



# Westminster Christian Academy

## 12th Grade Summer Reading

### AP Language and Composition

2026-2027

1. [Unbroken: A World War II Story of Survival, Resilience, and Redemption](#) by Laura Hillenbrand (ISBN-13: 978-0812974492).

From the book jacket:

In boyhood, Louis Zamperini was an incorrigible delinquent. As a teenager, he channeled his defiance into running, discovering a prodigious talent that carried him to the Berlin Olympics. But when World War II began, the athlete became an airman, embarking on a journey that led to a doomed flight on a May afternoon in 1943. When his Army Air Forces bomber crashed into the Pacific Ocean, against all odds, Zamperini survived, adrift on a floundering life raft. Ahead of starvation, enemy aircraft, and, beyond, a trial even greater. Driven to the limits of endurance, Zamperini would answer desperation with ingenuity; suffering with hope, resolve, and humor; brutality with rebellion. His fate, whether triumph or tragedy, would be suspended on the fraying wire of his will.

You will be assessed on the full, unabridged version of the text the first week of school, so do not mistake the young adult adaptation for the original book. Additionally, *Unbroken* has been made into a major motion picture that you're welcome to watch, but keep in mind the film will do little to replace the content of the nonfiction narrative, which is rich in historical detail and content that goes far beyond the time constraints of the film.

You might also consider listening to the [audiobook](#) if you are traveling somewhere this summer. The narrator does a great job bringing the story to life. However, it will be important for you to go back and mark any passages you think will be discussion worthy.

Our first unit will culminate with an essay in response to the following prompt, so mark/highlight quotes and passages that you find helpful:

In an interview about her lessons learned while writing *Unbroken*, author Laura Hillenbrand said that what the Bird sought to take from Louie was his dignity in order to leave behind a pervasive sense of helplessness and worthlessness. Why did the Bird ultimately fail? How did Louie find a sense of *meaning and dignity* that allowed him to lead a life of *nobility and purpose* despite the profound suffering he experienced?

2. [\*Man's Search for Meaning\*](#) by Viktor E. Frankl (ISBN-13: 978-0-8070-1427-1)

*Man's Search for Meaning* by Viktor E. Frankl is a profound blend of memoir and psychological insight that has inspired millions since its publication in 1946. Drawing from his harrowing experiences as a prisoner in Nazi concentration camps—including Auschwitz—Frankl explores how humans can endure unimaginable suffering by discovering a sense of purpose. He introduces his theory of logotherapy, which argues that the primary human drive is not pleasure or power, but the search for meaning, which can be found through work, love, or one's attitude toward unavoidable pain. Part survivor's testimony and part philosophical guide, the book argues that even in the darkest circumstances, individuals retain the freedom to choose their response and thereby maintain their inner dignity and humanity.

As you read *Man's Search for Meaning*, annotate passages that connect with Louis Zamperini's story in *Unbroken* and offer meaningful insight into the essay prompt above.