

**AP English Language
Summer
Reading Books – 2026/2027**

— JUNIOR COURSE

The Fire Next Time by James Baldwin
and
Outliers by Malcolm Gladwell

In preparation for the year ahead, we are assigning ***The Fire Next Time*** by James Baldwin and ***Outliers*** by Malcolm Gladwell as summer reading. This required reading will provide a common source of material with which to begin our study of rhetoric and texts in general. The goals of this assignment are simple but powerful: strengthen your prowess as a reader and increase your awareness of the world at large—both vital skills for this challenging course. You must have this summer reading work completed by the first day of school. When you return to school in the fall, you will have further assignments that involve the summer reading, and the expectation is that these books will have been read and annotated, and that students will be ready for discussion and further analysis of these texts.

In addition to simply reading the texts, students are assigned the following:

Annotate both books, as you read: Write directly in the margins of your novel, in a notebook, or on sticky notes while reading. Think of this as having a conversation with the text – interact with it! The expectation is that students will have at least one interaction with the text noted on nearly every page.

- Respond to ideas or information that stands out.
- Clarify topics you need to research and any challenging vocabulary.
- Connect to passages that evoke an emotional response.
- Identify stylistic elements (symbols, imagery, motifs, themes etc.)
- Note moments of interesting writing/rhetorical choices by the author (similes, alliteration, sentence structures, etc....)

→ React Include your genuine emotional and intellectual reactions to what you are reading- it CAN be short and informal at times.

Diligence and care with the assignment demonstrate one's commitment to the class. Please reach out to one of the AP Lang teachers if you have difficulty securing either of the texts.

Please contact Jill Campbell (jill.campbell@bvsd.org), Alicia Urie (alicia.urie@bvsd.org), or Adam Wildstein (adam.wildstein@bvsd.org) if you have concerns or questions.

Happy Reading!

Use the following link to guide your close reading of texts and your annotations:

<https://writingcenter.fas.harvard.edu/pages/how-do-close-reading>

Thank you!