**AP English Language and Composition: Summer Reading Assignments**

Welcome to AP Lang! I am excited to meet each of you. The work you do on these summer assignments is an important chance for me to get to know you as a reader, writer, thinker, and student, so please give yourself plenty of time to do your best work.

You are probably accustomed to reading primarily fiction in your English classes; AP Lang, however, places especial emphasis on nonfiction. The three essays I’ve assigned for you to read this summer are a great introduction to the American nonfiction tradition.

Over the summer, I expect you to read three essays and compose two brief pieces of writing. I suggest starting these assignments during the first week of July and progressing at a pace that works for you over the course of the month. This will give you plenty of time to read and write, but your responses to the pieces will still be fresh in your mind when school begins. Each of your assignments are described below.

**Read and annotate each of the following essays:**

* “Notes of a Native Son” by James Baldwin
* “The White Album” by Joan Didion
* “The View from Mrs. Thompson’s” by David Foster Wallace

You will probably find it helpful to research some of the historical events the writers discuss. I encourage you to do so.

Once you’ve done all the readings, please complete both assignments below.

**Write a 2-3 page response to the following prompt:**

Analyze one of the essays I’ve assigned. How does this essay portray American life at the time it was written? What themes does the author consider central to the American experience? What is the tone of the essay, and how does this tone help convey the author’s point(s)? Use evidence from the text to support your responses.

**Write a 2-3 page response to the following prompt:**

What ideas, in your opinion, define contemporary American life? What do Americans currently value, and what do we fear? What does it mean to be an American today? What has your experience as an American been like so far, and how do you feel about it? Use evidence (research, personal experiences, examples, and/or observations) to support your responses.

You may be accustomed to using a fairly rigid, often 5-paragraph, essay format. You do not have to adhere to those constraints while completing these assignments. You can write in a form that works for you, and you can speak from your first-person experience; however, you should still make clear claims supported by evidence, utilize paragraph breaks and correct grammar and syntax, and put your documents in MLA format. The rubric I will use to grade these assignments is on the following page.

**Rubric: Summer Writing Assignments**

I will use the criteria below to assess both of your summer writing assignments.

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|  | **Mastery (5 points)** | **Proficiency (4 points)** | **Developing (3 points)** | **Beginning (2 points)** |
| **Quality of analysis** | The piece expresses clear, thoughtful, and nuanced ideas. Relevant examples are included where appropriate. | Most of the piece’s ideas are clear and thoughtful. There may be times when ideas presented are a bit basic, are unclear, or are not supported by sufficient relevant evidence. | The piece may include some thoughtful ideas, but there are vague, underdeveloped, or unclear parts throughout. The piece may rely on generalizations where more specific evidence would be more effective. | The piece is underdeveloped and may appear rushed. The piece may not utilize any evidence or explore its arguments in logical ways. |
| **Organization** | The piece is organized in a way that makes sense and is easy to follow. The piece flows logically from one idea to the next. | The piece’s organization mostly makes sense and is easy to follow, barring occasional confusing points or abrupt transitions. | The piece’s organization is not always logical. Some points are raised in a way that is random, abrupt, or confusing. | The piece does not have an overarching organizational structure; it may appear that it was composed in one sitting without any pre-planning or revision. |
| **Editing and MLA Formatting** | The piece utilizes correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation, and careful editing is evident. The piece adheres to all the conventions of MLA formatting. | The piece utilizes correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation, barring occasional errors. The piece adheres to most of the conventions of MLA formatting. | The piece contains multiple spelling, grammatical, and/or punctuation errors and would have benefitted from more thorough editing. There are multiple flaws in MLA formatting. | The piece does not appear to have been edited for spelling, grammar, or punctuation errors. The piece is not in MLA formatting, or attempts at MLA formatting are consistently flawed. |

Please reach out if you have any questions as you complete these assignments.

I look forward to learning with you!