

11th Grade Advanced Placement Language and Composition Summer Reading List and Assignments

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. 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*. We will be opening up the year by focusing on two very important concepts: education and race relations.

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The Reading:

Part I: Short texts connected to the themes of education and race awareness

Access via the internet (use links provided), print, and read and annotate BOTH of 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. [link to text](#)

“Letter to my Son” *The Atlantic* - Ta-Nehisi Coates

This article was adapted from Ta-Nehisi Coates novel *Between the World and Me*. [link to text](#)

Part II: Different perspectives about education and what it means to be educated

Choose ONE of the following to read and annotate:

***Overachievers: The Secret Life of Driven Kids* - Alexandra Robbins**

The book brings to light the pressure to achieve in high school. It documents the experiences of high-achieving high school students to show how our meritocratic educational culture may be spiraling out of control.

***Educated: A Memoir*- Tara Westover**

Westover is born into a family living in middle-of-no-where Idaho. Her family does not believe in modern medicine or the education system as we know it. Ultimately Westover abandons her survivalist family's values and ends earning her PhD from Cambridge University.

***Range: Why Generalists Triumph in a Specialized World*- David Epstein**

Author and journalist David Epstein presents an argument that specialization, which many people believe is the pathway to success, should be the exception rather than the rule. Instead, he believes that people should become “generalists” or a “Jack of all trades” and value versatility.

***Outliers: The story of Success* - Malcolm Gladwell**

This New York Times bestseller examines the brightest and most successful people, whom Gladwell dubs “outliers,” how they got to where they are, and the factors that contribute to their success.

Part III: Race awareness and social responsibility

Choose ONE of the following to read and annotate:

***How to be an Anti-Racist* - Ibram X. Kendi**

No one becomes “not racist,” despite a tendency by Americans to identify themselves that way. We can only strive to be “anti racist” on a daily basis, to continually rededicate ourselves to the lifelong task of overcoming our country’s racist heritage. We learn early the racist notion that white people have more because they are more; that people of color have less because they are less. I had internalized this worldview by my high school graduation, seeing myself and my race as less than other people and blaming other blacks for racial inequities.
- Ibram X. Kedi

***Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria* - Beverly Tatum**

Beverly Daniel Tatum, a renowned authority on the psychology of racism, argues that straight talk about our racial identities is essential if we are serious about enabling communication across racial and ethnic divides. These topics have only become more urgent as the national conversation about race is increasingly acrimonious. This fully revised edition is essential reading for anyone seeking to understand the dynamics of race in America. - summary courtesy of: [link here](#)

***Just Mercy* - Bryan Stevenson**

An unforgettable true story about the potential for mercy to redeem us, and a clarion call to end mass incarceration in America — from one of the most inspiring lawyers of our time. - summary courtesy of: [link here](#)

***Evicted: Poverty and Prophet in the American City* - Matthew Desmond**

Princeton sociologist and MacArthur "Genius," Matthew Desmond, follows eight families in Milwaukee as they struggle to keep a roof over their heads. Evicted transforms our understanding of poverty and economic exploitation while providing fresh ideas for solving one of 21st-century America's most devastating problems. Its unforgettable scenes of hope and loss remind us of the centrality of home, without which nothing else is possible. - summary courtesy of [link here](#)

*For guardians who question the intention of this specific set of texts for AP Language students, the answer is this: Educators understand that conversations around social injustice must continue beyond moments of national outrage. Since AP Language centers on the use of rhetoric and language, current nonfiction, media, and opinion pieces appropriately support the academic objectives of the course. Teens are also at an important crossroads, as adults look to them for a progressive and hopeful future.

Together, we can help students prepare to address the issues of their time in an objective and informed way. Teacher preparation for this unit is supported by The College Board and by The National Council for Teachers of English. Please reach out to the teacher and/or department head if you desire any further discussion:

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The Assignments:

I am asking that you annotate directly in the four texts, but you must also prepare four separate documents of notes with direct supportive evidence from each text. Be sure to include a header with your name, the text, and the author at the top of each document. Your notes should focus on the following:

1. **Notes about rhetoric:** Rhetoric is the art of using language effectively; we are living in a world wherein we are *surrounded* and often deeply influenced by language. For each text, please prepare notes that focus on the following questions:
 1. What are the central and smaller claims? How does the author develop his/her claims?
 2. Who is the target audience? Where in the text does the author seem to directly appeal to this audience?
 3. What is the author's 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 the author's exigence? How do you know?
 5. Identify the author's appeals to pathos. What emotions does s/he intend to evoke from his/her audience and for what purpose?
 6. How does the author build credibility with his/her audience?
 7. Identify and analyze the author's appeals to logic. What is their effect?
 8. What is your personal takeaway after reading this text? (This response should be lengthier than the others.)

2. **Notes about theme:** We will start the year off discussing multiple perspectives and opinions about the concept and importance of *education* and how race relates to it. The essential questions for the quarter are as follows:
 1. What does it mean to be educated?
 2. What is the purpose of an education?
 3. To what extent do schools serve the goals of an education?

For each text, I want you to identify how the author would answer these questions. Pull direct evidence from the text to support your response. Leave your opinion out of these answers... for now :)

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