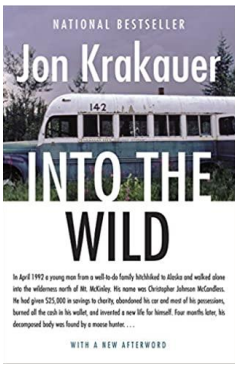
AP English Language & Composition | Summer Reading 2026

Course Description:
The AP English Language and Composition course focuses on the development and revision of evidence-based analytic and argumentative writing, the rhetorical analysis of nonfiction texts, and the decisions writers make as they compose and revise. Students evaluate, synthesize, and cite research to support their arguments. Additionally, they read and analyze rhetorical elements and their effects in nonfiction texts—including images as forms of text—from a range of disciplines and historical periods. AP Lang cultivates the reading and writing skills that students need for college success and for intellectually responsible civic engagement. The course guides students in becoming curious, critical, and responsive readers of diverse texts and becoming flexible, reflective writers of texts addressed to diverse audiences for diverse purposes. The reading and writing students do in the course should deepen and expand their understanding of how written language functions rhetorically: to communicate writers' intentions and elicit readers' responses in particular situations. (College Board Course and Exam Description, effective Fall 2020).

Suggested Current Events Summer Reading:
Students with knowledge of current events are typically more successful in this course. We highly recommend establishing the habit of weekly reading about current events and issues. You were given access to the *New York Times* through your school email, which is a great resource for this reading, along with any other credible news outlet, like *Wall Street Journal, NPR, BBC, Forbes, Reuters, etc.*

Required Non-fiction Summer Reading: Purchase, read, and annotate the following non-fiction book:



***Into the Wild*–Jon Krakauer**

McCandess had given his $25,000 in savings to charity, abandoned his car and most of his possessions, burned all the cash in his wallet, and invented a new life for himself. Not long after, he was dead. *Into the Wild* is the mesmerizing, heartbreaking tale of an enigmatic young man who goes missing in the wild and whose story captured the world's attention.

As you read, annotate your book. In particular, try to determine the subject of the book, the intended audience, the author's main purpose or message, and the strategies the author uses to convey this message. **This book will be the basis of our first unit, so it is imperative that you read and annotate thoroughly, before you get to class.** Expect a written assessment when you arrive for the new year!

You should be able to answer any of the questions below.

Elements of Rhetorical Situation	**Questions to Consider**
Speaker	Why is this particular person choosing to address the subject? What credibility do they have to speak on the subject? How does the speaker present themselves? What can we infer about the speaker? What barriers or limitations might they need to overcome to gain credibility?
Purpose	To + verb What does the speaker want you to know or consider? How do you know? Is the purpose implicit or explicit? What type of "call to" is this? (action, thought, belief)
Audience	Who do you think is the intended audience for this rhetoric? How do you know? What concerns do they have? What are their values? What would appeal to them? What's their relationship to the speaker? Are there secondary audiences for this text?
Context	When was this published? What was happening in the world that made this relevant? What was the "climate"? What are the defining social, political, and cultural contexts in which this text takes place? In what "conversations" is this text situated?
Exigence	Why now? What was the specific catalyst for this text being written? What's the direct problem/moment/incident in the world that made the author want to write?

AP English Language & Composition or On-Level English III?

The primary focus of this course is developing effective writing and critical reading skills, with special emphasis on rhetoric and argument. In deciding whether you should take on-level or AP English, you should ask yourself several questions:

Are you self-motivated to keep up with classwork, homework, reading assignments, and several tasks at once?

AP students must be disciplined enough to complete readings and assignments on their own, outside of class. At different points in the year, you may be asked to complete multiple tasks at once (projects, reading assignments, etc).

Are you frequently absent (for whatever reason)?

You will be at a disadvantage if you consistently miss class. The skills we are refining are often through whole-class and small-group discussions and assignments.

Have you done fairly well in Honors English? Or, have you done extremely well in regular English (to the point you're desperate for a challenge)?

The level of expectation and the pace goes up next year, not down, so you need to have a solid foundation to do well. If you've struggled during your sophomore year, and haven't improved as the year has progressed, you may not be ready for AP English. If you've consistently made As and Bs and are willing to work hard, AP is for you.

Do you enjoy reading and discussion?

As you might expect, there is a fairly heavy reading load in AP English. It's mostly non-fiction. If you don't like to read (especially non-fiction), AP probably isn't for you. This isn't to say you will like or agree with every idea presented in what we read; there's a big difference. You're free to dislike or disagree with the pieces—but you can't do that if you didn't read them or just think reading is "so boring." Also, we will discuss everything we read—both for the writing style and the purpose/opinion that is conveyed. Students who participate in class discussions are more successful in the class.

Do you enjoy writing and/or would you like to improve your writing?

AP English is a writing intensive class. We will focus on argument and rhetorical analysis, which is new for some people. If you enjoy arguing and want to learn effective writing strategies, AP is your class.

Why are you taking this class?

If the answer to this question is largely GPA-motivated, then AP English III is probably not the route you want to take. Successful AP students are those who are intellectually curious, appreciate learning, value education, and enjoy intellectual endeavors—beyond just a number in the gradebook.

We hope you have a great summer! Please contact the AP English III team if you have any questions.

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