

Date: June 13, 2011
To: AP English Language and Composition students
From: Mr. Weintraut, ajweintraut@gmail.com; Ms. Korones, jskorones@fcps.edu
Re: Summer reading assignments

We look forward to meeting all of you on the first day of class! The course is officially called “AP English Language and Composition,” though the content has not changed drastically from when it was called AP Journalism. As you know, this is a rigorous writing course, and you’ll need to complete some summer work.

Please remember that this is a college level course, and students should be enrolled in the course only if they have:

- Intellectual curiosity
- A desire to read nonfiction pieces
- A desire to write every day and improve their writing
- A proficiency in completing homework assignments
- A desire to work hard in an accelerated class

Although next year is one of the last things on your minds, here is the overview of the assignment due **on the first day of school**. Of course, be careful not to leave it until the last minute. You must see your counselor to determine which teacher you have for next year. You will communicate with one of us over the summer about your homework.

Please read all of the following directions very carefully – the deadlines for this assignment are nearer than you expect. Please e-mail us if you have any questions, but be sure to **identify yourself using first and last name** in the heading of the e-mail so it doesn’t get mistaken for Spam.

There are two parts to this assignment: Written Analysis and Class Presentation. Both assignments are focused on the same book (which you will choose from the list below).

Choose one of the following: Do some online research to learn more about these books (Amazon.com is a good place to start), and choose one to read.

What Really Happened to the Class of '93 by Chris Colin (a TJHSST graduate)
Outliers by Malcolm Gladwell
Freakonomics by Steven Levitt and Stephen J. Dubner
Into Thin Air by Jon Krakauer
This Boy's Life by Tobias Wolff
The Hot Zone by Richard Preston
Friday Night Lights by H. G. Bissinger
Pilgrim at Tinker Creek or *The Writing Life* by Annie Dillard
The Professor and the Madman by Simon Winchester
Lies My Teacher Told Me by James W. Loewen
Year of Magical Thinking by Joan Didion
Devil in the White City by Erik Larson
Omnivore's Dilemma by Michael Pollan
The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat by Oliver Sacks
Zeitoun by Dave Eggers

Written Analysis

Once you've selected your book, complete a 3-4 page analysis of the book as a whole. *You must blend some criticism and personal reflection within your writing* and you should *avoid a dry retelling of the book*. You should consider the response to be more than just a "book review" of your chosen book. The grade will be based on your critical thinking that is applied to the reading. Please include your personal responses to major sections of the book. Your analysis will be graded on how well you answer the following questions:

- For whom is the intended audience of this work? Conduct research on sales figures, publishing house and critical reviews at the time of its publication.
- What were the cultural, political and social circumstances at the time of the book's publication? Elaborate with detail.
- How did the author's biographical and educational background lead him/her to writing this book? What strategies of rhetoric and persuasion does the writer employ?
- What entails good writing? Provide some direct examples from the book, cite page numbers, and explain how those passages constitute good writing.
- How did you respond to certain passages of the book? How did you react personally? Why?
- What did book critics say at the time of the novel's publication? (Do not simply cite quotes from the back cover of the book. Do a little research.)

Class Presentation

You should also prepare a 15-20 slide PowerPoint presentation to be given on the first day of class. The content should be the same as your written analysis, and you should streamline your analysis and research into an well-thought out and dynamic presentation for the class. Your PowerPoint will be graded on its content, the format and design of the slides, and the presentation itself; this should be well-practiced, professional, and interesting for the class.

Optional, extra credit assignment – Reading of *Be True to Your School*, by Bob Greene

Bob Greene is a famous journalist who was a columnist for the Chicago Tribune, and he's written several books, one of them about Michael Jordan. *Be True to Your School* is an account of Greene's life in 1964 – his junior year in high school as recorded in his journal. It's a first person, quick read and an amusing account of what high school was like the year the Beatles landed. You will be required to keep a journal throughout your senior year, and this book gives you a good example of what can happen when you are a disciplined, daily writer. Reading this book and completing a 3-4 page critical evaluation of the book will give you between 5-10 percent added to your 1st quarter grade. You will also have a simple "book talk" with me about the novel once school has started.

DEADLINES – VERY IMPORTANT

You must e-mail your teacher with your selections by June 30.

For your summer readings, you should buy the book so you are free to mark up the text as you read.

LAST WORDS

Enjoy your summer, but don't delay in starting your reading. Feel free to contact us with any questions you have. The total value these assignments will have on your 1st quarter grade can be as high as 20%.