

**AP LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION**  
**SUMMER ASSIGNMENT**

Hello, my bright and eager students!

Welcome to APLAC. I'm excited to work with all of you on this journey in the fall!

In this course, we'll be looking to sharpen and strengthen your critical thinking, reading, and writing skills that you've built over the course of your academic career. This means that both reading and writing nonfiction will be done frequently and thoroughly throughout the year. As with all AP classes, this is meant to be a college level course; be ready to put in the work.

In order to prepare and practice for the school year to come, your summer assignment will focus on reading nonfiction works and handwriting a timed essay in response.

You will need a journal for this class—yes, a physical one. It can be as decorative or as basic as you would like, a leather bound journal or spiral notebook, but it must be something you're ready to use frequently. You'll use this throughout the school year. Please *do not* write your essay in your journal (unless you can easily and cleanly tear it out.) This journal will be for note taking in class.

This assignment can be fun if you let yourself enjoy it. Any student who signs up for any AP English class should already get some enjoyment out of reading and writing—so please, enjoy!

Warmly,  
Ms. Hathaway ([hathawayk@glenrocknj.org](mailto:hathawayk@glenrocknj.org))

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**A. Texts**

*Book Pairings*

You must choose *any* one text from **Column A** and *any* one text from **Column B**. You can select any two, as long as you have one from each column!

COLUMN A	COLUMN B
<p><b><i>In Cold Blood</i> by Truman Capote</b></p> <p><i>true crime; morality, humanity, psychology</i></p>	<p><b><i>On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft</i> by Stephen King</b></p> <p><i>autobiography; the craft of writing, anecdotes</i></p>
<p><b><i>Educated</i> by Tara Westover</b></p> <p><i>memoir; family, being sheltered, upbringing, disillusionment</i></p>	<p><b><i>Bird by Bird</i> by Anne Lamott</b></p> <p><i>reference work; the craft of writing, anecdotes</i></p>
<p><b><i>The Last Lecture</i> by Randy Pausch</b></p> <p><i>biography; the cards we're dealt, life lessons, sickness</i></p>	<p><b><i>They Say, I Say</i> by Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein</b></p> <p><i>reference work; the patterns in academic writing</i></p>
<p><b><i>Into Thin Air</i> by Jon Krakauer</b></p> <p><i>survivalist nonfiction; the elements, individual vs. group, dangerous conditions</i></p>	<p><b><i>On Writing Well: The Classic Guide to Writing Nonfiction</i> by William Zinsser</b></p> <p><i>reference work; the craft of nonfiction writing</i></p>

**Important note:** Please do your own research on these books before selecting your pairing. Some of these texts deal with serious, heavy topics, so you should be comfortable with and prepared for reading the texts. It is **heavily recommended** that you purchase the texts so you can mark them up as you read. It is not sacrilegious to write in a book, so long as it is with intent to attain and retain a deeper understanding of it!

Although the summer essay is only on the book in Column A, **you will be asked to speak about your book choice from Column B**. If you're concerned about not remembering (depending on when you read it over the summer), sticky notes and annotations are helpful ways to keep track of your thoughts on a text!

*Didion Essay*

No matter which pairing you chose from the above texts, you will be reading the essay “On Morality” by Joan Didion. I have included a PDF copy linked [here](#) for you to access.

You **must** print out and mark up this essay. You can use a highlighter, a pencil, a colored pen... whatever makes you happy. Mark up anything that stands out to you; you should be focusing on both the argument that Didion presents and the way in which she presents it.

**You must bring this essay with you to class.**

**B. Handwritten Essay**

*Expectations*

The essay must be written by hand (pen or pencil). Your essay must respond to the prompt, be timed according to the directions in the document, and stapled together. Since this essay is timed, it does not need to be your best work to date; it simply needs to be your best work that you can achieve in 45 minutes by hand.

*Prompt*

Please use the [hyperlink](#) to access the prompt.