

St. George's Episcopal School

Summer Reading for Students Entering AP Language and Composition

I want you to enjoy your summer reading. I hope that the titles listed below provide enough variety for you to find something that interests you. Please understand that the degree to which you take your summer reading seriously is the first evidence you will present to me of how seriously you intend to take the class as a whole. AP Language is a class about analytical reading and critical thinking, and I expect to see strong evidence of both in the way you approach your chosen title.

Each of these texts is a work of nonfiction or has been written with a rhetorical purpose in mind. I hope you will enjoy learning and thinking about why and how the authors have presented their perspective in the way they have. Since this is a college-level course, texts may contain college-level content. Parents who have concerns about content are encouraged to research titles before allowing their students to read. *Students are required to read **two** of these titles.*

There is no written assignment for you to complete over the summer, but since we will be using these books as a starting point for our studies, you do need to know your chosen book well. A cursory reading or vague memory will not suffice. I suggest that you annotate, create sketchnotes¹, or keep a dialectical journal² as you read. While this is not required and will not be graded, it will facilitate your more complete engagement and memory of the book you choose. Please finish reading your book by the first day of school.

Please choose two titles **that you have not previously read**:

Born a Crime by Trevor Noah
The Screwtape Letters by C. S. Lewis
Just Mercy by Bryan Stevenson
The Glass Castle by Jeanette Walls
In Defense of Food by Michael Pollan
Nickel and Dime by Barbarah Ehrenreich
The History of the World in Six Glasses by Tom Standage
The Sum of Us by Heather McGhee

How to Be Perfect by Michael Schur
The Gifts of Imperfection by Brenè Brown
The Anxious Generation by Jonathan Haidt*
Brain on Fire by Susannah Cahalan*
Girl, Interrupted by Susanna Kaysen*
Hidden Valley Road by Robert Kolker*
Outliers by Malcom Gladwell*
The Happiness Advantage by Shawn Achor*

*** Students enrolled in AP Psychology may choose one of these titles to satisfy the summer requirement for that course.**

¹**Sketchnotes** are a form of visual notetaking that allow you to use words, pictures, and spacial orientation on the page to show connections among author claims, author purpose, evidence, commentary, intended audience, etc. You don't have to be a great artist to create helpful sketchnotes! [This video](#) introduces the idea and links to a blog with more details if you want to give this technique a try. (There are lots of examples online to look at.)

²A **dialectical journal** is a reading journal kept in a two-column format. In one column, you quote passages that seem significant (noting the page number), and in the other, you record your thoughts about that passage. What does it make you think about? What does it reveal about the author's purpose or central argument? How does it help distill or add complexity to the overall exploration of the text? Does it contain a particular technique, strategy, or logical connection? This dialectical journal lets you think, critique, question, summarize, remember, clarify, and process your reading—it's a unique conversation between you and the text.