

AP LANG SUMMER READING 2020

Due on the first day of school!

Your writing sample **SHOULD BE SAVED IN A WORD or GOOGLE DOC**. We will be submitting it to [turnitin.com](https://www.turnitin.com) the first week of school. If you do not submit to [turnitin.com](https://www.turnitin.com), you will not receive credit for your summer reading assignment.

Part I: Writing Sample: Who Are You? One Word and 500 more

We will spend much of the year talking about cultivating, crafting, and protecting the unique voice that is you. With this in mind, we would like you to arrive on the first day of school with a writing sample that lets us know something about you as a writer and as a person.

The genesis for this assignment came from a recent essay in *The New York Times* by Scott Korb, a writing instructor at the New School. In it, he notes:

Somewhere along the way, these young people were told by teachers that who they are in their writing ought to be divorced from who they are on their phones, or as the writer Grace Paley may have said, with their families and on their streets. They know a private "I" who experiences devotion and frustration. I see them text in class and talk and laugh and sometimes cry in the halls. They wear band T-shirts, often from my era, so I assume they have taste. I watch them read.

But no matter who they are in private, when I first encounter their writing, they use only the public passive voice: The text was read. The test was taken.

It's never: I read the text. I took the test. And it is never ever: I loved the text with queer devotion!

It's true that a student's writing style isn't everything and that much of what we call good writing cannot be taught. (Bad writing apparently has been.) One can be devoted to something — a band from the '90s, surfing, YHWH— without being able to put that devotion into words.

But my experience with students has me worried that years of "texts being read" and "tests being taken" have created the sense in them that whatever they're devoted to doesn't matter much to the rest of us — so long as they know the answers to our questions, so long as they pass the test. Writing so passively and with what they've been taught is appropriate and "objective" distance from topics they often seem disinterested in, these young people signal to me that they're still waiting for something important or real to happen to them.

Perhaps they feel that only someone who has lived through something momentous — like the teenagers who survived the Parkland, Fla., shooting — has earned the right to be heard. It's hard to imagine any of those young activists writing, "The rally was held because Congress was lobbied and guns were purchased."

But what about those queer devotions and frustrations, experiences and ideas that have stirred an individual heart into peculiarity?

In a **1-2 page essay (250- 500 words)**, select **ONE adjective that serves as both title and argument for your essay**. Using first person, concrete details and examples from your life, and as much creativity and risk you can muster up at the end of summer, tell us how that **ONE word defines you**. The word can be positive or negative; however, if you chose a negative word think about how it could actually be positive (ex. Selfish—while often seen as a negative attribute, being selfish can create tremendous opportunities for success and, in practical terms, increase survival).

You may be serious or silly; sarcastic or literal; irreverent or cautious; you pick the tone that works best for you. **This is a writing sample; however, it should reflect your best effort.**

PART II: READING CHALLENGE

According to the College Board, “[a]t the heart of an AP English and Composition course is the reading of various texts...[w]hile writing represents a significant component of this course, the core skill required is the ability to read well. In reading another writer’s work, students must be able to address four fundamental questions about composition: What is being said? To whom is it being said? How is it being said? [and] Why is it being said?”

We will spend the entire year wrestling with these questions so we would like for you to spend time this summer reading for pleasure and with purpose.

Over the years, teachers have heard—again and again—that students don’t read because they don’t have time; however valid that argument is we would like to challenge you to read **WHAT YOU WANT** this summer: blogs, newspaper articles, essays, fiction and non-fiction books, memoirs, comics, poems, etc.

We would like to challenge you to do so on a regular basis (for those who like things quantified—20 minutes a day is a good rule of thumb).

You must keep track of what you read in a **composition notebook**. **This notebook—your Reader’s Response Journal—will be used throughout the school year.**

READING LOG REQUIREMENTS:

- **9 entries (one per week of summer) in a composition notebook**
- **Each entry should include the author’s name, title of the piece, and your personal reaction to its overall argument.**
 - **Please do not summarize what you’ve read; instead, tell us how the piece made you FEEL. What did it encourage you to believe or do? What did it make you think about? Did you enjoy it?**
- **Entries should be roughly a half page in length.**
- **Entries can be on one book you read throughout the summer or a variety of texts.**

This is an assignment that you will—as trite as it sounds—get as much out of it as you put in. We challenge you to read diversely and intensely, doing so will set you up for this course and—fingers crossed—remind you why reading matters.

Here are some favorites* and some selections that often accompany AP Lang**. This is not an exhaustive list and you do not have to read from it, but if you are looking for something and find yourself lost, one of these might work:

*When Breath Becomes Air** (memoir)
*The Hate You Give*** (fiction)
The Thing About Jellyfish (YA fiction)*
*Americanah** (fiction)
*Educated, A Memoir**
*Just Mercy*** (non-fiction)
*Between the World and Me*** (memoir)
*Evicted*** (non-fiction)
*Me Talk Pretty One Day*** (memoir)
Into Thin Air or *Into the Wild*** (non-fiction)
*Outliers*** (non-fiction)
*Freakonomics*** (non-fiction)
*Fast Food Nation** and ** (non-fiction)
*The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*** (non-fiction)

*Nickel and Dimed*** (non-fiction)
Unbroken or *Seabiscuit* * and ** (non-fiction)
*Silent Spring*** (non-fiction)
*The Devil in the White City*** (non-fiction)
*The Glass Castle** and ** (memoir)
*Persepolis*** (graphic novel)
*Maus** and ** (graphic novel)
*The Goldfinch** (fiction)
*Salvage the Bones** or *Sing, Unburied, Sing** (fiction)
*Cutting for Stone** (fiction)
*The Dutch House** (fiction)
*Their Eyes Were Watching God** (fiction)
*Calvin and Hobbes—any collection** (comic)
*Any Harry Potter** (fiction)