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AP Language and Composition Essential Readings
Summer Assignment 2026

June 2026

Dear Future AP Language and Composition Students:

Welcome to AP Language and Composition! This summer, please complete the following reading assignment and learn the tone words on the following list. We will reference these books and these words throughout the year, and you will have a multiple-choice test on these two books during the first week of school.

Please read *Tribe* by Sebastian Junger and *The Crucible* by Arthur Miller. For each text, take notes on what you consider to be the most interesting and important ideas and quotes in the text. Please select 3 passages per text that are of unique interest to you. Make sure to record page numbers. Comment on why these passages resonate with you personally in relation to your life and experiences.

Required: It should be handwritten, neatly, in blue or black ink. Do not type. Do maintain correct spelling, punctuation, grammar, and mechanics. Only handwritten hard copies will be accepted. This should be a 3-4 page response. Consider this a journaling assignment that you work on while reading. We advise working on this away from screens, which can be distracting. You will hand this in on the first day of school.

Also required: Learn the following list of tone words. These words will also be on the multiple-choice test in September. Study suggestions: Create a quizlet, create flashcards, create a foldable, create sentences, or quiz a friend.

We look forward to meeting you in September!

Sincerely,

Ms. DeMella, Ms. Fahey, and Ms. Livingston
AP Language Teachers

Name and Date: _____

English 3AP: Vocabulary List

Directions: As part of your 3AP summer reading assignment, you must learn the following words and definitions. These words will appear on the reading assessment quiz to be in September, and they are crucial background knowledge for this collegiate level course.

Mood and Tone Words

1. **Ambivalent** - having or showing very different feelings (such as love and hate) about someone or something at the same time

- He felt *ambivalent* about his job. [=he both liked and disliked his job]
- He has an *ambivalent* relationship with his family.
- She has a deeply/very *ambivalent* attitude about/to/toward religion.
- The senator is *ambivalent* about running for president. [=the senator has not decided whether or not to run for president]

2. **Apathetic** - not having or showing much emotion or interest

- Young people are becoming increasingly *apathetic*.
- a politically *apathetic* [=*indifferent*, *uninterested*] generation
- the *apathetic* attitude of the public

3. **Baffled** - completely confused

- a *baffled* look [=a look that shows confusion]
- His explanation left me feeling even more *baffled*[=*confused*] than I had felt before.

4. **Belligerent** - angry and aggressive **:**feeling or showing readiness to fight

- a *belligerent* remark
- He was drunk and *belligerent*.

5. **Cynical** - believing that people are generally selfish and dishonest

- *Cynical* people say there is no such thing as true love.
- People are so *cynical* nowadays.
- She's become more *cynical* in her old age.

— often + *about*

- He's *cynical about* marriage.
- Many young people today are *cynical about* politics.

6. **Contemplative** - involving, allowing, or causing deep thought

- She's in a *contemplative* mood today. [=she is quiet and thoughtful today]
- He has lived a quiet, *contemplative* life.
- a *contemplative* book

7. **Diffident** - lacking confidence **:** not feeling comfortable around people

- He becomes *diffident* [=*shy*, *timid*] around girls.
- She has a *diffident* [=*reserved*] manner.

8. **Didactic** - designed or intended to teach people something

- *didactic* poetry

Connotation - *usually disapproving* — used to describe someone or something that tries to teach something (such as proper or moral behavior) in a way that is annoying or unwanted

- Audiences were turned off by the movie's *didactic* quality.

9. **Disdainful** - feeling strong dislike or disapproval for something or someone you think does not deserve respect **:** feeling or showing disdain

- He looked at the waiter with a *disdainful* glare.
- a *disdainful* attitude toward authority

— often + *of*

- a critic who is *disdainful of* all modern art

10. **Dejected** - sad because of failure, loss, etc.

- The *dejected* players left the field.
- She's been so *dejected* [=*depressed, unhappy*] since her sister moved away.

11. **Derisive** - *formal*

: the feeling that people express when they criticize and laugh at someone or something in an insulting way

- *derisive* [=*scornful*] laughter
- a *derisive* [=*derogatory*] term

12. **Droll** - having an odd and amusing quality

- a *droll* little man with a peculiar sense of humor
- a book of *droll* stories

13. **Empathetic** - understanding and sharing another person's experiences and emotions

- He was very *empathetic*. He felt great *empathy* with/for/toward the poor.

14. **Fawning** - *disapproving*

: trying to get the approval of an important or powerful person by giving that person praise, special attention, etc.

- a sports star surrounded by *fawning* fans

15. **Flippant** -
: lacking proper respect or seriousness

- He made/gave a *flippant* response to a serious question.

16. **Furtive** -
: quiet and secret; trying to avoid being noticed

- He cast a *furtive* glance in our direction.
- We exchanged *furtive* smiles across the table.
- *furtive* movements

17. **Harried** - bothered by many problems or worries **:** very worried or anxious

- *harried* shoppers/travelers

18. **Indignant** -
: feeling or showing anger because of something that is unfair or wrong **:** very angry

- She wrote an *indignant* letter to the editor.
- He was/got/became very *indignant* about/over the changes.
- an *indignant* tone of voice

19. **Morose** - *of a person* **:** very serious, unhappy, and quiet

- He became *morose* and withdrawn and would not talk to anyone.

2: very sad or unhappy

- *morose* song lyrics
- *morose* thoughts

20. **Obsequious** - too eager to help or obey someone important, fawning

(tone: *disapproving)*

- She's constantly followed by *obsequious* assistants who will do anything she tells them to.

21. **Patronizing** - *disapproving*

: showing that you believe you are more intelligent or better than other people

- She spoke to us in a *patronizing* [=*condescending*] tone.
- a *patronizing* smile

22. **Pedantic** - *disapproving*

: annoying other people by correcting small errors and giving too much attention to minor details

- a *pedantic* teacher
- a *pedantic* insistence on following the rules exactly

23. **Pessimistic** - having or showing a lack of hope for the future **:** expecting bad things to happen

- I'm *pessimistic* about our chances of winning. [=I don't think we'll win]
- Most doctors were *pessimistic* that a cure could be found.
- The film gives a very *pessimistic* view of human nature.
- He has an extremely negative and *pessimistic* attitude.

— opposite OPTIMISTIC

24. **Plaintive** - *formal*

: expressing suffering or sadness **:** having a sad sound

- a *plaintive* [=*mournful, sorrowful*] sigh
- We could hear the *plaintive* cry of a wounded animal in the woods.

25. **Pompous** - *disapproving*

: having or showing the attitude of people who speak and behave in a very formal and serious way because they believe that they are better, smarter, or more important than other people

- a *pompous* [=*self-important*] politician
- a *pompous* remark
- She found it difficult to talk about her achievements without sounding *pompous*.

26. **Sardonic** - *formal*

: showing that you disapprove of or do not like someone or something **:** showing disrespect or scorn for someone or something

- The movie is a *sardonic* look at modern life.
- *sardonic* humor/comments
- a *sardonic* expression/smile

27. **Sadistic** -
: enjoyment that someone gets from being violent or cruel or from causing pain

— compare MASOCHISM

- *sadistic* behavior
- a *sadistic* criminal

28. **Supercilious** -
: having or showing the proud and unpleasant attitude of people who think that they are better or more important than other people

- a *supercilious* professor
- a *supercilious* tone/attitude
- *supercilious* behavior