

AP Capstone Seminar Summer Reading 2026

Maryville High School

Welcome to AP Seminar, "a foundational course that engages students in cross-curricular conversations that explore the complexities of academic and real-world topics and issues by analyzing divergent perspectives" (College Board). What does this mean for you as a student? How is this different from other AP courses? The answer: it will be a challenging, yet gratifying, year of critical thinking, analysis, research, and collaboration that will help you gain confidence in your own voice. You will look at other authors' arguments through a variety of perspectives and then will examine real-world issues and develop and defend your own credible arguments, both individually and collaboratively.

For your summer reading assignment, you will be reading *Think Like a Freak* by Steven Levitt and Stephen Dubner. According to Harper Collins Publishers, "With their trademark blend of captivating storytelling and unconventional analysis, they take us inside their thought process and teach us all to think a bit more productively, more creatively, more rationally — to think, that is, like a freak." You may borrow a copy from me or buy your own copy.

Your second assignment will be to watch the four Ted Talks listed below and analyze the presentations using the AP Seminar Presentation Rubric. This should be a fairly quick checklist to be completed at the end of each Ted Talk.

1. David Epstein: "Are Athletes Really Getting Faster, Better, Stronger?"

https://www.ted.com/talks/david_epstein_are_athletes_really_getting_faster_better_stronger

2. Sir Ken Robinson: "How to Escape Education's Death Valley"

https://www.ted.com/talks/ken_robinson_how_to_escape_education_s_death_vall

3. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie: "The Danger of a Single Story"

https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story

4. Daniel H. Cohen: "For Argument's Sake" https://www.ted.com/talks/daniel_h_cohen_for_argument_s_sake?language=en

AP Seminar Rubric: Performance Task 1

Component 2 of 2: Team Multimedia Presentation

		Performance Levels			
Content Area/ Row Proficiency		Low	Medium	High	Points (Max)
1 Establish Argument		The presentation is disjointed and offers little argument or makes minimal, unsupported connections (if any) between evidence and claims, It offers a solution unsupported by evidence (or does not offer any clear solution or resolution).	The presentation offers an argument that is logically organized, generally connecting claims and evidence (but shows a tendency towards oversimplification) AND the solution proposed is largely supported by the evidence.	The presentation offers a coherent argument with claims consistently supported by evidence and linked to the overall thesis. The argument illustrates the complexity of the problem or issue AND demonstrates an understanding Of implications and limitations of the proposed solution,	6
2 Understand and Analyze Context		The presentation identifies potential solutions but does not consider their consequences or implications.	The presentation offers superficial or simplistic consideration of implications or consequences of potential solutions.	The presentation offers a thorough evaluation of potential solutions by considering their implications and consequences.	6
3 Engage Audience		The presentation's design does little to effectively convey the information.	The presentation's design aligns with the information.	The presentation's design aligns well with and effectively contextualizes or emphasizes key information.	3

4	Engage Audience	The selection and execution of delivery or performance techniques (e.g., eye contact, vocal variety, movement, energy) severely limit the presentation's impact	The selection of delivery or performance techniques (e.g., eye contact, vocal variety, movement, energy), OR execution of those techniques, supports communication of the argument.	A careful selection of delivery or performance techniques (e.g., eye contact, vocal variety, movement, energy), coupled with a dynamic execution of those techniques, strongly supports the communication of the argument.	
		1	2	3	3
AP Seminar Performance Task 1 2016-2017 Scoring Guidelines				©2016 The College Board	4