

Summer Assignment

AP English Language and Composition 2026-2027

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Instructions

1. Choose a book from this list - all of these books can be found at the Morgan Hill or San Jose library. If you act quickly, you'll be able to check out a copy rather than purchase it.
2. Read it over the summer - ebooks and audiobooks are fine too.
3. Create a 3"x5" notecard with the basic ideas in the book to help you remember relevant details for the essay
4. Due: Thursday/Friday, August 20/21 (the end of the first full week of school)
5. In class, write an argument essay that uses your book as evidence (you can use your notecard) (there will be a variety of prompts and you will choose one)

Book Options

- *ADHD is Awesome* by Kim and Penn Holderness
 - "This book is a fun read! Written by award-winning content creators Penn and Kim Holderness. They lay out what it is like to have ADHD (or love someone who does) and how to thrive with it. The audio book is read by both Penn and Kim who do a fantastic job!"- Mrs. Hunger
- *The Glass Castle* by Jeannette Walls
 - "The Glass Castle allows for a different perspective on a considered harsh reality of others. Walls really knows how to take us on an emotional ride in her memoir. Beautifully capturing the ups and downs of her journey, from heartbreaking moments to moments of strength. Her vivid descriptions of her family dynamics really engage readers; perfect for mature readers who are interested/looking for a compelling and well-written story." ~Student, 2023
- *Born to Run* by Christopher McDougall
 - "My summer recommendation is one that will get your butt off the couch and have you feeling the wind in your face! This is the type of inspiration I got when I read Born to Run. The book also takes you through an adventure of a fascinating civilization that lives under our noses in such an interesting manner (no spoilers). There were many topics that I found myself researching out of curiosity one of my favorites was how Americans live when they retire versus how older people live in this civilization. *head exploding emoji*" -Mr. Paredes
- *The Boys in the Boat* by Daniel James Brown

- "I loved this book! As someone who reads nonfiction frequently, I thought this was one of the best I've read and would highly recommend it. I bought it in the airport, couldn't put it down and finished it in a day. Know anything about rowing crew or living through the Depression or the 1936 Olympics in Berlin? No prerequisite needed. The gripping narrative of Joe Rantz (and the other "Boys in the Boat") draws you in and makes this powerful moment in history so real and personal. You should read this book, and then come talk to me about it! :)" -Ms. McDaniel
- ***Beautiful Boy* by David Sheff**
 - "This book is heartbreaking and hopeful. This memoir follows a father's experience as he watches his son struggle with addiction and tries to help him through recovery. The book explores family, love, fear, and the impact addiction can have on everyone involved, not just the person taking the drug. Sheff writes in a very honest and emotional way, combining personal memories with facts and research about addiction. His style is reflective and descriptive, which helps readers understand both the emotional and real life challenges his family faced. Read if you like emotional true stories, family centered memoirs, or books that explore mental health and addiction." - Student, 2026
- ***Know My Name* by Chanel Miller**
 - "I think that this book is very powerful and a deeply personal memoir that is worth reading because it gives a voice to an experience that is often overlooked. Miller writes this with a lot of bravery and vulnerability and helps the reader understand the lasting impact of trauma but also shows resilience/ growth. This book is meaningful because its storytelling is very human and relatable. It encourages empathy/ reflection and a better understanding of justice, identity, and healing. It shows the truth about a really hard topic that many might not want to face." - Student, 2026
 - "Know My Name tells the story of Chanel Miller's journey after surviving sexual assault and finding her voice. Her writing is honest, emotional, and engaging, making it very interesting. Read this if you enjoy inspiring true stories about resilience, courage, and personal growth." - Student, 2026
 - "Literally one of the most heart- wrenching, beautiful pieces of writing I've ever read. I can't put into words how powerful this book was, but I truly believe everyone should read it." ~Ms. Unterreiner
- ***Permanent Record* by Edward Snowden**
 - "Snowden's revelations are very interesting to me. It almost makes me nostalgic for a time I never experienced. His saying that we, the users and our data, are the product of the monetization of the web is not a surprise to me, but in the end we really can't do much about it. After all, everything is on the internet now, and the only real way to stop the collection and selling of our data is to stop using it completely. This, of course, is nearly impossible in this very internet-connected world." ~Student, 2022
 - "[This book is captivating] because of the detail that Snowden goes into regarding his experience as being a part of the American Intelligence, while also depicting his feelings and motivations to why he believed that America was violating their own citizen's rights through mass surveillance. Because of how interesting Snowden's point of view and how he explains his opinion of the wrongdoing America was doing, from the perspective of a high ranked intelligence officer in the United States, this book earned my recommendation. All in all, this would be a great read for anyone who are interested in

cybersecurity, journalists, digital rights activists, and political/social activists” ~Student, 2024

- ***Alive* by Piers Paul Read**
 - “This story is about the Andes Survivors of Air Force Flight 571. The plane carrying a college rugby team crashed in the remote Andes mountains and faced avalanches, and other elemental disasters.” - Mrs. Hunger
 - “Alive: The Story of the Andes Survivors is an exciting yet gory tale about a Uruguayan rugby team who lives through a plane crash in some of the coldest and tallest mountains in the world. The survivors were stranded for 72 days total and every day they are faced with new challenges that will keep you hooked. The writer sat with the survivors for extensive interviews so that every story is told. Read if you enjoy learning about unique experiences that show the true capability of humans in emergency situations and are curious in seeing the lengths they go.” - Student, 2026
- ***Spare* by Prince Harry**
 - “*Spare* is about Prince Harry’s experience living with the Royal Family as the “spare” child to his older brother, the heir to the throne. He also goes through his life and examines the various experiences that changed his life and his public image. The writer uses clear imagery and strong descriptions to engage the reader. Read if you like to learn about the British Royal Family and are already familiar with Prince Harry.” - Student, 2026
 - “This must be the strangest book ever written by a royal. Prince Harry’s memoir, *Spare*, is part confession, part rant and part love letter. In places it feels like the longest angry drunk text ever sent. It’s the view from inside what he calls a “surreal fishbowl” and “unending Truman Show”. It’s disarmingly frank and intimate – showing the sheer weirdness of his often isolated life. And it’s the small details, rather than the set-piece moments, that give a glimpse of how little we really knew.” - [Sean Coughlan for the BBC](#)
- ***Just Mercy* by Bryan Stevenson**
 - “*Just Mercy* was the recommended reading during my college orientation when I went to college! I thought they were just giving us some random book and I put it on a shelf and didn’t look at it for a long while. When I finally got to it, I really appreciated the perspective on the justice system and the meaning of ‘justice.’ This book provides a very specific look into an often-ignored part of our society and focuses on wrongful incarceration from a lawyer’s perspective.” -Ms. Suh
- ***Everything is Tuberculosis* by John Green**
 - “You may know John Green as a YouTuber (Vlog Brothers, Crash Course) or as a YA Novelist (*Looking for Alaska*, *The Fault in Our Stars*). In this book, Green traces the history of tuberculosis, the deadliest disease in history, which claims over a million lives a year and over 1 billion lives over the course of history. This book emerged from a visit to Sierra Leone, where Green met a tuberculosis patient named Henry. Using Henry’s story as a frame, Green frames the continued spread of the disease in terms of rich vs poor, colonizer vs colonized. This book is a masterclass in using a variety of rhetorical techniques to make history and science meaningful and engaging.” - Mr. Jones
- ***Can’t Hurt Me* by David Goggins**
 - “Going into this book I was ready to take in his story and learn what it means to be disciplined. I wasn’t expecting how intense and ‘graphic’ it was going to be. I personally enjoyed reading this book as it told a story like no other with true emotion. In the book,

at the end of every chapter, he leaves a guide on how to be more disciplined and how to start your personal goals. This book taught me a lot..." ~ Student, 2025

- *I Am Malala* by Malala Yousafzai

- "I am Malala is an inspiring autobiography of a girl who spoke out for what she believed in, in the face of terrorists. Told from a first person perspective, Malala offers readers a glimpse of what her childhood was like, and tells the story of how she began to speak up for education is important for all, especially girls. Her style of writing is extremely vivid and compelling, and near-perfectly captures so many details that make one feel as if they are actually there, with her the entire time, through the good and the bad." - Student, 2026
- "I would highly recommend *I Am Malala* to anyone interested in human rights, education, social justice, or stories of resilience. It is especially relatable to young readers like myself, as Malala herself was a teenager when she began her activism." ~Student, 2024

- *Another Kind of Madness* by Stephen Hinshaw

- "My psych professor from college wrote this book! It's about bipolar disorder, family, and high achievement. It's also about the stigma of mental health and how it still affects so much of our lives, our interactions, our views of each other. If you're interested in psychology (if you're in psych/marriage sex and family), this book may not teach you many facts about psychology but will help situate the facts in a real situation." -Ms. Suh

- *Man's Search for Meaning* by Viktor Frankl

- "I recommend this especially if you took AP Seminar this year: Viktor Frankl was a psychiatrist and Holocaust survivor. After the war ended what amazed him was not that so many people died in the camps, but that anyone was able to survive at all. His conclusion was that mindset mattered – while having a positive sense of meaning in life was obviously not enough to survive a concentration camp, *lacking* a sense of meaning always meant falling into despair, leading to certain death. The first half of the book will be familiar if you've ever read a Holocaust memoir, but the second half of the book explores the psychiatry of how people can discover meaning in life and find the resolve to go on through life's many challenges." ~Mr. Jones

- *Visual Thinking* by Temple Grandin

- "When my best friend closes her eyes and tries to picture a purple cow, she can't see it. When I read this book, I understood Grandin as a kind of opposite: a very strong visualizer. This isn't Grandin's first book or her most famous one, but it goes into depth on her own personal history, her job and the way that she was able to cultivate her strengths, and her suggestions for changes that could help other visual thinkers." -Ms. Suh (P.S. there's a movie about Grandin and [this video](#) may be interesting to watch before reading the book)

- *Educated* by Tara Westover

- "I would most definitely recommend this book because I gained an insight about how important education can be for more reasons than changing your future career, something I previously was not aware of and something I believe enough people aren't aware of. Tara also changes very drastically from the beginning of the book to the end through various different events that shape her into the person she becomes, and can be used to study new ways to change oneself. I thoroughly enjoyed the book." ~Student, 2024