

Summer Assignment AP Lit and Comp 2023-24

“The role of a writer is not to say what we can all say, but what we are unable to say.”
-- Anais Nin

Introduction

Your summer assignment is a chance for you to read a variety of texts, explore ideas, and write in response to what you are reading and thinking. The assignment has three parts and all work is due the second week of school.

I have linked to all the texts that are available online, but in some cases, you may need to go to your local library to get a copy of a novel. I also have copies of books in room 103 that you can check out. In many cases, I have included extra links if you are fascinated by what you read and are interested in exploring more.

As Voltaire said, “Think for yourself and let others enjoy the privilege of doing so too.” Enjoy the privilege of reading great texts. Enjoy the writing process. In short, have a great summer!

Part I -- Taking Notes (preparing for college)

Text -- [How I Take Notes](#) and [Crash Course Note-Taking](#)

After watching StudyTee’s notes system or the Crash Course Note Taking, I want you to think about how you can benefit from these organization methods that will be used for this summer and throughout the year.

Assignment #1 -- Write a short summary on how to take notes and why it might be important for you. Think of your most difficult class last year and describe how taking notes might have made a difference (10 points).

Why it is important -- The process of learning something often starts out feeling disorganized and unwieldy; the most important aspects are not always apparent right away.

Part II -- Seeing (Stepping into Analysis)

Text -- [The Nerdwriter Analyzes Edward Hopper's "Nighthawks"](#)

Evan Puschak has his own [YouTube channel \(NerdWriter\)](#) in which he offers video essays. I admire these essays that range from art, to film, to politics, to literature. He is thoughtful, well-researched, and has a keen sense of timing and audience awareness. In this video essay, he analyzes one of the iconic 20th century American paintings, “Nighthawks.” Pay attention to not only what he sees, but also notice the biographical

and historical context he weaves into his analysis. I admire how he uses both images and words to teach you about the painting.

Assignment #2 --For your first set of notes, I want you to write **two pages**. Choose a work of art that has had meaning to you. It can be a work of literature. It can be a painting. It can be a song. It can be any creative endeavor that has some fascinating artistry. I want you to *analyze* that work of art in a way that is similar to Evan Puschak (the Nerdwriter). If you look at his show notes on the YouTube page for the “Nighthawks” video essay, he has done a fair amount of research. I want you to do the same. In your notes, find an organized way to explain its [artistic merit](#) and value. **Don’t just provide a summary of what it is - rather, analyze how it is “art” and why it is important (20 points).**

Why it is important -- This is an exercise in switching from an argumentative and rhetorical approach to things to a more informative and analytical approach. While this may not feel important, learning to look at something you really like and analyze it will help this process become easier.

Part II -- Reading

Text 1 -- [Leo Babauta's Why I Read \(+ a Dozen Book Recommendations\)](#)

Assignment #3-- Write a page of notes about your relationship with reading. Share an honest assessment of the role that it plays in your life. Think about how you would conceptualize and categorize reading’s impact on you. I value honesty over flattery. If reading is not your thing, say it. If you love it, then let me know. I don’t care so much which side you take. More important than what you choose is the truth of your reflection. I want to read about why you feel the way that you do. I want to get to know you as a reader (15 points).

Why it is important -- This is the first step in my getting to know you as a reader. What’s more important than that?

Text 2 -- Any College Level Novel

[Any novel on this list or this one](#) or a book from the [Brooklyn Library](#)

On-line access: [Welcome to Open Library](#) | [Open Library](#)

Assignment #4 -- Read **any** novel that is on a **college level** (look for *complexity*, lexile scores over 950, or a novel that explores complicated social/personal issues). If you are unsure - please feel comfortable in asking me - norivers@smsd.org. Feel free to check out a book from the library, find one on the National Book Award list, or the list of Pulitzer Prize winners for fiction from the past 20 years. For the digital libraries, you can click on the titles to learn a bit more about each book. It is worth your time. There are so many great books, both in the library and on these lists to choose from; I want you to pick a book that you will enjoy. You do NOT have to purchase a book. I have plenty in my room you can borrow as well. [How to take notes from a novel](#)

Then **create three pages** of notes about your book. How you organize those three pages is up to you. I know that this is vague and undefined but look at it another way. I am empowering you to do what you feel is right. You have the freedom to do what you want. You can create whatever you want. All I'm asking you to do is create three interesting pages of notes about your reading experience. When there are little to no rules, the possibilities are endless. It is up to you to make it awesome! (30 points)

Why it is important -- A mature thinker chooses and develops his or her own criteria in order to evaluate the quality of texts. I respect your ability to make connections to other texts, ideas, cultural perspectives, eras, and personal experiences and when you have control over how you do that, you often exceed my expectations. So do it.

Text 3 -- [10 of the Best Poems to Analyze](#)

Assignment #5 -- Choose **two poems from this list** and **create notes for each**. The notes should focus on an [analysis](#) of each poem. Look for parts that are interrelated. Find the individual aspects of the poem that give it meaning. [Here](#) is a good example of a complex analysis of a popular middle school poem. A more sophisticated analysis of an e.e. Cummings poem can be found [here](#) (20 points).

Why it is important -- Thoughtful readers write to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately by selecting apt and specific evidence, organizing that evidence into broader ideas, and conveying the impact of its meaning.

Each of these assignments is a preview of what we will be practicing all year. While it seems that summer is a time of rest, relaxation, and fun (it is!) - keeping your mind sharp with a little reading will help next year run more smoothly.

Part III -- Cultural Experience

Being a student means being well-rounded and having experiences that illuminate the cultures around us rather than simply relying on academic reading for our understanding. Understanding literature goes beyond words on a page and involves delving into humanity, which is why good readers are those who have a wide variety of life experiences that they can connect to their reading. The experience the student participates in should be something NEW to the student, outside of their day-to-day routine. It should offer the student a different insight and new perspective. The experience does not need to have a direct connection to anything the student reads. As well, please note, while some of our suggestions are local, Kansas City opportunities, you can absolutely engage in any of these experiences if you're traveling this summer!

Some ideas of a cultural experience:

Going to Shakespeare in the Park. **(On June 28, the North ELA teachers will be there and have a space reserved for North students and teachers)**

Watch a foreign film (with subtitles in your first language).

Visit a historical site, museum, or landmark.

Visit the Nelson-Atkins or another art gallery
Attend a concert (band or music genre should be new to the student)
Attend another play or musical
Eat at an ethnic restaurant. Have the staff order for you!

Some restaurants to consider:

Elsa's (Ethiopian)
Holy Land Cafe (Middle Eastern)
El Salvedoreno (Salvedorian)
Sohaila's Kitchen (Pakistani)
African Dream Cuisine (West African)
Anousone's (Lao and Thai)

Assignment #6 -- Write a short summary of your cultural experience and what you enjoyed about it 😊 (10 points).

I am greatly looking forward to meeting you all. If any questions arise - feel comfortable reaching out.

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