

## AP English Language and Composition Summer Enrichment

If you have any questions, don't hesitate to email me: [Eric.Benson@sno.wednet.edu](mailto:Eric.Benson@sno.wednet.edu)

So last year was... interesting... to say the least! And this coming year promises to keep the curve balls coming. One thing that doesn't change: the world's need for what this class offers. AP Language plunges you into the matters we're all dealing with right now. It seeks 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. I'm not lying when I say this class is more applicable to any career than likely anything else you've had thus far. From how to think, to how to argue, to how to closely read, the skills you're about to strengthen will serve you your whole life.

We don't deal with much fiction in this class, even though I love that stuff! But we do deal with some of the most powerful writing ever done. Speeches that moved armies, doctrines that shaped nations, ideas that built cultures. We'll listen to tyrants and kings, presidents and activists, slaves 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; to opinions you've been taught to disagree with; to ideas that might make you uncomfortable. That's kinda 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 issues. That said, the options before you will likely get political--heck, they may even offend you. If you are prone to such things, please read reviews about what you are seeking to consume. I encourage you to choose perspectives that don't align with your own in this class, but I want you to be an informed reader making the best decisions for your lifestyle and belief system.

So, here are the links for 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. When you've invested the work and the time, then submit your work. This is *very* different than what we've done in the past, but we are all adjusting to new norms. Enjoy your choices, and do as many that interest you! You'll be better for it.

**Task 1 (choose at least 1). 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 retinue of examples and support. Here is where you commit to learning about what's going on in the world with reliable sources, not the back alleys of the internet or your uncle's Facebook memes from 4chan.*

Option 1: I would like you to subscribe to one of the following podcasts and listen to them 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. Warning: you might get addicted to some podcasts.

Option 2: Documentaries (on Netflix or otherwise). These are often very well made and extremely informative. [CLICK HERE](#) to see an amazing list (no, Tiger King doesn't count). [CLICK HERE](#) to see list 2. And [CLICK HERE](#) to see the documentaries that have won the Academy Award (please stick to this decade for this "task"! ). Stick with **modern** (past 20 or so years) issues for this one, please.

Option 3: Read a memoir! Remember, your choice should be a "current" one. Think 20 years back or newer. As an extra bonus, try to read something from an author whose gender or ethnicity is different from your own! [HERE](#) is a great list (you *may* need to make a *New York Times* account). [HERE](#) is another great list. You can also Google search "top selling memoirs." Amazon has an amazing list!

- Remember, you get a free book if you sign up for Audible (you'll need to cancel to avoid the monthly charge, but that's easy)! You can also "Libby," an app that is free and you can get books from Sno-Isle.

Option 4: Read a non-memoir 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. It's nice to have this as an option. My long-term plan kids, this is a solid choice! Enjoy the list. It is awesome: Non-Fiction [Book List '20-21.docx](#)

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Option 5: Follow the local news, and, at when school draws near, write a letter to the editor of the [Seattle Times](#) (click "Contact the Newsroom" and then click "a Letter to the Opinion Editor"), [the Snohomish Times](#), 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 also turn it in as your Task 1 submission, of course. If you get a response, please keep that for sharing!

Option 6: Write a letter to our school board about a local, current topic that affects our school or you (again, 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. [HERE](#) is where you can do that. 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. The first one is "what's the cause of the need for writing something or giving a speech, and the second one is "the spirit of the age." Each of those are vital to sophistication. When you can see the why behind a piece, you can understand it so much better. Seeing yourself in history gives you SUCH better reasons behind your thoughts! Don't be like my 1st grade son: "Do you know why there are riots on the street, Luke?" "Because." He doesn't understand the world that lead up to this moment. This task will help with that. He would be a prodigy genius child if he dropped facts about the history of race inequality.*

Option 1: I would like you to subscribe to one of the following podcasts concerning history and listen to them 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. Warning: you might get addicted to some podcasts.

Option 2: Historical Documentaries (on Netflix or otherwise). These are often very well made and extremely informative. [CLICK HERE](#) to see an amazing list. [CLICK HERE](#) to see list 2. And [CLICK HERE](#) to see the documentaries that have won the Academy Award (please stick to this decade for this "task!"). Stick with **documentaries that are of "old stuff"** (at least 30 years old) for this one, please. There are plenty on YouTube, too; just search "historical documentaries." Please avoid prehistoric or really anything older than 1700. This class touches on that stuff, but that's a bit too old for what we deal with.

Option 3: Read a memoir about a historical figure! Remember, your choice should be a "old" one. Think 30 years back or older (Again, avoid prehistory or anything pre-1700). As an extra bonus, try to read something from an author whose gender or ethnicity is different from your own! [HERE](#) is a great list. And [HERE](#) is Amazon's top sellers in this category!

- Remember, you get a free book if you sign up for Audible (you'll need to cancel to avoid the monthly charge, but that's easy)! You can also "Libby," an app that is free and you can get books from Sno-Isle.

Option 4: Read a non-memoir piece of non-fiction that deals with history. 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. It's nice to have this as an option. My long-term plan kids, this is a solid choice! [HERE](#) is a great list of the top historical non-fiction.

## What do I do with these tasks?

What you do this summer will be used in the second week of school (the first week of school is only 3 days, remember). If I were you, I would keep some sort of 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 hand write this. You should have the tasks clearly identified and easy to identify (Task 1, Option 3 and Task 2, Option 1... for instance). You'll want these on paper, so if you type them, print them. Consider the following when keeping track of your work (you don't have to answer all of these, but they will help when you go to "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!

And here are some links that you might find helpful in the coming weeks/months:

[What high school juniors should be doing for college right now!](#)

[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...](#)