

AP COMPOSITION SUMMER ASSIGNMENT

June 2011

Dear AP Composition Student:

Welcome to Advanced Placement Composition! In order to keep your reading and writing skills sharp and to begin your course immediately when you return to school in September, your AP Comp teachers have given you a reading and writing assignment. As a member of a writing group, you owe it to yourself to read and to write as often and as much as possible. To start you on your way, your teachers ask that you complete these activities before the beginning of the school year.

PLEASE BE SURE THAT ALL RESPONSES ARE TYPED AND DOUBLE-SPACED.

1) **Read the editorial pages** of the *New York Times* as part of your daily/weekly reading. An easy way to access the paper is on line at www.nytimes.com. On the **Op-Ed page**, read feature articles and columnists such as Gail Collins, Nicholas Kristof, Bob Herbert, Maureen Dowd, et al. **Maintain a folder** in which you keep special articles, columns, stories, editorials, and political cartoons that focus on **a particular controversial issue** such as gay marriage, health care, war in Afghanistan, abortion, business ethics, global warming and the environment, etc. In the **Sunday edition** of the *New York Times*, read not only the editorial pages in the “Week in Review” section, but also read the magazine section, including the *On Language* column, and articles in *The Way We Live Now* section such as *The Ethicist*. **Cut out applicable articles each week**. In addition, be sure to specifically locate and collect *at least five* articles on **one of the specific issues** listed above or otherwise controversial in nature. You must have at least **3 op-ed articles**, and the **other two articles should be from the following list**: *a political cartoon, a letter to the editor, an objective news article, and a photograph*.

For the five articles/documents chosen, please do the following:

- a. Explain the **thesis or argument** of the document in **two paragraphs**. In doing so, list at least *three quotations* from the article (or mention at least 2-3 details if it is a political cartoon or photograph) that help to support this document’s article.
- b. Include a final paragraph that explains *your reaction* to this document’s argument.

2) **Read *Bird by Bird: Some Instructions on Writing and Life*** by Anne Lamott. It’s a real treat for those who like to write as well as for those who want to learn to write. **Select THREE chapters** from the book and **react to them**. You should **devote at least one paragraph to each chapter** that you choose. **Avoid paraphrasing what the author suggests or discusses**. Instead, **be reflective** on the advice or discussion of writing and **discuss how this chapter would be helpful** to you or how it has even proven true in your past experiences with writing. Please **type** all reactions and **be prepared to submit them to your teacher on the first day of class**.

****Optional/Personal writing:** as an AP student, regular writing is most important. You may want to purchase a journal in which you make weekly entries, which will serve as a springboard for some of the writing you will use throughout the course. Your journal is neither a diary nor a listing of events and appointments--although these may be the starting point for personal comment and reflection. Your journal is, however, a collection or compilation of your personal reactions and interactions with experiences, events, people, readings, etc., which affect you, as well as reactions to the films, literature, and news articles. Consider: How do you feel about the experience? What question(s) do you have? What would you do in similar circumstances? Why are you content, dissatisfied, frustrated, angry, amused, etc., as a result of this experience? Date all entries. Try to give yourself at least five to ten minutes of private time each day to do nothing else but write in your journal. To write is the thing!

****Optional Reading Assignment and Reflection:** learn more about current issues and debatable topics by reading a work of non-fiction. Select one listed below or discover another on your own and read to learn this writer's perspective on a particular topic. In addition, **type a 1-2 page reflection** on how this author enlightened you about a particular topic.

Suggested Summer Reading List
(with descriptions from BarnesandNoble.com)

Chua, Amy *Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother*

All parents want to do what's best for their children. What *Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother* reveals is that the Chinese just have a totally different idea of how to do that.

Diamond, Jared *Guns, Germs and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies*

Jared Diamond argues that geographical and environmental factors shaped the modern world. Societies that had a head start in food production advanced beyond the hunter-gatherer stage, and then developed religion —as well as nasty germs and potent weapons of war —and adventured on sea and land to conquer and decimate preliterate cultures.

Dyer, Geoff *The Ongoing Moment*

Cultural critic Dyer explores the way the visual image affects our understanding of the world.

Gardner, Howard *Multiple Intelligences*

Explores the practical implications and applications of Multiple Intelligences theory--the powerful notion that there are separate human capacities, ranging from musical intelligence to the intelligence involved in self-understanding.

Gladwell, Malcolm *The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference*

The tipping point is that magic moment when an idea, trend, or social behavior crosses a threshold, tips, and spreads like wildfire. Just as a single sick person can start an epidemic of the flu, so too can a small but precisely targeted push cause a fashion trend, the popularity of a new product, or a drop in the crime rate.

Hirsch, E.D. *Cultural Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know*

Hirsch argues that children in the U.S. are being deprived of the basic knowledge that would enable them to function in contemporary society. Includes 5,000 essential facts to know.

Ifill, Gwenn *The Breakthrough*

Ifill explores how politics and race and identity played out in the 2008 Presidential campaign.

Kristof, Nicholas and WuDunn , Sheryl *Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide*

Through inspiring stories of extraordinary women, Kristof and WuDunn show that the most effective way to fight global poverty is to unleash the potential of women. They also offer an uplifting do-it-yourself tool kit for those who want to help.

Levitt, Steven D. and Dubner, Stephen J. *Freakonomics: A Rogue Economist Explores the Hidden Side of Everything*

Through storytelling and wry insight, Levitt and co-author Stephen J. Dubner show that economics is, at root, the study of incentives -- how people get what they want, or need, especially when other people want or need the same thing.

Paul, Ron *Liberty Defined: 50 Essential Issues That Affect Our Freedom*

Dr. Paul writes that to believe in liberty is not to believe in any particular social and economic outcome. It is to trust in the spontaneous order that emerges when the state does not intervene in human volition and human cooperation.

Wilson, Edward O. *The Future of Life*

An impassioned call for quick and decisive action to save Earth's biological heritage, and a plan to achieve that rescue.

Remember that **all work must be brought to school on the first day of class**. All responses should be highly introspective and detailed, reflecting work on an AP level. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to find us in the English workroom or telephone us at 203-3600, ext. 3231.

We look forward to working with you this coming school year in this very engaging course.

Sincerely,

Ms. Boulter, Ms. Gulitti, Mr. Kramer, Mr. Romano

Name _____

Date _____

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On the first day of school, your teachers ask that you bring all of your summer work to class. Please remember that all responses must be typed and will be collected.

SUMMER CHECKLIST

BIRD BY BIRD by Anne Lamott

personally reflected on **three chapters

**typed responses (one full paragraph per each piece of advice)

Question for discussion: _____

FIVE articles from the *NY Times* on **one** current issue

include **3 op-ed articles, and **two other documents**, such as political cartoons, etc.

**include the analysis of each document's thesis and your reaction to it

Question for discussion: _____

OPTIONAL ACTIVITY: A PERSONAL JOURNAL

OPTIONAL READING AND REFLECTION