

# AP Language and Composition

## Suggested Summer Learning 2023

Welcome to your first taste of AP Language and Composition! The goal of this class is to help you become stronger readers, writers, and thinkers by looking at how and why writers make the choices they do. This course focuses on the exploration of nonfiction texts, the majority of which will be short essays, speeches, videos, etc. The best part of this class is that what we read comes from people with a wide variety of experiences and whose pieces were written in a wide variety of contexts. Understanding those contexts is one of the first ways we understand a text, and these summer activities will help you with that.

Another benefit of these summer activities is that they will help you expand your background knowledge, which will help you analyze more thoroughly and make stronger arguments. Moreover, expanding your background knowledge will help you become a more informed citizen of our world.

**Finally, if you do these activities, you will have a head start for our first assignments in the first two weeks of school.**

Whatever your summer plans are – work, travel, video games, spending time with friends and family – pay attention to what is going on around you in your community and the world. Have fun. Be safe and I'll see you in the fall!

Watching, listening to, and reading from podcasts, programs, and books from the lists below will help you learn more about the world. By the way, when writing one of the main styles of essays you will write in AP Lang, the argument essay, you can use nearly anything for your evidence. Considering the following categories will be helpful.

### C.H.O.R.E.S

- **Current Events**
- **History & Art**
- **Our Experiences**
- **Reading**
- **Entertainment/Pop Culture**
- **Sports & Science**

**Note:** Some of the podcasts, documentaries, and books listed below may include sensitive content, so do your research before reading and heed content warnings.

For nonfiction books categorized by topic, see the list at the bottom of this document.

Nearly all of the descriptions of these are quoted from the show's descriptions.

\*Podcasts, documentaries and books with an asterisk (or more) are my **personal recommendations**.

## Current Events

### Podcasts

- \* [RadioLab](#) -- Radiolab is on a curiosity bender. We ask deep questions and use investigative journalism to get the answers. A given episode might whirl you through science, legal history, and

into the home of someone halfway across the world.

- \* [Throughline](#) – Ramtin Arablouei and Rund Abdelfatah, the hosts of NPR’s new podcast *Throughline*, are here to remind us that we must heed the past as we consider what it means to live in the present.
- [Frontline Dispatch](#) -- FRONTLINE Executive Producer Raney Aronson-Rath sits down with series filmmakers for probing conversations about the investigative journalism that drives each FRONTLINE documentary and the stories that shape our time.
- [Global News Podcast](#) – The day’s top stories from BBC News. Delivered twice a day on weekdays, daily at weekends
- [Dear Hank & John](#) – Hosts John and Hank Green (authors and YouTubers) offer both humorous and heartfelt advice about life’s big and small questions. They bring their personal passions to each episode by sharing the week’s news from Mars (the planet) and AFC Wimbledon (the fourth-tier English football club).
- [Let’s Be Real with Sammy Jaye](#) -- Let’s Be Real, hosted by GenZ change maker Sammy Jaye, is all about having powerful and candid conversations with celebrities, activists, athletes and influencers, while discussing real-life issues – from mental health and political activism to pop culture and more.
- [This American Life](#) – With fascinating, in-depth reporting on the phenomena that make up our lives, This American Life is a great family listen. A public-radio institution, it features slices of life that center around themes that unite them.
- [Wait, Wait...Don’t Tell Me!](#) -- NPR's weekly news quiz. Have a laugh and test your knowledge with today's funniest comedians. And if you can't get enough, try our new mid-week show, Everyone & Their Mom. Each Wednesday, host Emma Choi takes the story everyone's talking about and uses it as an excuse to hang out with culture makers, Wait Wait panelists, and hilarious new comedians.
- [Short Wave](#) -- New discoveries, everyday mysteries, and the science behind the headlines — all in about 10 minutes. It's science for everyone, using a lot of creativity and a little humor. Join hosts Emily Kwong, Aaron Scott and Regina Barber for science on a different wavelength.

### Documentaries

- \* [Frontline](#), from PBS, is a long-running documentary series that explores timely and important issues using some serious critical journalism.
- [Independent Lens](#) hosts documentaries by independent filmmakers from around the world. It’s another PBS offering with strong, reliable, interesting information.
- [Click here](#) to see a list of stellar politics documentaries.
- [Click here](#) to see the documentaries that have won the Academy Award.

## History & Arts

### Podcasts

- [Backstory](#) – U.S. historians Ed Ayers, Brian Balogh, Nathan Connolly and Joanne Freeman of [Virginia Humanities](#) endeavor to look at today’s headlines through the lens of American history. They assure their listeners that these are the stories they “want to learn,” not the ones they “had to learn” in history class.
- [Dan Carlin’s Hardcore History](#) – He dramatically narrates some of the most epic moments in human history with such color that Hollywood producers looking for new material ought to take notice.
- [More Perfect](#) – Each episode of More Perfect delves into a specific Supreme Court case and tries to get inside the justice’s heads to understand why they made the decisions that have had

decades- or even centuries-long ripple effects in American society.

- [Presidential](#) – Lillian Cunningham dives into the life and legacy of a different American president. The show often focuses on the tension between how we perceive these historical figures and who they actually were — as in one running joke in which Cunningham asks historians what it would be like to go on a blind date with various presidents.
- [Revisionist History Malcolm Gladwell](#) – His podcast reexamines “overlooked” moments in history, like why a famed basketball player made the illogical decision to favor a worse free throw form or why an artist who broke the glass ceiling only ended up reconfirming gender biases. Gladwell comes alive when tackling societal injustices that are particularly irksome to him.
- [Not Past It](#) – Ever wonder why the world is the way it is? Like, 1000s of years of humanity and this is the version of the world we came up with. This one? Same. Each Wednesday on Not Past It host Simone Polanen will pick a moment from that very same week in history -- and tell you how it shaped our lives today.
- [This is Where It Gets Interesting](#) – Here’s Where It Gets Interesting finds the stories of America you probably haven’t heard. Host Sharon McMahon, a longtime teacher and one of today’s most influential voices, will ignite your curiosity about the fascinating stuff that wasn’t in history textbooks. She’s joined by notable thought leaders who share insights about history, culture, and politics, and inspire us to grow into more thoughtful, well-informed citizens.
- [Lore](#) – Lore is a bi-weekly podcast (now also a TV show and book series) about dark historical tales. Each episode explores the mysterious creatures, tragic events, and unusual places that fill the pages of history. Because sometimes the truth is more frightening than fiction.

## Documentaries

- \* [American Experience, from PBS](#), provides rich storytelling as it explores well-known, and lesser-known, events, situations, and people in American history.
- If you want to focus on biographical documentaries check out [American Masters](#), also from PBS, and also fantastic.
- [Independent Lens](#) hosts documentaries by independent filmmakers from around the world, some of which are historical documentaries.

## Podcasts

- \* [The Moth](#) – Since its launch in 1997, The Moth has presented thousands of true stories, told live and without notes, to standing-room-only crowds worldwide. Moth storytellers stand alone, under a spotlight, with only a microphone and a roomful of strangers. The storyteller and the audience embark on a high-wire act of shared experience which is both terrifying and exhilarating.

## Entertainment/Pop Culture

### Podcasts

- [Mogule](#) – The series covers the life and death of Chris Lighty, a manager who represented [Missy Elliott](#), [50 Cent](#) and Busta Rhymes, and, in following his story, traces the history of hip-hop. Host Reggie Ossé, a former industry lawyer who knew Lighty, brings passion to the story of his old friend.
- [Armchair Expert](#) – Hi, I’m Dax Shepard, and invite you to join me as I explore other people’s stories. We will celebrate, above all, the challenges and setbacks that ultimately lead to growth and betterment. What qualifies me for such an endeavor? More than a decade of sobriety, a degree in Anthropology and four years of improv training. I will attempt to discover human “truths” without any laboratory work, clinical trials or data collection. I will be, in the great tradition of 16th- century scientists, an Armchair Expert.
- [Cocaine & Rhinestones](#) – This obsessively researched, essayistic show examines the history of

country music and some of its icons. Even those who have never donned a cowboy hat will appreciate the sordid and controversial history of the genre.

- [Smartless](#) – "SmartLess" with Jason Bateman, Sean Hayes, and Will Arnett is a podcast that connects and unites people from all walks of life to learn about shared experiences through thoughtful dialogue and organic hilarity. A nice surprise: in each episode of SmartLess, one of the hosts reveals his mystery guest to the other two.

## Sports

### Podcasts

- [30 for 30](#) – This audio spinoff of ESPN's famed 30 for 30 documentary series, hosted by Jody Avirgan, explores sports stories from history exclusively in the podcast format. Most episodes cover a different sports saga, with the exception of a few mini-series that dive deep into one person or topic.
- [Nobody Asked Us With Des & Kara](#) - on Spotify Once competitors and Olympic teammates, now friends and podcast partners, Des Linden and Kara Goucher share their hot takes about all things running with a little bit of life-stuff sprinkled in too. Come for the insights on running and stay for the inspiration from two legends in the sport. No filter needed.
- [The Lowe Post](#) – ESPN's Zach Lowe talks to various basketball people about various basketball things basketball.

## Science

### Podcasts

- \*\* [Science Vs.](#) -- Science Vs takes on fads, trends, and the opinionated mob to find out what's fact, what's not, and what's somewhere in between.
- \* [Hidden Brain](#) – Host Shankar Vidantam explores the unconscious patterns that drive human behavior and questions that lie at the heart of our complex and changing world.
- \* [Invisibilia](#) -- Unseeable forces control human behavior and shape our ideas, beliefs, and assumptions. Invisibilia—Latin for invisible things—fuses narrative storytelling with science that will make you see your own life differently.
- \* [RadioLab](#) - Radiolab is on a curiosity bender. We ask deep questions and use investigative journalism to get the answers. A given episode might whirl you through science, legal history, and into the home of someone halfway across the world.
- [Ologies](#) – Alie Ward is a science correspondent who uses comedy to explore science.
- [Short Wave](#) -- New discoveries, everyday mysteries, and the science behind the headlines — all in about 10 minutes. It's science for everyone, using a lot of creativity and a little humor. Join hosts Emily Kwong, Aaron Scott and Regina Barber for science on a different wavelength.
- \* [This Podcast Will Kill You](#) -- Grad students studying disease ecology, Erin and Erin found themselves disenchanted with the insular world of academia. They wanted a way to share their love of epidemics and weird medical mysteries with the world, not just colleagues. Plus, who doesn't love an excuse to ... have a chat about pus and poop?
- [Science Friday](#) – Science Friday, or "Sci Fri" to the initiated, is another podcast for science lovers: It focuses more on current events, and the scientific concepts that are in the news.
- [The Skeptic's Guide to the Universe](#) – The Skeptics' Guide to the Universe is produced by SGU Productions, LLC – dedicated to promoting critical thinking, reason, and the public understanding of science through online and other media.

- [Curiosity Daily](#) – The award-winning Curiosity Daily podcast from CuriosityDaily.com will help you get smarter about the world around you. In less than 10 minutes, you'll get a unique mix of research-based life hacks, the latest science and technology news, and more. Nate Bonham and Calli Gade will help you learn about your mind and body, outer space and the depths of the sea, and how history shaped the world into what it is today.
- [I Know Dino: The Big Dinosaur Podcast](#) – The big dinosaur podcast. News, interviews, and discussions about dinosaurs.

### **Documentaries**

- \*\*\* [NOVA](#), from PBS, “is the most popular primetime science series on American television, demystifying the scientific and technological concepts that shape and define our lives, our planet, and our universe.” In short, NOVA is amazing, and also the reason my dog is named Nova!

### **Nonfiction Reading**

[Check out this document for book recommendations.](#)