

AP English Language and Composition: Suggested Summer Reading

Welcome to AP English Language and Composition! This course will focus on understanding, analyzing, and writing non-fiction prose, connecting fiction selections to rhetoric and argumentation, and synthesizing sources to develop and support your own arguments. My goal for you is to become more proficient readers, writers, and thinkers.

The suggested summer reading will prepare you for our studies next year. **In the first few weeks of the semester, we will study F. Scott Fitzgerald's novel *The Great Gatsby*.** As *Gatsby* has recently entered the public domain, copies of the text are widely available in print and online. As you read, consider the text's central argument and how it may answer the questions posed below. Additionally, you may read the linked ancillary materials to further your understanding of the text. Examine how you might synthesize the claims posited by Fitzgerald's novel with the argument(s) presented in these supplemental texts.

In this class, we'll consider the argument, structure, rhetorical situation, and purpose of texts. This is different from the way you've approached literature in the past. The summer assignment prepares you to engage with texts in this different way - throughout the course of the semester, you'll be equipped with tools to effectively analyze the readings we engage with using this new framework.

What does <i>The Great Gatsby</i> say about the American Dream?		
Text	Genre	Author
2004 Address to the DNC	speech	Barack Obama
"The Original Meanings of the 'American Dream' and 'America First' Were Starkly Different From How We Use Them Today"	article	Anna Diamond
American Creed	Documentary Series	Condoleeza Rice and David M. Kennedy
"Is the American Dream Really Dead?"	podcast	<i>Freakonomics</i>
"What Happens to the American Dream in a Recession?"	article	Katharine Q. Seelye

What does <i>The Great Gatsby</i> say about sex and gender?		
Text	Genre	Author
"Raising Boys With a Broader Definition of Masculinity"	opinion	Julie Beck
"There is No Unmarked Woman"	article	Deborah Tannen
"The Boys Are Not All Right"	opinion	Michael Ian Black
"The Mask of Masculinity"	TED Talk	Connor Beaton
"Professions for Women"	essay	Virginia Woolf

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What does <i>The Great Gatsby</i> say about social stratification and economic disparity?		
Text	Genre	Author
"When Watching the Wealthy, a Fictional Barrier is Healthier"	opinion	Farnoosh Torabi
"'The Great Gatsby' Curve: Why It's So Hard for the Poor to Get Ahead"	article	Matthew O'Brien
"Inventing 'Hispanic'"	podcast	<i>The Experiment</i>
"The College Admissions Scandal: The Side Door"	podcast	<i>Gangster Capitalism</i>
"From Wells Fargo to Fyre Festival, the Scam Economy is Entering Its Baroque Phase"	article	Carina Chocano

What does <i>The Great Gatsby</i> say about the literary canon?		
Text	Genre	Author
"Why Do We Keep Reading The Great Gatsby?"	opinion	Wesley Morris
"American Icons: The Great Gatsby"	podcast	<i>Studio 360</i>
"Gatsby Without Greatness"	opinion	Roger Ebert
"'The Great Gatsby' Glut"	opinion	John Williams
"Gatsby: The Greatest of Them All"	opinion	Jonathan Yardley

What does <i>The Great Gatsby</i> say about the "self made man"?		
Text	Genre	Author
"The Ways We Lie"	essay	Stephanie Ericsson
"Jay Gatsby, Dreamer, Criminal, Jazz Age Rogue, Is a Man for Our Times"	opinion	Adam Cohen
"Pull Yourself Up By the Bootstraps? Go Ahead, Try It"	opinion	Nicholas Kristof
"Man of the People"	podcast	<i>Reply All</i>
Excerpt from <i>Outliers</i>	Non-fiction book	Malcolm Gladwell

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In addition to the novel, there will be a choice component to the course. In order to get a head start, you may also consider reading a text from the list below.

Memoirs:

Speak, Memory – Vladimir Nabokov
The Woman Warrior – Maxine Hong Kingston
Running With Scissors – Augusten Burroughs*
Angela's Ashes – Frank McCourt*
Naked – David Sedaris*
Me Talk Pretty One Day – David Sedaris*
The Autobiography of Malcolm X
A Man Without a Country – Kurt Vonnegut*
When Breath becomes Air – Paul Kalanithi
H is for Hawk – Helen Macdonald
On the Move – Oliver Sacks*
The Glass Castle – Jeanette Walls
I Am Malala – Malala Yousafzai

Travel Narratives:

Confederates in the Attic – Tony Horwitz
A Walk in the Woods – Bill Bryson*
Bicycle Diaries – David Byrne*
The Travels of Marco Polo – Marco Polo
The Best American Travel Writing (2010 or 2011)
Deep South: Four Seasons on Back Roads – Paul Theroux
The Last Train to Zona Verde – Paul Theroux
The Lost City of Z – David Grann
The River of Doubt: Theodore Roosevelt's Darkest Journey – Candice Millard
In the Heart of the Sea: The Tragedy of the Whaleship Essex – Nathaniel Philbrick
Into Africa: The Epic Adventures of Stanley and Livingstone – Martin Dugard
Over the Edge of the World: Magellan's Terrifying Circumnavigation of the Globe – Laurence Bergreen
Blood River – Tim Butcher
Lost Continent – Bill Bryson

Culinary Narratives:

Heat – Bill Buford*
Kitchen Confidential – Anthony Bourdain*
Medium Raw – Anthony Bourdain*
Omnivore's Dilemma – Michael Pollan*
Fast Food Nation – Eric Schlosser*
Blood, Bones & Butter – Gabrielle Hamilton
The Devil in the Kitchen – Marco Pierre White
The Omnivore's Dilemma – Michael Pollan
Eating Animals – Jonathan Safran Foer*

Science:

A Short History of Nearly Everything – Bill Bryson
The Fabric of the Cosmos – Brian Greene
The Elegant Universe – Brian Greene
Wonderful Life – Stephen Jay Gould
The Selfish Gene – Richard Dawkins

The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks – Rebecca Skloot*
Thinking, Fast and Slow – Daniel Kahneman
Silent Spring – Rachel Carson*
The Signal and the Noise – Nate Silver*
A Brief History of Time – Stephen Hawking
The Wright Brothers – David McCullough

History/Biography:

John Adams – David McCullough*
Theodore Rex – Edmund Morris
The Boys in the Boat – Daniel James Brown
SPQR: A History of Ancient Rome – Mary Beard
Manhunt: The 12-Day Chase for Lincoln's Killer – James Swanson*
Guns, Germs, and Steel – Jared Diamond
Underground – Haruki Murakami
Beasts in the Garden – Eric Larson
American Sphinx: The Character of Thomas Jefferson – Joseph Ellis
Hamilton – Ron Chernow*
The Big Short – Michael Lewis
American Lion: Jackson in the White House – Jon Meacham*

Essayists and other General Non-Fiction:

Trick Mirror – Jia Tolentino*
The White Album – Joan Didion (essays)*
So You've Been Publicly Shamed – Jon Ronson (sociology)*
Among the Thugs – Bill Buford (sports – soccer)
People's History of Sports in the United States – Dave Zirin (sports – American)
How Soccer Explains the World: An Unlikely Theory of Globalization – Franklin Foer (sports – soccer)
The Book of Basketball – Bill Simmons (sports – basketball)
Up, Up, and Away – Jonah Keri (sports – baseball)
The Extra 2%: How Wall Street Strategies Took a Major League Baseball Team from Worst to First – Jonah Keri (sports – baseball)
Born to Run – Christopher McDougall (sports – running)
What I Talk About When I Talk About Running – Haruki Murakami (on the craft of writing)
The Armies of the Night – Norman Mailer (war)
The World is Flat – Thomas Friedman (globalization)
Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can't Stop Talking – Susan Cain (social science)
Walden – Henry David Thoreau (philosophy)
Mother Tongue – Bill Bryson (language)*
At Home: A History of Private Life – Bill Bryson
Whatever It Takes – Paul Tough (poverty/education)
Savage Inequalities: Children in America's Schools – Jonathan Kozol (poverty/education)
The New Jim Crow – Michelle Alexander (crime/poverty)
Musicophilia – Oliver Sacks (psychology)
Socrates Café – Christopher Phillips (philosophy)

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Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance – Robert
Pirsig (philosophy)

Eating the Dinosaur – Chuck Klosterman (contemporary
culture)

Into Thin Air – Jon Krakauer (true adventure)

Freakonomics – Levitt and Dubner (economics)*

The Tipping Point – Malcolm Gladwell (sociology)

Bowling Alone – Robert Putnam (sociology)

All the President's Men – Carl Bernstein (political
reporting)