the most effective means possible to relay the intended message. The ability to decipher and evaluate each of these areas will make you an asset to any college classroom or business boardroom you enter. You will learn how to conduct ethical research, decode logically flawed arguments, and create thorough evaluations of texts. You will learn to analyze others' writing so that you, too, can become an effective writer.

As a first step towards embarking on this intellectual journey together, we are asking you to read an acclaimed (and wildly engaging) nonfiction text this summer, *Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption* by Bryan Stevenson. **It is *essential* that you read the original version (published in 2014) NOT the young adult version.** Here is a link to the text on Amazon as well as the catalogue numbers to ensure that you read the correct version (albeit you may purchase the book from any bookseller of your choice):

- ISBN-10 : 9780812984965 ISBN-13 : 978-0812984965
https://www.amazon.com/Just-Mercy-Story-Justice-Redemption/dp/081298496X/ref=sr_1_2?dchild=1&keywords=just+mercy&qid=1620671375&s=books&sr=1-2

As you are reading *Just Mercy*, please think about the following questions:

- What is Bryan Stevenson's *purpose* in writing *Just Mercy*? Try to go deeper than the most obvious answer. Is he trying to merely inform his audience? Does he want to persuade them in some way? If so, what does he want to persuade them to think and/or do?
- Try to identify Stevenson's intended audience (or audiences). How do you know to whom he is writing?
- How does Stevenson use emotion (pathos) and logic (logos) to accomplish his purpose? Is the usage of these two types of appeals well balanced?
- How does Stevenson establish his own credibility (ethos) as a journalist and writer?

You need not write out your answers to these questions; thinking about them will provide you a focus as you are reading. You should expect an in-class essay during the first week or two of school in which you demonstrate your reading and understanding of the text.

We look forward to meeting you in August. We truly hope you enjoy your summer and your reading of *Just Mercy*. If you have any questions about the reading or the course, you may contact Mr. Lambersie (jlambersie@cps.k12.in.us). Have a wonderful summer!