

## AP English Language and Composition

### Summer Assignment 2022

**Summary:** Stuff on this summer assignment will help you prepare for this class, which will prepare you for life. Do Tasks 1 and 2, choosing one option from each of the two lists. Take notes on it or come prepared to use your observations/reflections for an assignment during the first two weeks of school.

AP Language plunges you into the matters we're all dealing with right now. It aims to give you the tools to cut through the junk that pours into our ears and onto our screens. It gives you tools to make your voice heard and respected. And it makes you think about how writing is crafted the way it is and *why* it is crafted the way it is. This class is all about understanding how you're being sold what you believe and how you should adjust your methods for persuading others. This class will help you be a more informed reader, thoughtful conversationalist, critical thinker, and enlightened citizen. It will strengthen skills that will serve you your whole life.

We don't deal with much fiction in this class, but we do deal with some of the most powerful writing ever put to page (and spoken to ears), speeches that moved armies, doctrines that shaped nations, ideas that built cultures. We'll listen to tyrants and kings, presidents and activists, enslaved peoples and poet laureates. We will listen to those who are famous for their words and those whose words are often ignored. You will be a more well-rounded thinker and citizen when we're all done.

Keep in mind, too, that this class deals with a variety of topics, from politics to policy, philosophy to science, sociology to psychology. It is going to expose you to worldviews you haven't seen, opinions you've been taught to disagree with, and ideas that might make you uncomfortable. Which is the point. That's our world. I won't throw hot button political debates in front of you and say, "Now fight." That's the antithesis of this class. But I will always expect a willingness to learn from unfamiliar worlds and views, to listen to those you don't want to listen to, to think critically about things you once thought were set-in-stone fact. That's what academia is. And it's the lack of that sort of teaching and learning that is at the core of our modern problems. I encourage you to look beyond perspectives align with your own in this class, that's how you become an informed reader who can make the best decisions for your life and belief system.

Your summer enrichment activities will help build your knowledge of history and the world around you. It's difficult for students to analyze texts if they don't understand historical zeitgeists or current issues.

So, here are your activity options. *Please note that you are not doing all of these.* Treat this like a menu with meal with multiple courses. Look at the menu, then make your decision based on what suits your tastes. Enjoy your choices, don't feel married to any of them, and do as many that interest you! You'll be better for it.

## Task 1 (choose at least one) *Broadening your Horizons: The Present*

*This is a summer-long (hopefully life-long) task to help you know what's happening in the world. Knowledge of current events in a class dealing with persuasion is a must. Sophistication as a thinker and as a writer does not just come naturally. Habits need to be formed to build your repertoire of examples and support. Here is where you commit to learning about what's going on in the world with reliable sources.*

**Option 1:** Subscribe to a **current events podcast** and listen to its newly released episodes.

None of these are too long, and all of them make for great background listening while you're doing chores or commuting somewhere. [Time Out \(UK-based\) has a list of a few great current events podcasts.](#) [HERE is another website](#) that gives a list of some of the more popular options out there. These are downloadable on your phone through a variety of sites/apps.

**Option 2: Watch documentaries** on current events/situations

These are often very well made and extremely informative. [Frontline](#), from PBS, is a long-running documentary series that explores timely and important issues using some serious critical journalism. [CLICK HERE](#) to see a list of the best documentaries on Netflix (no, Tiger King doesn't count). [CLICK HERE](#) to see a list of stellar politics documentaries. And [CLICK HERE](#) to see the documentaries that have won the Academy Award. Please make sure your chosen documentary is **modern** (past 20 or so years).

**Option 3: Read a memoir or biography**

Remember, your choice should be a current one. Think 20 years back or newer. To expand your understanding of experiences outside of yourself, read something from an author whose gender or ethnicity is different from your own. Click [HERE](#) for a list of best memoirs as evaluated by *The New York Times*. (You may need to make a *New York Times* account). [HERE](#) is another list of bests. You can also Google search "top selling memoirs." Amazon has lots of recommendations.

**Option 4:** Read a non-biography piece of **non-fiction**.

I will provide a document (that you will see in this class a few times) of some very good non-fiction that you can pick from. There is a bit of a bonus to this option: you can use whatever book you read for a major essay that is due late in the year. Non-Fiction [Book List '20-21.docx](#)

- You get a free book if you sign up for Audible (you'll need to cancel to avoid the monthly charge). You can also download the free "Libby" app to get books from Sno-Isle Libraries.

**Option 5:** Follow the local news, and, when school draws near, **write a letter to the editor**.

Choose to write to [The Seattle Times](#) (click "Contact the Newsroom" and then click "a Letter to the Opinion Editor"), the [Snohomish Tribune](#), or [The Herald](#) (see "[Letters to the Editor](#)"). This is an opinion write; just make sure it is discussing a current **local** topic. You should read a few of the letters from other people before submitting your own so you get a sense for what the paper actually picks (they don't publish all of them). Save a copy so you can share it with us. If you get a response, please keep that for sharing too!

**Option 6: Write a letter to our school board** about a local, current topic that affects our school or you.

You should read opinion letters to newspapers to see how they are written, how their tone is handled, and how passion meets logic. This, too, is an opinion piece. Click [HERE](#) to get the contact info for our school board members. Send your letter to each of the members (click on their names for their emails; also include [Kim.Radek@sno.wednet.edu](mailto:Kim.Radek@sno.wednet.edu)). If you get a response, please keep that for sharing!

## Task 2 (choose at least 1) *Broadening your horizons: The Past*

*This class doesn't just deal with the present. And, of course, the present isn't what it is without the past. Many of the things we do in this class revolve around history, about contexts that now define our context. You will hear these two words a TON in this class: **exigence** and **zeitgeist**. **Exigence** means the cause of the need for writing something or giving a speech. **Zeitgeist** is "the spirit of the age." Each of those are vital to creating sophistication in your thoughts and arguments. When you can see the **why** behind a piece, you can understand it so much better. Seeping yourself in history gives you SUCH better reasons behind your thoughts!*

### **Option 1: Subscribe and listen to a podcast about history**

Listen to episodes when they are released. None of them are too long, and all of them make for great background listening while you're doing chores or commuting somewhere. [HERE](#) is a website that gives a bit of data for the top, most popular options out there. These are downloadable on your phone through a variety of sites/apps.

### **Option 2: Watch Historical Documentaries**

[American Experience](#), from PBS, provides rich storytelling as it explains well-known, and lesser-known, events, situations, and people in American history. Another option, if you want to focus on biographical documentaries is [American Masters](#), also from PBS, and also fantastic. (Are you sensing a theme?) There are other well-made and informative historical documentaries – but probably not from The History Channel. [CLICK HERE](#) to see a list of Netflix documentaries. [CLICK HERE](#) to see another list of strong historical documentaries. And [CLICK HERE](#) to see the documentaries that have won the Academy Award (please stick to this decade for this "task"!). Stick to documentaries that are about events and situations that happened at **least 30 years ago**. There are plenty on YouTube, too; just search "historical documentaries." Avoid prehistory or anything pre-1590.

### **Option 3: Read a biography or memoir about a historical figure**

Remember, your choice should be an about someone in history, think 30 years back or older. (Avoid prehistory or anything pre-1590.) To expand your horizons, read something from an author whose gender or ethnicity is different from your own. [HERE](#) is a list of bestsellers, which are often such because they are engaging. And [HERE](#) is Amazon's top sellers in this category.

- You get a free book if you sign up for Audible (you'll need to cancel to avoid the monthly charge. You can also download the free "Libby" app to get books from Sno-Isle Libraries.

### **Option 4: Read a non-biography piece of historical non-fiction**

Bonus for this option: you will probably be able to use whatever book you read as a source for an essay that you will write later this year. For those of you who like to plan ahead, this is a good choice. Here is a solid list from [Book Riot](#). This [list from LitHub](#) is good, too. [Look here](#) for suggestions by people who use GoodReads. I've enjoyed reading Timothy Egan's *The Worst Hard Time* (about the dust bowl) and *The Big Burn* (about wildfires, the inception of the U.S. Forest Service, and a man named Polaski).

## What you bring to school after you listened to, watched, or read

What you do this summer will be used in the second week of school (the first week of school is only 3 days, remember). My suggestion is to **keep a journal or written reflections** that you'd be able to use for our in-class tasks and discussions. You will be able to use whatever you've written down/recorded. You don't need quotes with MLA formatting or anything like that, but you should **keep track of major ideas and major arguments**. There is no page min/max, and you may type or handwrite this. Heck, you could even **bring in a copy of what you read with sticky notes sticking out of it**. Just make sure you have access to your notes of your observations during our class discussions. Honestly, please write your thoughts and observations down when you listen, watch, or read, or right after. While your brain is a young one, it won't remember all of your insightful, beautiful thoughts by the time you're in class.

Consider the following when keeping track of your work (you don't have to answer all of these, but they will help you show what you know):

- What should I have learned from this?
- What did I learn from this?
- How could I use this to be a better functioning member of society?
- What led to my interest in my task choices?
- What led to the author's need to write/create what he/she did?

I look forward to seeing your work and your thinking! This class, hopefully, will help you in more ways than you can keep track of, and I hope this is the start to that growth!

[Here is a video on the basics of what Rhetoric is. If you don't know, it's worth a quick watch. It's kinda what this class is all about...](#)

Please email me at [rochelle.feil-adamowsky@sno.wednet.edu](mailto:rochelle.feil-adamowsky@sno.wednet.edu) if you have questions.