

AP English Language and Composition Summer Reading Assignment

You will be required to read **two** texts and complete a reading log for **each** text. You are strongly encouraged to annotate the texts and take notes in the book as you read. In addition to your reading logs, which will be graded, you will be required to take a test on the required book and complete a 5-7 minute presentation on the choice book during the first week of class.

Required Fiction Book:

- *The Anthropocene Reviewed* by John Green

Choice Nonfiction Book (Select one of the following):

- *The Devil in the White City: Murder, Madness, and Magic at the Fair that Changed America* by Erik Larson
- *The Radium Girls: The Dark Story of America's Shining Women* by Kate Moore
- *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* by Rebecca Skloot
- *Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption* by Bryan Stevenson
- *In the Heart of the Sea: The Tragedy of the Whaleship Essex* by Nathaniel Philbrick
- *Moneyball: The Art of Winning an Unfair Game* by Michael Lewis
- *The Things They Carried* by Tim O'Brien

Note about reading selections:

Please remember that this course is a college-level course. Because of this, the texts in this course are written for an adult audience and may deal with challenging topics such as gender, race, sexuality, class, etc. These texts have been included here with the intent of expanding your critical thinking abilities. Please read a description (Google, Amazon, Goodreads, Storygraph, etc.) of the choice nonfiction books to find one best aligned with your interests. If you have a question or concern about a text or the summer assignment, please let me know by emailing me (ksisson@parrottacademy.org).

Reading Log Requirements:

Your reading log will be formatted as a dialectical journal. Your goals for each entry will be to quote and cite the text, analyze that quotation, and connect the quote to larger concepts (either within the work, in other works, or to real world events and experiences). Each quote should be formatted in MLA format. For each book, your reading log should have **at least 10** entries spread out throughout the text. This means that your entries should not come from just the first two chapters or even just the first half of the book. You should demonstrate that you have read and critically reflected upon the entire work. You should include at the end of your reading log a Works Cited page with any outside works you referenced in your entries as well as the summer reading book. You may type or handwrite these entries. If you choose to handwrite, your work must be neat and legible and not submitted as part of a spiral or composition notebook.

Entry #	
Quote	Find your quote! Cite your quote in MLA format. Example: "Content of quote" (Last 1). Last is the last name of the author, and the number should correspond with the page number in the book. The quotation marks close before the parenthesis begin. The period goes outside the last parentheses.
Analysis	Analyze the quote! Write 3-4 sentences explaining and analyzing. Why did you select this quote? How does it enhance the mood, tone, theme, conflict, plot, or characterization? What literary elements or techniques are used in this quote, and to what effect are they used? If this is a nonfiction work, you may want to consider how this quote advances the author's argument.
Connection	Make a connection! Connect the quote to a larger concept in the work, in another work you've read, or to something outside the work such as a historical event or personal experience. Write 2-3 sentences for this section.

Reading Log Sample for Fiction:

Entry #1: <i>Far from the Madding Crowd</i> by Thomas Hardy	
Quote	“He had just reached the time of life at which ‘young’ is ceasing to be the prefix of ‘man’ in speaking of one. He was at the brightest period of masculine growth, for his intellect and his emotions were clearly separated; he had passed the time during which the influence of youth indiscriminately mingles them in the character of impulse, and he had not yet arrived at the stage wherein they become united again, in the character of prejudice, by the influence of a wife and family. In short, he was twenty-eight, and a bachelor” (Hardy 13).
Analysis	Hardy’s description of Farmer Oak helps the reader understand that Oak is a very steady person but one who is at a pivotal point in life. It is interesting that Hardy chooses long explanations of the significance of Oak’s age only to follow it up with a succinct restatement. If we only had that restatement giving his age and marital status, we would lose much of the insight about Oak and the implication of where he is expected to go from this point in his life (towards married life). This characterization of Oak’s age and maturity contrasts with Bathsheba’s description as youthful and vain later in the chapter.
Connection	The way that Gabriel Oak is set up to contrast Bathsheba feels very similar to past tropes in literature of “opposites attract” (such as Elizabeth and Darcy in <i>Pride and Prejudice</i>), but it doesn’t feel like a stale trope. This is something that continues today in both romance books and movies (such as Harry and Sally in <i>When Harry Met Sally</i>). It is interesting that the book focuses so much on the male romantic lead at the beginning with Bathsheba being introduced and described but not named in this chapter.

Sample Works Cited entry:

Hardy, Thomas. *Far from the Madding Crowd*. 1874. Barnes & Noble Classics, 2005.

Reading Log Sample for Nonfiction:

Entry # 1: <i>Vanderbilt: The Rise and Fall of an American Dynasty</i> by Anderson Cooper and Katherine Howe	
Quote	“The United States, a country founded on antiroyalist principles, would, only twenty years after its revolutionary burst into existence, produce the progenitor of a family that would come to hold itself up as American royalty, with the titles and palaces to prove it. But their empire would last for less than a hundred years before collapsing under its own weight, destroying itself with its own pathology” (Cooper and Howe 12).
Analysis	This quote feels like Cooper and Howe’s thesis for the book, presenting the tension of the American idea that all are created equal but that there are those who are above the rest. It is interesting that the Vanderbilts seem to be chasing the system that the United States was established to move away from. Cooper and Howe seem to approach the Vanderbilts with a critical eye based on the negative connotation conveyed with words like “collapsing” and “destroying” to describe the end of the Vanderbilt reign (12).
Connection	I have learned about the Vanderbilts in history class and visited Vanderbilt University and Biltmore Estate (both connected to the Vanderbilts). While this book hasn’t mentioned the Biltmore Vanderbilts yet, the description of The Breakers in this prologue very much reminds me of visiting Biltmore to admire the art and architecture. The overwhelming size of The Breakers, described as “nearly three times as big as the White House,” is comparable to the feeling of driving up to Biltmore for the first time and seeing it appear castle-like out of the mountains (Cooper and Howe 3).

Sample Works Cited entry:

Cooper, Anderson and Katherine Howe. *Vanderbilt: The Rise and Fall of an American Dynasty*. HarperCollins, 2021.

Note: Please feel free to use the template on the next page as you write your reading log entries.

Entry #	
Quote	
Analysis	
Connection	