

AP Language & Composition/Contemporary Issues Summer Project

Hello, combo students! We have quite the class planned out for you next year. Our goal is for you to not only to end the school year with an AP credit in Language, but for you also to also have spent the year working on a wide variety of academic and soft skills to get you college ready. It is going to be a fast-paced and challenging year, but it is also going to be a time of personal growth for all of us. It will also, if we have our way, be a lot of fun.

In order to get you thinking like a college student, we have created a summer assignment for you this summer. It is technically **optional**; that said, we will be working with the elements of it the first few weeks of school, and it will count as a test grade. However, if you do not complete it during the summer, we will provide an alternate assignment to take its place in your grade. That alternate assignment will be due before we leave for Christmas Break, and you will complete it entirely **outside of class**.

Why are we approaching our summer assignment this way? The answer is simple. Balancing fun and responsibility is an essential college skill, and you have to learn to make good choices for yourself that allow you to be well rounded and healthy as well as academically successful.

So, the choice is yours! For those of you who prefer to knock this out for the summer...here is your assignment. For those of you who need the summer to recharge and relax, we get it. Just be aware that you will have a zero test grade until you do the alternate assignment, and that you will be a bit left out of some of the opening activities and discussions. If you have any questions at all, email Ms. Allen or Mr. Karas (laurie.allen@barrow.k12.ga.us david.karas@barrow.k12.ga.us).

Part I: Political Socialization Tree and Written Analysis

The heart of the Contemporary Issues course is learning about the world around you in all its glory and craziness, but it is important to realize that you internalize the world around you through your own unique lens. Everything you observe, experience, watch, read, etc. is filtered through your own personal belief and biases that have created your unique worldview. Our worldviews have been developing our entire lives, but we rarely reflect on them. You won't be able to really understand the world you live in without taking some time to reflect on yourself, how you fit in it, and why you see it the way you do. This self-reflection is also an important part of the AP Language and Composition course, and more broadly, life in general. We want you to find your voice.

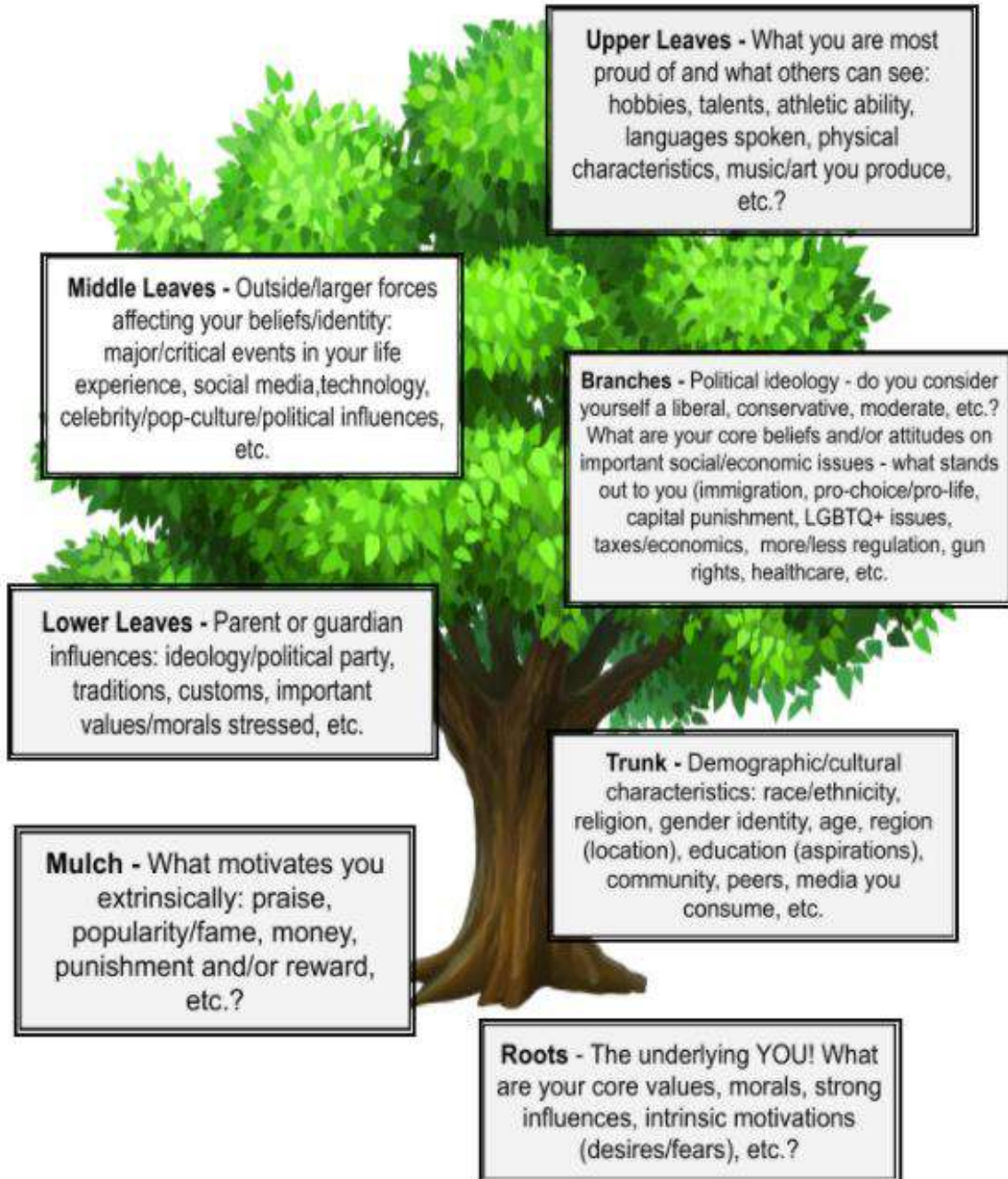
Political socialization is defined in the AP U.S. Government & Politics textbook as "the process through which individuals in a society acquire political attitudes, view, and knowledge, based on input from family, schools, then media, and others." This part of the assignment is for you to think about your own political socialization and the development of your broader worldview. The assignment has two parts:

Part 1 - Develop your Tree

Using the visual of the tree in this document as a guide, you need to self-reflect and create your own political socialization tree. While you can create a digital version using Google Slides, Prezi, Microsoft Publisher/Word, or some other digital tool to create your tree, we actually prefer you to flex your creative muscles and create your tree on a poster board or something equivalent so that you take a break from your technology for a minute. This tree could be considered your brainstorm, so it doesn't have to use complete sentences in paragraph form, but realize that you will be asked to share this with others so make sure it is comprehensible (and also don't share anything you don't feel comfortable with others seeing).

Part 2 - Written Analysis

In this part, you need to write a written reflection/analysis of your tree where you expand upon your ideas in the tree itself and develop a written version of your socialization/worldview. This is where you can reflect a little deeper (know that only we, Ms. Allen and Mr. Karas, will read these so share whatever you feel comfortable with us reading). While we'll give you creative licensing on the organization of your written analysis, you need to make sure that you address all parts of the tree in your analysis. It may be most helpful to group them into categories by paragraph, for example: paragraph one could discuss the roots and mulch, paragraph two could discuss the trunk and lower leaves, and the third could discuss the branches, middle leaves, and upper leaves. You can either submit this written analysis via Google Docs, email us a copy from a different word processor, or print it and turn it in on the first day of school.



Part II: Science Meets Politics Article Analysis

[Left, Right: Politics's Brain Science](#) from Politico

Optional - watch this TED Talk on the same topic [Red brain, Blue brain -- The Neurobiology of Political Values](#)

Read the article listed above and then thoroughly answer the following questions to the best of your ability (answer the first question BEFORE reading the article). Be sure to edit your answers to ensure correct grammar and mechanics:

Before reading the article, answer this question:

1. Do you think that an individual's personality and worldview are genetically determined/part of their biology or a result of their upbringing and experiences? Essentially, where do you stand on the age old question of nature vs. nurture?

After reading the article, and the following (feel free to do outside research as necessary):

2. What does partisanship mean and why would people be sick of it? Explain your thoughts on the issue - is this inevitable and is it a good or bad thing for our democracy?
 3. What is the author's main argument/claim in the article?
 4. What evidence does she give to support her argument/claim? What are examples of the hypothesis/theory she entertains? Which piece(s) of evidence stands out to you the most?
 5. What are your thoughts on the claim/thesis and the implications it has for our society and politics? How can you relate to this topic?
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Part III: American Identities Essay Analysis

Group One: *Read one of these short essays on identity:*

[On Being a Cripple](#) by Nancy Mairs

[The Fourth of July](#) by Audre Lord

[Two Ways to Belong in America](#) by Bharati Mukherjee

[The Way to Rainy Mountain](#) by N. Scott Momaday

[A Plague of Tics](#) by David Sedaris

Group Two: *Read one of these longer essays on identity:*

[Aria: Memoir of a Bilingual Childhood](#) by Richard Rodriguez

[How to Tame a Wild Tongue](#) by Gloria Anzaluda

[Notes of a Native Son](#) by James Baldwin

[On Dumpster Diving](#) by Lars Eighner

Then for each article, thoroughly answer the following questions to the best of your ability. Be sure to edit your answers to ensure correct grammar and mechanics:

1. What argument(s)/claim(s) is this essay making?
2. What reasons/evidence does the author provide to support the overarching argument?
3. How does the author acknowledge counter arguments or opposing viewpoints? Do they develop these viewpoints or are they on the surface of the argument?

4. What are your thoughts on the quality of this argument? Was it well argued and supported? Why or why not? What was particularly strong or weak about the argument? Write a paragraph. Be sure you are analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of the argument, **not** your personal opinions or reactions to the argument. Your feelings on a topic have no place in an analysis of the merits or failings or an argument, so be careful to focus on the argument and not your emotions (get used to this feeling! It will happen a lot!)
5. Write a paragraph making a connection between this essay and either a personal experience of yours, a current event, a historical event, or a work of literature. Be sure to make specific connections to parts of both texts/experiences.

