

Summer Reading Assignment 2022

Welcome to AP English Language and Composition!

Congratulations on making it to Advanced Placement English! Get ready to explore some wonderful fiction and non-fiction, along with honing your writing skills. Your work will culminate in taking the prestigious AP Language and Composition exam (in May 2023).

In addition to exploring *The Bluest Eye* and related, shorter readings, AP Language also requires you to read and analyze Daniel James Brown's *The Boys in the Boat*—with a written assignment attached to kickstart you analyzing rhetoric—a skill that will foster you throughout this intense class.

These assignments will contribute to your first English class grades, so please give them the attention they deserve. You must have the required readings with you throughout the first months of school, but feel free to use the New York Public Library as a resource. For more information on *SimplyE*, the library's free version of Kindle, please access this link: <https://www.nypl.org/books-music-movies/ebookcentral/simplye>

If you have any questions, feel free to contact Ms. Esposito, the English Department Chairperson, at mesposito@prestonhs.org

Enjoy your summer and see you next year!

Sincerely,
The Junior-Level Faculty

Assignment:

1. We require you to obtain and read Toni Morrison's novel *The Bluest Eye* (see ISBN and other information below). You must bring it with you to English class on the first days of school. You should complete a writing assignment with it later during September, so ensure you annotate accordingly and bring any questions to class.

The Bluest Eye

Toni Morrison

* To purchase or borrow this book, please use one of these numbers: ISBN-10: 0307278441 or ISBN-13: 978-0307278449.

* Also feel free to take out a hard copy from the New York Public Library.

*Here's a description: Originally published in 1970, *The Bluest Eye* is Toni Morrison's first novel. In an afterword written more than two decades later, the author expressed her dissatisfaction with the book's language and structure: "It required a sophistication unavailable to me." Perhaps we can chalk up this verdict to modesty, or to the Nobel laureate's impossibly high standards of quality control. In any case, her debut is nothing if not sophisticated, in terms of both narrative ingenuity and rhetorical sweep. Set in Lorain, Ohio, in 1941, *The Bluest Eye* is something of an ensemble piece. The point of view is passed like a baton from one character to the next, with Morrison's own voice functioning as a kind of gold standard throughout. The focus, though, is on an 11-year-old African-American girl named Pecola Breedlove, whose entire family has been given a cosmetic cross. (Amazon.com Review)

2. Read and annotate Judith Ortiz Cofer's "The Myth of the Latin Woman" (see link on page 3). After reading, type answers to the questions also appearing on page 3. In September, your teacher will also expect you to upload such responses to Google-Classroom.

3. Read Daniel James Brown's *The Boys in the Boat*. Again, to purchase, please find the following number: ISBN-10: 0147516854. You can also use The New York Public Library, and ensure you have it with you in September.

4. Please answer questions (this document's page 3) about Brown's work, ensuring you can submit such answers to Google Classroom.

5. For the remaining two books, choose one book from the fiction list and one book from the non-fiction list that start on this document's pages 4 and 7. Both genres offer relevant and timely examinations of the human condition, and they provide you with helpful writing models since they must explain and analyze information in a clear and compelling style.

2. Information for Judith Ortiz Cofer’s “Myth of the Latin Woman:”

Link: (Ignore the questions that appear before and after this reading.)

<https://www.vonsteuben.org/ourpages/auto/2015/2/23/48981760/The%20Myth%20of%20the%20Latin%20Woman.pdf>

If you encounter trouble opening the above link, immediately email Ms. Esposito.

1. How does Cofer define this myth about Latin women?
2. In the second paragraph, Cofer states, “As a Puerto Rican girl growing up in the United States and wanting like most children, to ‘belong,’ I resented the stereotype that my Hispanic appearance called forth from many people I met.” What does this line mean?
3. How does Cofer’s opening scene—with the British man on the bus—serve as an example of the myth mentioned in question 1?
4. Summarize Cofer’s description about career day in her high school. Include: Why did she and her Puerto Rican classmates leave feeling “less than”?
5. Describe one incident in *The Bluest Eye* that resembles the career day experience Cofer discusses.
6. According to Cofer, how has society—especially the media—preserved the stereotype, or myth, of the Latin woman?
7. What happens to Latinas who, unlike Cofer, are unable to deflate this myth? What self-image do they form?
8. Discuss Cofer’s first public poetry reading. How does it positively affect her—still to the day she wrote this essay? How does it negatively affect her?

3-4. Daniel James Brown’s *The Boys in the Boat*

Questions

Please answer these questions in your notebook, to bring with you on the first day of class.

1. *The Boys in the Boat* occurs during the 1930s financial depression, when millions of Americans lost their homes and jobs. Amid this despair, however, sports distracted the public while also providing successful opportunities for athletes. Why do you think the story of the 1936 University of Washington crew provided a sense of hope and escape for their fellow Americans? Include one quote from the memoir (at least a sentence) to support your answer.
2. A dichotomy exists between two major groups: The East Coast, elite rowers and the West Coast, University of Washington crew. How did the West Coast boys’ background contribute to their ultimate outcome? How did their rivalry and class struggle with the East Coast boys also contribute? Explain through merely discussing examples from the memoir.
3. *The Boys in the Boat* involves a team memoir—but also Joe Rantz’s own story. How does Brown portray Joe in the story? Does Joe change throughout the work? If so, how? If not, why not?
4. Why might we consider Joe Rantz similar to Pecola Breedlove and Judith Ortiz Cofer, even though all three personas belong to very different communities?
5. *The Bluest Eye*, “The Myth of the Latin Woman,” and *The Boys in the Boat* all address, in some way, the intersections of race, class, and gender. Which of these social constructs (race, class, gender) do you think most powerfully affect the characters? In your response, discuss how each of these characters (Pecola, Cofer, and Rantz) support your answer. Use specific examples from each work.

Section One: Choose at least one *fiction* book from this section (alphabetized by author). Feel free to read more.

A Long Petal of the Sea, Isabel Allende

Isabel Allende's *A Long Petal of the Sea* gets to the heart of immigrant struggle. . . . [It] begins, as it ends, with the heart. . . . Victor and Roser's story is compelling. . . . Allende's prose is both commanding and comforting. The author writes eloquently on the struggle of letting go of one culture to embrace a new one and shows that one's origin story is not the whole story. . . . While debate and policy surround the issues of refugees and immigration, Allende reminds us that these issues, at their core, are made up of individuals and their love stories.

In the Time of the Butterflies (En el Tiempo de las Mariposas), Julia Alvarez (in English or Spanish)

A skillful blend of fact and fiction, *In the Time of the Butterflies* is inspired by the true story of the three Mirabal sisters who, in 1960, were murdered for their part in an underground plot to overthrow the government. Alvarez breathes life into these historical figures—known as "las mariposas," or "the butterflies," in the underground—as she imagines their teenage years, their gradual involvement with the revolution, and their terror as their dissentience is uncovered.

The Astonishing Life of Octavian Nothing, Vol. 1 (The Pox Party), M. T. Anderson

It sounds like a fairy tale. He is a boy dressed in silks and white wigs and given the finest of classical educations. Raised by a group of rational philosophers known only by numbers, the boy and his mother — a princess in exile from a faraway land — are the only persons in their household assigned names. As the boy's regal mother, Cassiopeia, entertains the house scholars with her beauty and wit, young Octavian begins to question the purpose behind his guardians' fanatical studies. Only after he dares to open a forbidden door does he learn the hideous nature of their experiments — and his own chilling role in them. Set against the disquiet of Revolutionary Boston, M. T. Anderson's extraordinary novel takes place at a time when American patriots rioted and battled to win liberty while African slaves were entreated to risk their lives for a freedom they would never claim.

The Sweet Hereafter, Russell Banks

In *The Sweet Hereafter*, Russell Banks tells a story that begins with a school bus accident. Using four different narrators, Banks creates a small-town morality play that addresses one of life's most agonizing questions: when the worst thing happens, who do you blame?

Time and Again, Jack Finney

"Sleep. And when you awake everything you know of the twentieth century will be gone from your mind. Tonight is January 21, 1882. There are no such things as automobiles, no planes, computers, television. 'Nuclear' appears in no dictionary." Did illustrator Si Morley really step out of his twentieth-century apartment one night—right into the winter of 1882? The U.S. Government believed it, especially when Si returned with a portfolio of brand-new sketches and tintype photos of a world that no longer existed—or did it? Part romance, part science fiction, part historical fiction, it's a good read. Read about the history of the Dakota building in Manhattan. The main character lives there...so did John Lennon.

Fried Green Tomatoes at the Whistle Stop Café, Fannie Flagg

Various women's voices tell anecdotes of Whistle Stop, as the chapters jump back and forth through time. We hear from Mrs. Threadgoode, reminiscing fondly from her nursing home in the 1980s, and the chatty Dot Weems, editor of the gossipy town newsletter (1929-1969), and then listen in on spirited dialogue set in the town of Whistle Stop itself. The now-classic novel of two women in the 1980s: of gray-headed Mrs. Threadgoode telling her life story to Evelyn, who is in the sad slump of middle age. The tale she tells is also of two women—of the irrepressibly daredevil-ish tomboy Idgie and her friend Ruth—who back in the 1930s ran a little place in Whistle Stop, Alabama, a Southern cafe offering good barbecue and good coffee and all kinds of love and laughter, even an occasional murder.

The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman, Earnest Gaines

Set in rural southern Louisiana, the novel spans 100 years of American history—from the early 1860s to the onset of the civil rights movement in the 1960s—in following the life of the elderly Jane Pittman, who witnessed those years. A child at the end of the Civil War, Jane survives a massacre by former Confederate soldiers. She serves as a steadying influence for several black men who work hard to achieve dignity and economic as well as political equality. After the death of her husband, Joe Pittman, Jane becomes a committed Christian and a spiritual guide in her community. Spurred on by the violent death of a young community leader, Jane finally confronts a plantation owner who represents the white power structure to which she has always been subservient.

Stranger in a Strange Land, Robert Heinlein

This is the story of Valentine Michael Smith, born during, and the only survivor of, the first manned mission to Mars. Michael is raised by Martians, and he arrives on Earth as a true innocent: he has never seen a woman and has no knowledge of Earth's cultures or religions. But he brings turmoil with him, as he is the legal heir to an enormous financial empire, not to mention de facto owner of the planet Mars. With the irascible popular author Jubal Harshaw to protect him, Michael explores human morality and the meanings of love. He founds his own church, preaching free love and disseminating the psychic talents taught him by the Martians. Ultimately, he confronts the fate reserved for all messiahs.

Crooked Little Heart, Anne Lamott

Lamott depicts the tsunami of adolescence that nearly drowns Rosie, a 13-year-old tennis champion, and her tennis partner and best friend, the luscious Simone, and that capsizes Rosie's fragile mother, Elizabeth. Happily married to James but still in mourning for Rosie's dead father, Elizabeth isn't up to the arduous work of guiding her daughter through this sea change and collapses into the black hole of depression just when Rosie has to face a series of painful situations both on the tennis court and off.

Crow Lake, Mary Lawson

The story, narrated by 26-year-old Kate Morrison, is set in Crow Lake, an isolated rural community where time has stood still. The reader dives in and out of a year's worth of Kate's childhood memories—when she was 7 and her parents were killed in an automobile accident that left Kate, her younger sister Bo, and two older brothers, Matt and Luke, orphaned.

Lost Children Archive, Valeria Luiselli

In Valeria Luiselli's fiercely imaginative follow-up to the American Book Award-winning *Tell Me How It Ends*, an artist couple set out with their two children on a road trip from New York to Arizona in the heat of summer. As the family travels west, the bonds between them begin to fray: a fracture is growing between the parents, one the children can almost feel beneath their feet. Through ephemera such as songs, maps and a Polaroid camera, the children try to make sense of both their family's crisis and the larger one engulfing the news: the stories of thousands of kids trying to cross the southwestern border into the United States but getting detained—or lost in the desert along the way. A breath-taking feat of literary virtuosity, *Lost Children Archive* is timely, compassionate, subtly hilarious, and formally inventive—a powerful, urgent story about what it is to be human in an inhuman world. —*The New Yorker*

Cat's Cradle, Kurt Vonnegut

The book, one of Vonnegut's most entertaining novels, is filled with scientists, government agents and even ordinary folks caught up in the game. These assorted characters chase each other around in search of the world's most important and dangerous substance, Ice Nine, a new form of ice that freezes at room temperature. The novel is a delightful combination of science fiction and satire, very popular in the 1960s and eerily relevant now.

The Nickel Boys, by Colson Whitehead

Based on a real school for boys that closed in Florida in 2011 after more than one hundred years in existence, Colson Whitehead's Nickel Academy is the kind of institution that purports to rebrand bad boys into good young men. So in theory it should be a good place for Elwood, a young black man who, although he had planned to attend a nearby college, was caught unknowingly riding in a stolen car. But what happens inside Nickel Academy does not match its public image, and Elwood is about to learn that, no matter how idealistic or optimistic he is, his life is taking a very bad turn. He is lucky to meet Turner, who does not share Elwood's idealism and who helps him to survive Nickel Academy. But what Elwood experiences there will never leave him. Set in the 1960s during Jim Crow, 2019 Pulitzer Prize winning *The Nickel Boys* is both an enjoyable read and a powerful portrayal of racism and inequality that acts as a lever to pry against our own willingness to ignore it.

Section Two: Choose at least one *non-fiction* book from this section (alphabetized by author). Feel free to read more.

Madam Secretary: A Memoir, Madeleine Albright

Madeleine Albright, born in Prague, was confirmed as the sixty-fourth US Secretary of State in 1997. Her distinguished career in government includes positions on the National Security Council, as U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, and on Capitol Hill. In this outspoken and much-praised memoir, the first female Secretary of State in American history shares her remarkable story and provides an insider's view of world affairs during a period of unprecedented turbulence. *Madam Secretary* combines warm humor with profound insights and personal testament with fascinating additions to the historical record. Read an article about Albright and her book

I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings, Maya Angelou

In this first of five volumes of autobiography, poet Maya Angelou recounts a youth filled with disappointment, frustration, tragedy, and finally hard-won independence. Sent at a young age to live with her grandmother in Arkansas, Angelou learned a great deal from this exceptional woman and the tightly knit black community there. These very lessons carried her throughout the hardships she endured later in life.

The Greatest Generation, Tom Brokaw

Brokaw defines "the greatest generation" as American citizens who came of age during the Great Depression and the Second World War and went on to build modern America. The vehicle used to define the generation further is the stories told by a cross section of men and women throughout the country. The approximately 50 stories are listed in the table of contents under eight topics: Ordinary People; Homefront; Heroes; Women in Uniform and Out; Shame; Love, Marriage and Commitment; Famous People; and the Arena.

Between the World and Me, Ta-Nehisi Coates

In a profound work that pivots from the biggest questions about American history and ideals to the most intimate concerns of a father for his son, Ta-Nehisi Coates offers a powerful new framework for understanding our nation's history and current crisis. Americans have built an empire on the idea of "race," a falsehood that damages us all but falls most heavily on the bodies of black women and men—bodies exploited through slavery and segregation, and, today, threatened, locked up, and murdered out of all proportion. What is it like to inhabit a black body and find a way to live within it? And how can we all honestly reckon with this fraught history and free ourselves from its burden?

Don't Know Much About History: Everything You Need About American History but Never Learned, Kenneth C. Davis

Kenneth Davis's history of the United States is not a series of isolated incidents that happened long ago with no bearing on contemporary American life. Heroes and villains alike are presented, warts and all, and the "less savory moments" in America's past are discussed frankly. The theme running through the book, from pre-European settlement to the Reagan years, is the struggle for power—the never-ending battle between the haves and have-nots that is the "essence of history." Six hundred years of history are broken up into manageable segments through a series of questions (spoken in a number of different voices to help distinguish them from the main narration), each of which is given a specific answer and then discussed in the context of its contemporary setting and perhaps past and future events.

In Code: A Mathematical Journey, Sarah & David Flannery

In January 1999, Sarah Flannery, a sports-loving teenager from Blarney in County Cork, Ireland, was awarded Ireland's Young Scientist of the Year for her extraordinary research and discoveries in Internet cryptography. *In Code* is “a wonderfully moving story about the thrill of the mathematical chase” (Nature). A memoir in mathematics, it is all about how a girl next door, nurtured by her family, moved from the simple math puzzles that were the staple of dinnertime conversation to prime numbers, the Sieve of Eratosthenes, Fermat's Little Theorem, googols—and finally into her breathtaking algorithm.

Reason for Hope: A Spiritual Journey, Jane Goodall & Phillip Berman

Here, Goodall offers a fascinating and candid look at her impressive life. She reveals what her private life was like during the time of her groundbreaking work, and she explores the environmental concerns that now keep her on a hectic lecture and fundraising schedule. Who is Jane Goodall, you may ask? Find the answer here.

Mountains Beyond Mountains: The Quest of Dr. Paul Farmer..., Tracy Kidder

Few books aptly capture what it truly means to make a conscious decision in your life to make a difference in the world; this one is perhaps the best of its kind. Paul Farmer made a life-changing trip to Haiti early in his college career and realized that, step-by-step, act-by-act, he could help to improve health care and the lives generally of Haitians by developing a novel approach to health care and community improvement. Farmer, a doctor, founded Partners in Health, an organization that now operates clinics in various parts of the world, all transforming health care in their local communities. This is an inspirational story about how it is possible for each of us to make a profound change in the world with individual effort and passion.

Woman Warrior, Maxine Hong Kingston

This is a pungent, bitter, but beautifully written memoir of growing up Chinese American in Stockton, California. Maxine Hong Kingston stills the dire lessons of her mother's mesmerizing “talk-story” tales of a China where girls are worthless, tradition is exalted and only a strong, wily woman can scratch her way upward. The author's America is a landscape of confounding white “ghosts—the policeman ghost, the social worker ghost—with equally rigid, but very different rules. Like the woman warrior of the title, Kingston carries the crimes against her family carved into her back by her parents in testimony to and defiance of the pain.

In the Land of Men, Adrienne Miller

A naive and idealistic twenty-two-year-old from the Midwest, Adrienne Miller got her lucky break when she was hired as an editorial assistant at *GQ* magazine in the mid-nineties. Even if its sensibilities were manifestly mid-century—the martinis, powerful male egos, and unquestioned authority of kings—*GQ* still seemed the red-hot center of the literary world. It was there that Miller began learning how to survive in a man's world. Three years later, she forged her own path, becoming the first woman to take on the role of literary editor of *Esquire*, home to the male writers who had defined manhood itself—Hemingway, Mailer, and Carver. Up against this old world, she would soon discover that it wanted nothing to do with a “mere girl.”

The Blue Sweater, Jacqueline Novogratz

This is the education of a patient capitalist. Novogratz was an idealistic college graduate hired by Chase Manhattan to investigate and write off loans to the Third World. What she discovers in her journey is a blue sweater she gave away to Goodwill many years early on the back of a small Rwandan boy. This sweater becomes a metaphor for the interconnectedness of the world. Later, Novogratz founds The Acumen Fund which underwrites investments to rising entrepreneurs in the Third World to foster economic growth from the bottom of the pyramid up.

The Killer Angels, Michael Shaara

In the four most bloody and courageous days of our nation's history, two armies fought for two dreams. One dreamed of freedom, the other of a way of life. Far more than rifles and bullets were carried into battle. There were memories. There were promises. There was love. And far more than men fell on those Pennsylvania fields. Shattered futures, forgotten innocence, and crippled beauty were also the casualties of war. Unique, sweeping, and unforgettable, *The Killer Angels* is a dramatic re-creation of the battleground for America's destiny.

My Beloved World, Supreme Court Justice Sandra Sotomayor

The first Hispanic and third woman appointed to the United States Supreme Court, Sonia Sotomayor has become an instant American icon. Now, with a candor and intimacy never undertaken by a sitting Justice, she recounts her life from a Bronx housing project to the federal bench, a journey that offers an inspiring testament to her own extraordinary determination and the power of believing in oneself.

Thurgood Marshall: American Revolutionary, Juan Williams

Williams retells the story of Thurgood Marshall's successful desegregation of public schools in the U.S. with his victory in the case of *Brown v. Board of Education*, followed by his appointment to the Supreme Court in 1967 for a 24-year term. But he also recounts how W.E.B. Du Bois, then the head of the NAACP, gave a cold shoulder to the younger Marshall (who eventually helped oust Du Bois from the organization), and describes the tug of war between Marshall and FBI director J. Edgar Hoover, as well as the mind games Lyndon Johnson played on Marshall before nominating him for the Supreme Court. Readers also learn about Marshall's relationship with his replacement, Clarence Thomas, which was surprisingly civil given their contrary views on affirmative action. Williams has captured many examples of Thurgood Marshall's heroism and humanity in this comprehensive yet readable biography of a complex, combative, and courageous civil rights.

If you have any questions, feel free to email Ms. Esposito, the English Department Chairperson, at mesposito@prestonhs.org