

AP LANG SUMMER READING 2025

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 the first week of school. If you do not submit to 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 2 page essay (500ish 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. This means you should proofread! Sloppiness will not be rewarded.

PART II: PODCAST CHALLENGE

Your podcast log SHOULD BE SAVED IN A WORD or GOOGLE DOC. We will be submitting it to turnitin.com the first week of school. If you do not submit to turnitin.com, you will not receive credit for your summer reading assignment.

To help you become more knowledgeable about the world around you we'd like you to listen to at least **8 podcast episodes** this summer. Believe it or not, being a consumer of podcasts can serve you well in this class. The purpose of this assignment is to give you a wider range of evidence to draw from for the AP Lang Argument essay, so you should pick stuff that you think might help on possible argument prompts.

While we've provided the links to these podcasts, please note that you can get all of these free on various apps (Apple podcasts, Spotify, Podbean, Stitcher, Google Podcasts etc.), and it is probably better just to search for them on a podcast app. Truthfully, there are so many great podcasts. This list doesn't even begin to scratch the surface. **You are not required to select from this list.** If you don't see something here that sparks your interest, just search around for something that does.

Also, some of these come with a content/language warning. If you get offended, move on, or don't, sometimes it's good to be uncomfortable.

You must keep track of what you listen to in a podcast log, which will be submitted digitally the first week of school.

PODCAST LOG REQUIREMENTS:

- **8 entries in a Word/Google document**
- **Each entry should include the title of the podcast, the name of the episode and your personal reaction to its overall argument.**
 - **Please do not just summarize what you've heard; 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 at least a half page in length but no more than a page.**
- **Entries can be on one podcast you followed throughout the summer OR a variety.**

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 listen diversely and intensely, doing so will set you up for this course and—fingers crossed—make you more aware of the world around you.

Here are some recommended podcasts. This is not an exhaustive list and you do not have to listen from it, but if you are looking for something and find yourself lost, one of these might work:

1. Throughline: <https://www.npr.org/podcasts/510333/throughline> The past is never past. Every headline has a history. Join us every week as we go back in time to understand the present. These are stories you can feel and sounds you can see from the moments that shaped our world.
2. [30 for 30](#): From ESPN. Original audio documentaries from the makers of the acclaimed 30 for 30 film series, featuring stories from the world of sports and beyond. The show offers captivating storytelling for sports fans and general interest listeners alike, going beyond the field to explore how sports, competition, athleticism and adventure affect our lives and our world.
3. [The Biology of Superheroes](https://thebiologyofsuperheroespodcast.podbean.com/): <https://thebiologyofsuperheroespodcast.podbean.com/> Episodes examine the intersection of science and superheroes—learn about the biology behind Antman and The Upside Down; the psychology behind the Hulk; and the bio-ethics of Wakanda
4. Codeswitch: <https://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/> Race and identity, remixed.
5. [Stuff You Missed in History Class](#): Join Holly and Tracy as they bring you the greatest and strangest Stuff You Missed In History Class in this podcast.

6. [Stuff You Should Know](#): Over 1400 episodes about stuff you should know. Actually, if you google "HowStuffWorks" They have tons of different podcasts on lots of cool stuff. Not every episode is going to work for AP Argument, but the ones that do work, work well.
7. In the Dark Season 2: <https://www.apmreports.org/in-the-dark/season-two> Curtis Flowers has been tried six times for the same crime. For more than 20 years, Flowers has maintained his innocence. He's won appeal after appeal, but every time, the prosecutor just tries the case again. What does the evidence reveal? And why does the justice system ignore the prosecutor's record and keep Flowers on death row? Season 1 is interesting too, but Season 2 is the gold standard.
8. The Rabbit Hole Podcast: <https://www.nytimes.com/column/rabbit-hole> What is the internet doing to us? The Times tech columnist Kevin Roose discovers what happens when our lives move online.
 - a. Content/language warning with this one.
9. Uncivil: <https://gimletmedia.com/shows/uncivil> A history podcast where we go back to the time our divisions turned to war (The Civil War), and bring you stories left out of the official history.
10. White Lies: <https://www.npr.org/podcasts/510343/white-lies> Summary: In 1965, Rev. James Reeb was murdered in Selma, Alabama. Three men were tried and acquitted, but no one was ever held to account. Fifty years later, two journalists from Alabama return to the city where it happened, expose the lies that kept the murder from being solved and uncover a story about guilt and memory that says as much about America today as it does about the past.
11. 1619: <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/23/podcasts/1619-podcast.html> Summary: An audio series on how slavery has transformed America, connecting past and present through the oldest form of storytelling.
12. The Argument: <https://www.nytimes.com/column/the-argument> Three journalists, one conservative, one moderate, and one liberal, discuss various political and cultural issues of the day.
13. Revisionist History: <http://revisionisthistory.com/> Welcome to *Revisionist History*, a podcast from Malcolm Gladwell and Pushkin Industries. Each week for 10 weeks, *Revisionist History* will go back and reinterpret something from the past: an event, a person, an idea. Something overlooked. Something misunderstood. *Because sometimes the past deserves a second chance.*
14. [Nice White Parents](#): From Serial and The New York Times: "Nice White Parents" looks at the 60-year relationship between white parents and the public school down the block. Think you know about school desegregation? Well, whatever you think you know is probably wrong.
15. [On Being](#): A Peabody Award-winning public radio show and podcast. What does it mean to be human? How do we want to live? And who will we be to each other? Each week a new discovery about the immensity of our lives.
16. Good Podcasts for keeping up on recent news.
 - a. [The Daily](#)
 - b. [Up, First](#)
17. [Extra Credit with EverDink](#): Haverdink and Everly dissect complex topics that influence the lives of our students both now and in the future.