

May 2012

Dear Junior Advanced Placement English student:

Welcome to Junior Advanced Placement English—Language and Composition. We follow the curriculum guidelines set down by the *College Board* as far as reading, writing and difficulty level are concerned. This class is essentially modeled after a college composition course. We focus on reading and writing rhetorically. Junior year, you prepare for the **Advanced Placement Language and Composition Exam**. This preparation places stringent demands on our time.

With that said, know then, that your summer reading assignment is comprised of books that come highly recommended by the College Board, have been used on the A.P. test several times, and grace the college reading lists and high school summer reading lists of syllabi across the country. The books for this summer are the following:

1. *The Things They Carried* by Tim O'Brien, a fictional account of the Vietnam War, a story that fuses fiction and non-fiction as O'Brien, a Harvard graduate and National Book Award winner, served a tour of duty in the war and puts himself into the story as a fictional character. The novel was a finalist for the Pulitzer and the National Book Critics Circle Award. And, read the *Sparknotes* for *The Things They Carried*; you may read online, check out or purchase. Your response for this novel will analyze and tell us what *Sparknotes* totally missed or overlooked.

2. A *Self-selected non-fiction book*, however, it must meet the following criteria: consist of at least 180 pages in length, and possess literary merit. If you are unsure of what to select, you may choose a non-fiction book from the following list: *In the Garden of Beasts* or *The Devil in the White City* by Erik Larson, *The Blind Side* by Michael Lewis, *Freakonomics* or *Superfreakonomics* by Steven D. Levitt, *The Tipping Point*, *Blink* or *Outliers* by Malcolm Gladwell, *The Gatekeepers* by Jacques Steinberg, *A Natural History of the Senses* by Diane Ackerman, *Game of Shadows* by Mark Fainaru-Wada, *Nickel and Dimed* by Barbara Ehrenreich, *Chew on This* by Eric Schlosser, *The World is Flat* by Stephen Friedman, *Once Upon A Quinceanera* by Julia Alvarez, *In Defense of Food* by Michael Pollan, *Readicide* by Kelly Gallagher.

Consider consulting parents, librarians and book store associates for suggestions. Award-winning books usually work well. Forego "How To" books, books that just list the "Top Twenty-Five Whatever," and cookbooks.

3. A *Self-selected Memoir book* is your final requirement; it must be written by or co-authored by the actual person the book explores. Please note, this is also **NON-Fiction, true story**. Reading a novel about a fictitious character will **NOT** count. You may choose a memoir from the following list or go off of book store or library recommendations: *Glass Castle* by Jeannette Walls, *Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood Among Ghosts* by Maxine Hong Kingston, *House Rules* by Rachel Sontag, *A Million Little Pieces** by James Frey, *Kick Me: Adventures in Adolescence* by Paul Feig, *Last Lecture* by Randy Pausch, *A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier* by Ishmael Beah, or *If I Die in a Combat Zone* by Tim O'Brien, *Julie and Julia* by Julie Powell, *Black Boy* by Richard Wright, *Walden* by Henry David Thoreau, *A Summer's Life* by Gary Soto, *Three Cups of Tea** by Greg Mortenson,

The Hunger of Memory by Richard Rodriguez, *Living by Fiction* by Annie Dillard, *Welfare Brat* by Mary Childers, *A Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius* by David Eggers. (* Indicates questionable memoir).

Be aware that suggested titles vary in readability levels and mature content; for this reason, choose a book that you feel comfortable reading. Keep in mind that the writers are simply expressing their views and in no way are we expected to assume their opinions as our own.

The Larkin High School English Department recommends that you purchase your books; however, using the library, or borrowing texts from acquaintances works, too. There will be Larkin copies of *The Things They Carried* in the main office over the summer that you may sign out.

“What should I do with these wonderful books?” you may be asking yourself. Read them. Seriously, read them and enjoy them. Please understand that your thorough reading and understanding of each of these texts is important for the work we will do at the beginning of the year as well as what we do *throughout the year*. Then, after you have read them, respond to the following for **EACH** text:

Title and Author – For *Things They Carried*, tell us what sparknotes DOESN'T Reveal about these aspects.

1. Why you think the writer wrote that particular book/ story — beyond wanting to make money and entertain readers? What was the **occasion** for the writer choosing that **subject** (for memoir, what aspects of his or her life does the writer cover and why)?
2. To whom is the book geared – what is the particular **audience**?
3. What does the writer seem to want the reader to do, think or feel after reading the book?
4. How do you see the writer appealing to ethos, pathos and logos in each book? **ETHOS** deals with the credibility of the author – how the author proves he/she is legitimate, qualified to write about the topic. **PATHOS** evokes feelings from the audience – how are we supposed to feel about the text and about ourselves? And **LOGOS** is the argument – how is the text logical, how are we able to understand and “get it?”

These are open-ended questions. Please, do not fret over whether you have the “right” answer or not. We want to know what you think and see what you got out of your text; that is for what we shall assess you. Did you read your book and did you think about it while and after reading it, is all. No worries.

Due dates: Over the first few weeks of class, we will collect the work for each book as we study it. We will begin with *The Things They Carried*, so your thoughts for that book will be due the last week of August. Approximately a week later, work for the **non-fiction book** is due and then approximately a week after that, the work for **Non-Fiction Memoir** will be due. This will allow for teacher / student conversations and /or questions to be answered during the first few days of school, if necessary.

If you should have questions or concerns, please email your teacher at jenniferslawski@u-46.org or erichill@u-46.org

Thank you,

Jennifer Slawski & Eric Hill
Larkin High School English Department

Here is a general idea of the scoring breakdown and where a student might and might not gain full points:

Summer Reading Breakdown and Comments

Each book is worth 15 points, the real value will come from your having read three whole texts, though. Questions 1-3 are worth 3 points each for development. Question 4 is worth 6 points, 2 per ethos, pathos, logos.

1 – I like this idea; it is on target, but you need to write more about the thought. It's just too short right now, like I need to read your mind to get the rest of the story.

2 – Why do you know/think this and how do you know this? Use the text, not just what you think to back up your claims.

? Interesting idea! Explain this to me; I need to see your reasoning.

This is a really significant or insightful idea.

(this is the part I question or need explained/supported further)

Note on Choosing your Non-Fiction Book – you will be writing an argumentative-analytical essay using **the non-fiction book** as one of your sources. While this essay will be worked on **DURING** the school year, we find it's smart for you to know ahead of time what you'll be doing with this non-fiction book. **So that you choose wisely**; here is the gist of the **writing assignment** we will do **in September**:

*First, we'll have to consider the issues and controversies that arise in the book; these may be central arguments the writer explores. Perhaps claims or warrants, sub arguments, or points of contention that occurred to you as you read the book. Once you have a controvertible statement, a claim, to defend, challenge or qualify via educating yourself further, you will find, **three more sources outside** your summer reading book.*

If at all possible when gathering your sources, find a source that is **Pro**, one that is **Con**, one that is neutral or provides strictly **background** to the issue, and one other one that may be a **personal account**, **statistics**, **research** information, **survey**. The Summer Reading text may count as the Pro, Con, background, and so on; it all depends.

When you have gathered your sources take notes: What are the claims made in each?

What evidence is provided? How successfully does the evidence support the claim? What is the unspoken assumption the writer seems to think the reader will agree with in order for the claim and data to logically fit together? Rebuttals? See how other thinkers have made judgments and expressed their arguments.