

AP Language and Composition (Junior English)

Text: No textbook will be required for this course

Required: [*The Slaughterhouse Five*](#) by Kurt Vonnegut

Choose one: [*Tribe*](#) by Sebastian Junger

[*When You Are Engulfed in Flames*](#) by David Sedaris

[*Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience*](#) by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi

[*River of Doubt: Theodore Roosevelt's Darkest Journey*](#) by Candice Millard

[*Plato: Five Dialogues*](#) by John M. Cooper

[*Amusing Ourselves to Death*](#) by Neil Postman

[*The Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals*](#) by Michael Pollen

Summer Assignments

Assignment 1: Literary Analysis

Read: [*The Slaughterhouse Five*](#) by Kurt Vonnegut

Write: Compose a 2 – 3 page literary analysis essay on the novel. Your essay should assert and develop support for a thesis explaining 1) what the author of your text was trying to do (think “theme”) and 2) how she crafted the elements of literature in the novel to achieve that purpose. Consider plot, setting, character, and any other significant elements you see working in the novel.

Due: Submit to Canvas by July 29

Assignment 2: Seminar Prep

Read: One of the Choice Books

Prepare: As you read your book, annotate it. Identify key ideas and major supporting details. Make sure you understand key concepts that the author works to develop and that you are able to communicate these verbally. Practice by telling your family members what you are reading about and what you think of the ideas presented. Ask them the questions that you are considering as you read.

Then, prepare for seminar by identifying and writing a brief response to five passages in the book. Select a passage which connects to each of the five questions below:

1. What problems do we have to deal with as human beings?
2. To what extent do human cultures and societies help us to deal with these problems? To what extent do they make these problems worse?
3. What solutions are available to us to solve these problems?
4. What obstacles might get in the way of these solutions?
5. To what extent is it possible and likely that we can solve the great problems that we face as human beings?

Your written response should clearly connect the passage to the question and analyze what the author believes and why.

Though written on a wide variety of subjects, there are many deep connections which link our books. Your grade for the opening seminar will depend wholly on your ability to make those connections, which will depend on your thorough knowledge of the book and your creative critical thinking.

Due: Submit to Canvas by July 29

Assignment 3: The Pure Essay

Read: One of the Choice Books

Write: Believe it or not, essays were not invented by teachers who wanted to torture students. In fact, the genre dating back to the 1500's when the great French philosopher Michael de Montaigne published a collection titled *Essais*. Indeed, the word "essay" is taken from the French verb "essayer" which means "to try." And that's exactly what an essay is: an author trying to think systematically about a question or idea and to communicate those thoughts to another. The books you will read may be too long (some of them at least) to qualify as essays in the technical sense, but in each, the author "tries" to argue a perspective or to develop an understanding through question and exploration.

Write an essay in which you try to think systematically about an idea or a question related to your book. First, identify some questions or ideas that the book made you consider. List these. Then, think and, if necessary, read more. You can begin to write as you do this, but spend some time letting the question sit with you and, potentially, exploring it further. Next, create an outline. Now that you have thought about the subject or question, what topics will you need to cover in an essay. If you will argue for a particular perspective, what points will you need to make? Write your outline and submit it with your final essay. Finally write and revise. A good essay should be re-written multiple times to tighten the connections between your ideas as your understanding of the subject grows. Your final work should be focused, well-organized, thoroughly developed with specific details, and should adhere to proper conventions of writing.

Due: Submit to Canvas by July 29