



AP SUMMER READING LIST

PART 1: The lists below contain suggested titles for students taking AP Language and Composition. Over the summer, read one book of your choice. You will be tasked with creating a *Book Love* presentation, analysis, and review of each text when you return to school in August. Directions to follow!

Autobiography / Memoir/ Biography

Goodwin, Doris Kearns. *Wait Till Next Year*. (Pulitzer author about childhood and baseball)
McCourt, Frank. *Angela's Ashes*. (Poverty, starvation, and exuberance in depression Ireland)
Ashe, Arthur. *Days of Grace*. (Ashe's personal struggles with prejudice and AIDS)
Rodriguez, Richard. *Hunger for Memory*. (Social assimilation / education with alienation) Karr, Mary. *The Liar's Club*. (Poetic insight into one of the ugliest places on earth)
Wolff, Tobias. *This Boy's Life*. (Somber, dark funny story of growing up in the '50's)
Drakulic, Slavenka. *Café Europa*. (Idiosyncratic look at westernized ex-communist countries)
Wideman, John Edgar. *Brothers and Keepers*. (One a professor, the other an inmate)
Cheng, Nien. *Life and Death in Shanghai*. (Imprisonment, resistance, justice) Mathabane, Mark. *Kaffir Boy*. (Civil rights in South Africa)
Orwell, George. *Down and Out in Paris and London*. (Life as a tramp in Europe)
Hurston, Zora Neale. *Dust Tracks on a Road*. (Account of her rise from poverty to prominence)
Dawson, George. *Life is So Good*. (101-year-old recounts life in context of 20th century) Armstrong, Lance. *It's Not About the Bike*. (Honest, open, smart autobiography)
Lynch, Thomas. *The Undertaking*. (Essays by a small-town undertaker)
Conover, Ted. *Newjack*. (Chronicles a year as a prison guard at Sing-Sing)
Gawande, Atul. *Complications*. (A surgeon writes about his 'craft')
Eire, Carlos. *Waiting for Snow in Havana*. (Yale prof. about his childhood in Cuba before Revolution)
Angelou, Maya *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* (African-American writer traces her coming of age)
Mortenson, Greg and David Oliver Relin. *Three Cups of Tea: One Man's Mission to Promote Peace One School at a Time*. (sheltered and nursed in a remote mountain village, author vows to return to build schools throughout Pakistan and Afghanistan)

Educated, Tara Westover (Book jacket: Tara Westover was seventeen the first time she set foot in a classroom. Born to survivalists in the mountains of Idaho, she prepared for the end of the world by stockpiling home-canned peaches. In the summer she stewed herbs for her mother, a midwife and healer, and in the winter she salvaged in her father's junkyard. Her father forbade hospitals, so Tara never saw a doctor or nurse. Gashes and concussions, even burns from explosions, were all treated at home with herbalism. Then, lacking a formal education, Tara began to educate herself.)



Alexander, Caroline. *The Endurance: Shackleton's Legendary Antarctic Expedition*. Back cover description: The Imperial Transatlantic Expedition, Sir Ernest Shackleton's daring but ill-fated attempt to cross the South Pole.

**Black Boy*. Wright, Richard. (Life to age 19 in the deep south)

**Black Like Me*. Griffin, John Howard. (Eyewitness history by white man who becomes black)

**We Wish to Inform You Tomorrow We Will be Killed with Our Families*. Gourevitch, Phillip. (Rwanda Genocide)

Nature / Adventure / Science

Kinder, Gary. *Ship of Gold in the Deep Blue Sea* (Engineer's scheme to salvage \$1 billion) Junger, Sebastian. *The Perfect Storm* (Swordfish boat vs. Mother Nature)

Krakauer, Jon. *Into Thin Air*. (Everest climb gone wrong)

Larson, Erik. *Isaac's Storm*. (1900 hurricane still deadliest of all time)

Werbach, Adam. *Act Now, Apologize Later*. (former Sierra Club pres. On steps to stop environment loss)

Winchester, Simon. *The Map that Changed the World*. (obscure historical figure with strong impact on civ.) Lamott, Anne. *Bird by Bird*. (practical advice for aspiring writers and life in general)

Menzel, Peter and Faith D'Aluisio. *Hungry Planet: What the World Eats*. (photo-chronicle of families around the world, the food they eat, and how uncontrollable forces like poverty, conflict and globalization affect our most elemental human need – food)

Firlik, Katrina. *Another Day in the Frontal Lobe: A Brain Surgeon Exposes Life on the Inside*. (honest appraisal of work as a doctor)

Thoreau, Henry David. *Walden* (spends 26 months alone in the woods to "front the essential facts of life.")

Thompson, Gabriel. *Working in the Shadows: A Year of Doing the Jobs (Most) Americans Won't Do* (author works in various unskilled labor jobs providing engaging and gruesome details)

Skloot, Rebecca. *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* (story of a woman whose cancerous cells were developed in culture without her knowledge and became the HeLa line scientists used in researching some of the most important and astounding medical discoveries of the 20th century)



Sports

Reynolds, Bill. *Fall River Dreams* (team searches for glory, town searches for soul) Dent, Jim. *The Junction Boys*. (10 days in training camp with Bear Bryant) Lewis, Michael. *Moneyball*. (how Oakland A's general manager is changing baseball) Conroy, Pat. *My Losing Season*. (famous author on his senior year at The Citadel) Riley, Rick. *Who's Your Caddie?* (Sports Illustrated writer caddies for famous people) Shapiro, Michael. *The Last Great Season*. (Brooklyn Dodgers 1956 pennant race) Powell, Robert Andrew. *We Own This Game*. (Pop Warner football in Miami run by race, politics, money) Asinof, Eliot. *Eight Men Out: The Black Sox and the 1919 World Series*. (the scandal and damage caused) Foer, Franklin. *How Soccer Explains the World*. Soccer is much more than a game, or even a way of life. It is a perfect window into the cross-currents of today's world, with all its joys and...sorrows...a wide-ranging work of reportage...a surprising tour through the world of soccer, shining a spotlight on the clash of civilizations, the international economy, and just about everything in between...an utterly original book that makes sense of our troubled times.

History / Social Sciences

Lacey, Robert and Danny Danziger. *The Year 1000: What Life Was Like at the Turn of the First Millennium* (facts and principles inside and outside Saxon England) Winchester, Simon. *The Professor and The Madman*. (tale of compilation of Oxford Dictionary) Ambrose, Stephen. *Undaunted Courage*. (Compelling story of Lewis and Clark expedition) Tuban, Jeffrey. *A Vast Conspiracy*. (well researched account of Clinton tragedy) Sontag, Sherry. *Blindman's Bluff*. (story of American submarine espionage, for Clancy fans) Herman, Arthur. *How the Scots Invented the Modern World*. (just what the title suggests) Marquez, Gabriel Garcia. *Notes on a Kidnapping*. (investigation behind Pablo Escobar's terror) Diamond, Jared. *Guns, Gems, and Steel*. (readable work of 13,000 years of history) Fleming, Thomas. *Duel*. (story of duel between Aaron Burr and Alexander Hamilton) Gladwell, Malcolm. *The Tipping Point*. (explains why changes in society occur suddenly) Menzies, Gavin. *1421: The Year China Discovered America* (discovery before Columbus?) Huggington, Arianna. *Pigs at the Trough*. (what to do about greedy CEOs and politicians) Lewis, Bernard. *The Crisis of Islam*. (origins of 9-11 thru history of conflict between Islam and West) Levitt, Stephen and Stephen Dubner. *Freakonomics: A Rogue Economist Explores the Hidden Side of Everything* (interesting illumination of mysteries of everyday life)



Friedman, Thomas. *The World is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-first Century* (advances in technology)
Brown, Dee. *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee: An Indian History of the American West*

Tuchman, Barbara *A Distant Mirror: The Calamitous Fourteenth Century* (example of a single feudal lord to trace the history of the 14th century)

Machiavelli, Niccolo *The Prince* (A treatise giving the absolute ruler practical advice on ways to maintain a strong central government)

Gwynne, S.C. *Empire of the Summer Moon: Quanah Parker and the Rise and Fall of the Comanches, The Most Powerful Indian Tribe in American History* (war with Comanches, story of Cynthia Parker whose son became the last and greatest chief of the Comanche tribe)

In the Heart of the Sea : The Tragedy of the Whaleship Essex

by *Philbrick, Nathaniel*

Recounts the story of the 1820 wreck of the whaleship Essex, which inspired Melville's classic "Moby-Dick," and describes its doomed crew's ninety-day attempt to survive whale attacks and the elements on three tiny lifeboats.

Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption

by *Stevenson, Bryan*

Bryan Stevenson was a young lawyer when he founded the Equal Justice Initiative, a legal practice dedicated to defending those most desperate and in need: the poor, the wrongly condemned, and women and children trapped in the farthest reaches of our criminal justice system. One of his first cases was that of Walter McMillian, a young man who was sentenced to die for a notorious murder he insisted he didn't commit. The case drew Bryan into a tangle of conspiracy, political machination, and legal brinksmanship—and transformed his understanding of mercy and justice forever.



Berendt, John. *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil*. (entertaining true crime story)

Metress, Christopher. *The Lynching of Emmett Till: A Documentary Narrative* (murder in the South)

**Devil and the White City*. Larson, Erik. (the Chicago World's Fair and the first serial killer.)

More General Nonfiction and "Recommended by AP Language and Comp. Students from the Class of 2019-2020" (noted with an *)

**Beautiful Boy: A Father's Journey through His Son's Addiction*. Sheff, David. (father's anguished account of his promising son's meth addiction and its painful impact on the entire family is honest, raw, and full of information about the realities of drug addiction)

Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance. Pirsig, Robert. (travel, philosophy and bikes)

Driving Mr. Albert: A Trip Across America with Einstein's Brain. Paterniti, Michael. (yes, it's true)

**On the Road*. Kerouac, Jack. (cross country bohemian adventure)

**The Radioactive Boy Scout: The True Story of a Boy and His Backyard Nuclear Reactor* Silverstein, Ken. (boy's obsession with nuclear energy creates radioactive device with potential to spark environmental disaster in his community)

**How the Irish Saved Civilization*. Cahill, Thomas. (just what the title suggests)

**King of the World*. Remnick, David. (Ali as racial and cultural hero in the 1950's)

**The Glass Castle* Walls, Jeannette. (story of childhood with eccentric, bordering on abusive parents)

**Isaac Newton*. Gleick, James. (Comprehensive and intimate look at a great scientist)

**The Devil in the Shape of a Woman: Witchcraft in Colonial New England* Karlsen, Carol (The status of women in colonial society affects the Salem witch accusations)

**T.Rex and the Crater of Doom* Alvarez, Walter. (story of impact theory of dinosaur extinction development)

**The Road Less Traveled* by M. Scott Peck – Pretty much the granddaddy of all self-improvement books, it's easily one of the best nonfiction works I've ever read. By melding love, science, and spirituality into a primer for personal growth, Peck guides the reader through lessons on delaying gratification, accepting responsibility for decisions, dedicating oneself to truth and reality, and creating a balanced lifestyle.

Radical Honesty by Brad Blanton – The book's basic point is sound – honesty is the best policy. With a brash, 'in your face' writing style, Blanton states that lying is the primary cause of human stress and advocates strict truthfulness as the key to achieving intimacy in relationships and happiness in life.

**Random Family*. Leblanc, Adrian Nicole. (Four teens grow up in the Bronx)

The Art of Learning by Josh Waitzkin – Josh Waitzkin transformed himself from a championship chess master into an elite Tai Chi martial arts practitioner. This book is part autobiography, part chess memoir, and part martial arts philosophy. Essentially, Waitzkin offers his own approach to becoming a student and applying



certain disciplines and habits toward learning and eventually mastering any skill.

Scratch Beginnings: Me, \$25, and the Search for the American Dream by Adam Shepard – Shepard started his life over from scratch in Charleston, South Carolina, with \$25 and the clothes on his back. He lived in a homeless shelter while looking for work. His goal was to start with nothing and, within a year, work hard enough to save

\$2500, buy a car, and to live in a furnished apartment. “Scratch Beginnings” is sometimes sad, sometimes amusing, pointed and thought provoking - all the makings of a book well worth reading.

**Death Be Not Proud.* Gunther, John. (Father tells of 17 year old’s struggle with brain tumor)

The Joy of Simple Living by Jeff Davidson – A great resource for anyone wanting to cut down on the clutter and confusion in their life. Davidson takes a step-by-step, easy to follow approach to simplifying your house, garage, office, car, etc. Not only will you learn to create an orderly home, you’ll gain the knowledge necessary to be a more successful spouse, parent, and worker by learning how to prioritize and simplify.

* **How to Talk to Anyone** by Leil Lowndes – Another practical book about conversational people skills. Lowndes helps the reader discover how to make small talk work, how to break the ice, how to network at a party, how to use body language to captivate your audience, and much more.

**Change Me Into Zeus’ Daughter.* Moss, Barbara. (Female version of *Angela’s Ashes*)

Nickel and Dimed by Barbara Ehrenreich – This is the book that provoked Adam Shepard to write “Scratch Beginnings.” It’s another first person perspective on poverty in America. In the book, Ehrenreich moves into a trailer and works as a waitress, hotel maid, and Wal-Mart sales clerk. Nickel and Dimed reveals low-rent America in all its tenacity, anxiety, and duality. I found it to be an extremely thought-provoking read.

Outliers: The Story of Success by Malcolm Gladwell – Gladwell embarks on an intellectual journey to figure out what separates the best, the brightest, and the most successful people from everyone else. He investigates these high achievers by looking closely at their culture, family, generation, and the individual experiences of their upbringing. This book really gets you thinking about success from a totally different perspective.

Freakonomics by Steven Levitt and Stephen Dubner – This book just may redefine the way you look at the modern world. Through skillful storytelling and wry insight, Levitt and Dubner set out to explore the hidden side of everything from the inner workings of a crack gang to the myths of political campaign finance to the true importance or unimportance of gun control. It’s an eye-opening read.

* **Fast Food Nation** by Eric Schlosser – “What we eat has changed more in the last forty years than in the last forty thousand,” Schlosser observes, yet most Americans know very little about how that food is made, where, by whom, and at what cost. In a wonderfully horrifying way, this book exposes the American fast food industry’s evil side. It’s a true eye-opener.



Stumbling on Happiness by Daniel Gilbert – Gilbert, a Harvard professor of psychology has studied happiness for decades, and he shares scientific findings that just might change the way you look at the world. His primary goal is to persuade you into accepting the fact that happiness is not really what or where you imagined it would be. This is my favorite book on happiness by a long shot.

A People's History of the United States by Howard Zinn – Although this book is likely to be more interesting to Americans than citizens of other countries, it's truly a great read either way. Covering Christopher Columbus's arrival through President Clinton's years in office, as well as the 2000 election and the War on Terrorism, the book features an insightful and frank analysis of the most important events in American history told from the perspective of minorities and the working class.

* ***The Devil in the White City: Murder, Magic, and Madness at the Fair that Changed America.***
Larson, Erik. Tale of early 20th Century Chicago World's Fair.

Manchester, William. ***A World Lit Only by Fire: The Medieval Mind and the Renaissance.*** Portrait of an Age. This is the preeminent popular history of civilization's rebirth after the Dark Ages

Read, Piers Paul. ***Alive.*** —Sixteen Men, Seventy-two Days, and Insurmountable Odds—The Classic Adventure of Survival in the Andes.

***The Now Habit** by Neil Fiore – Quite possibly the best book ever written on overcoming procrastination. Fiore provides an optimistic, empathetic, and factual explanation of why we procrastinate and then delivers practical, immediately applicable tips for reversing the procrastination spell. On many levels, this book saved my life.

The Tipping Point by Malcolm Gladwell – Gladwell looks at how small ideas can spread like viruses, sparking global sociological changes. 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.

Barracoon : The Story of the Last "Black Cargo"

by *Zora Neale
Hurston* Year

In 1927, Zora Neale Hurston went to Plateau, Alabama, just outside Mobile, to interview eighty-six-year-old Cudjo Lewis. Of the millions of men, women, and children transported from Africa to America as slaves, Cudjo was then the only person alive to tell the story of this integral part of the nation's history. Hurston was there to record Cudjo's firsthand account of the raid that led to his capture and bondage fifty years after the Atlantic slave trade was outlawed in the United States.