

**Advanced Placement Language and Composition
Summer Reading List and Expectations
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Before we dive headfirst into a year filled with reading and writing, let's spend some time during the summer months getting our brains to think-yes, think, not just allow our eyes to scan the tops of words in an effort to finish the book before the beginning of September and some dreaded assessment. No, our purpose must exist as something different from the status quo. You see, to find true growth, we must make our brains perform and seek knowledge, not just experience what the words in front of us say, but, more importantly, *try to understand what they mean, what they show, and what they can do for our lives.*

Note: All of the below should be prepared by the first day of school.

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The Reading:

Access via the internet, then read and annotate the following:

Kenyon Commencement Speech 2005 - David Wallace Foster. A remarkably intelligent and brutally honest author, Foster provides a semi-diatribes to these graduates in an uncommon way that offers them insight, reality, and supposed clarity. You can search this up via Google.

You will not be required to write about this. Yet... So please be sure to annotate as you read for ethos (how Foster builds his credibility), pathos (the emotions he attempts to evoke from his audience), and logos (the appeals aimed at the audience's mind, their rational, thinking side).

Everyone must read and annotate the following non-fiction books:

***Overachievers: The Secret Life of Driven Kids* - Alexandra Robbins.** The book brings to light the pressure to achieve in high school. The book documents the experiences of several likable, high-achieving high school students to show how our high-stakes educational culture may be spiraling out of control.

***Blink* - Malcolm Gladwell.** The book delves into the world of thinking, of the small difference between a good decision and bad one. It'll make you examine what you do and how you do it.

*Please be sure to secure your own copy of these books. You will be required to make annotations in them, as well as have it with you in class.

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The Assignments:

These texts all own a considerable level of success. Whether via the bestseller list or through critical acclaim, these authors have touched people in a way that generated thought and forged thinking. Given this, we need to ponder two simple yet complex ideas: **how and why?**

The *conscious choices* made by writers, in combination with their voices and styles, exist because they have a commitment to the **craft** and a desire to **impact** the audience. They write to express, and *the way they choose to do it matters just as much as the sentiments expressed*.

Task 1: Symposium on *The Overachievers*:

During the first few days of school, we will have a graded symposium-style discussion on *The Overachievers*. Be prepared (which means you must have notes AND annotations directly in the text) to discuss the below questions. You must have **direct evidence** prepared to support your responses. As you read, think about and annotate for the following:

1. What is Robbins' central claim? How does she develop it for her reader throughout her piece?
2. Who is Robbins' target audience? Thinking about this, where in her text does she seem to directly appeal to this audience?
3. What is Robbins' purpose in writing this piece?
4. Exigence is the term used to describe what has stirred an author or speaker to write or speak. Exigence is what has moved them to feel the need to get their message out. What is Robbins' exigence? How do you know?
5. Identify Robbins' appeals to pathos. What emotions does she intend to evoke from her audience and for what purpose?
6. How does Robbins build her credibility with her audience?
7. Robbins builds a logical argument here. Identify and analyze her appeals to logic. How do they impact her audience?
8. What do you notice about Robbins writing style? Identify specific passages as evidence.
9. How does Robbins structure her book? Analyze whether or not this is effective in conveying her claim and fulfilling her overall purpose.
10. What is your personal takeaway after reading Robbins book?

Task 2: Presentation on *Blink*:

During the first few days of school, you will be presenting your analysis of and reaction to *Blink* using the two focal points below. You must have **direct evidence** in your presentation. To help you prepare for your presentation, think about and annotate for the following:

Part 1 of Presentation:

Authors hope to get a message across in their writing. Think about a significant message, a central argument, the author hopes to convey to his readers, then **analyze how the author conveys that message**. Please do not go for the simple, the easy, or the obvious; think deeply and critically about what the author is trying to convey.

This is NOT a literary theme analysis. This is an analysis of an author's **choices when writing**. Do not just tell what the message is, but *analyze how the author gets that message across in his novel*. You may consider, but are not limited to, such devices as tone, style, voice, language, structure, figures of speech, symbols, and descriptions.

Part 2 of Presentation:

After identifying a central argument made in *Blink*, **respond** to this by *taking a stand on the argument*. Support your argument with examples from the text as well as your own personal bank of knowledge and experience.

Note: Feel free to break the mold of the typical PowerPoint presentation. Make decisions based on what you believe works best to communicate your analyses and reactions. Liberate yourself! Your presentations should not be less than 5 minutes and should not exceed 10.

Each presentation must be completely yours and yours alone; do not use any resources, other than the texts themselves, to help you. I want to know what YOU observed while reading the books, not what someone else noted. All work should be done independently. Do not do your work with a classmate! Any of these infractions could result in zeros on the assignments.



The Why:

Here we need to not just respond to literature, but also, and more importantly for the goal of the course, analyze *how and why it happens*. If we wish to become excellent writers, learning the craft and not merely experiencing it must stand at the forefront of our efforts.

I want confident, prepared, and passionate thinkers, speakers, and writers by the year's end, so looking closely at how successful writers go about their business will get us a bit closer to that goal. Overall, enjoy the summer and let your mind relax. I hope we don't have just a great class next year, but also a memorable experience that leaves you prepared and satisfied.