

A.P. English Language and Composition Summer Reading/Writing Assignment, 2009-2010

1. Opinion Column Responses

In this course, knowledge counts, so we will be doing some knowledge building this summer. In preparation for the argument questions you will have to answer on the exam in May, you will track two syndicated (political) columnists' writing this summer. The first week of summer vacation, read as many opinion columns as you can to find two writers you enjoy. To expose yourself to a wide range of ideas, you might consider choosing one columnist that you hate. Beginning the second week (June 29), read and annotate one column each by your selected columnists. (See Attachment 1 for information on annotating a text.) Then complete the following for both columns:

- Cut and paste the article on a piece of typing paper, or print out an online article.
- Using proper MLA format, cite your source. (See Attachment 2.)
- On a separate piece of paper, summarize the article, being sure to include its main point. Type your responses, using a Times New Roman 12-pt. font.
- State the author's purpose.
- Examine the logical appeals (logos, ethos, pathos). (See Attachment 3.)
- Note any gaps in logic—places where you could launch a counter-argument.
- Comment on tone. (See Attachment 4.)
- Place the following information in the upper LEFT corner of EACH piece of paper:
Your name, my name, course title, and date (day month year, with no comma).

Once you complete the assignment the week of August 27, staple one columnist's articles and your responses together in chronological order, and then staple the other columnist's articles the same way. Staple the articles in "book" format—with three staples down the left side of the papers. Place both packets together in a manila file folder with your name, my name, course title, and due date (same format as above) on the front of the file folder. *This collection, due the first day of class in September, will be checked for completeness and spot-graded for quality of thinking and effort.* I expect twenty columns and responses.

You may choose any columnists who interest you. *The Virginian-Pilot* offers a variety of syndicated columnists, rotating them on a regular basis. You may also find opinion columns in newsmagazines and online. (If you do not have Internet access at home, the public libraries offer that service.) Check out the sites listed below for listings of hundreds of columnists.

<http://www.headlinespot.com/opinion/columnists/>

<http://www.argusleader.com/apps/pbcs.dll/section?Category=COLUMNISTS02>

<http://www.creators.com/opinion.html> (Creators Syndicate)

<http://www.shns.com> (Scripps Howard News Service—Click on Columns; then click on Political Commentary.)

I'm including the names of some of the more well-known columnists, but this is in no way a comprehensive list. Many of these columnists are printed in our local paper—they write for a particular paper (say, *The New York Times*), but their columns are sold by a syndicate to other papers, like ours. Some online newspapers are available free (*The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Sacramento Bee*), but others require subscriptions (*The Wall Street Journal*).

Thomas Friedman, *NY Times*
Ellen Goodman, *Boston Globe*
Joe Klein, *Time*
Paul Krugman, *NY Times*
Tom Teepen, Cox News
Fareed Zakeria, *Newsweek*
Maureen Dowd, *NY Times*
Jay Ambrose, Scripps Howard
Betsy Hart, Scripps Howard
Thomas Sowell, Creators Syndicate
Nicholas Kristof, *NY Times*

George Will, *Newsweek*
Richard Cohen, *Wash. Post*
Anna Quindlen, *Newsweek*
Leonard Pitts, *Miami Herald*
Robert Scheer, Creators Syndicate
E. J. Dionne, Jr., *Wash. Post*
William H. Buckley, *Nat'l Review*
Marianne Means, Hearst Newspapers
Charles Krauthammer, *W. Post*
Suzanne Fields, Creators Syndicate
Christopher Brauchli,
<http://humanraceandothersports.com>

2. The Bible

In *Time*'s April 2, 2007, cover story, David Van Biema reminds us that "...the Bible is the most influential book ever written. Not only is the Bible the best-selling book of all time, it is the best-selling book of the year every year." Yet Stephen Prothero, chair of the religion department at Boston University and author of the new book *Religious Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know—and Doesn't*, claims that "...an entire generation of Americans is growing up almost entirely ignorant of the most influential book in world history, unable to understand...the scriptural oratory of President Lincoln and the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. or even the prominence of Ezekiel 25:17...in the film *Pulp Fiction*." "Surveys...have found that only one out of three U.S. citizens is able to name the four Gospels, and one out of ten thinks that Joan of Arc was Noah's wife. No wonder pollster George Gallup has concluded that the United States is 'a nation of biblical illiterates.' Biblical illiteracy is not just a religious problem. It is a civic problem with political consequences." Van Biema adds, "...it's hard to call anyone educated who hasn't at least given thought to [the Bible's] key passages." I fully agree. It is imperative that you know the Bible's characters and stories so you can recognize the allusions you will encounter throughout Western civilization—in literature, politics, art, history, philosophy, film, etc. The Bible permeates our culture; Shakespeare alone alludes to the Bible some 1,300 times. And because American political speech is laced with biblical references, only informed citizens knowledgeable about the Bible can actively participate in a civic life that is awash with such allusions, and increasingly so in today's political climate. Therefore, we will further build knowledge by becoming biblically literate so that we may more fully engage in public life.

For this portion of the summer assignment, you are to read the portions of the Bible listed below and *briefly* summarize the stories listed in parentheses. Label each summary with the title given below. Much of what you read will sound familiar—you probably already have encountered

these characters and stories and sayings out in the real world. Write your summaries in a *journal-type bound book*, with either lined or unlined pages. You can find these journals in stores ranging from Dollar Tree to Barnes and Noble. Serious writing deserves serious presentation, and spiral notebooks and school composition books are not serious presentations. *This journal is due the first day of class in September. Be prepared for an identification quiz the first day of school.*

A note on Bible translations: While most biblical references allude to the King James Version of the Bible, it is probably the most difficult to understand for the average American reader. Even though you are not “the average bear” (to what am I alluding here? ☺), I would suggest you read a more user-friendly version. The Revised Standard Version is a classic, but others you might look at include the New American Bible and any of the “parallel” Bibles, which print up to four translations on a single page! If you do not have a Bible available at home, you can check one out from the public library.

THE OLD TESTAMENT (HEBREW BIBLE)

- The Book of Genesis (includes Creation, Adam and Eve, Temptation, Cain and Abel, Noah and the Ark, Babel, Abram-Abraham, Sodom and Gomorrah, Sacrifice of Isaac, Esau and Jacob, Joseph, Jacob/Egypt, Israel into Egypt)
- Exodus chapters 1-14 (the Exodus from Egypt); 19-20 (The Covenant at Mount Sinai); 32:1-20 (The Golden Calf)
- Judges chapters 14-16 (Samson, Philistines, Delilah)
- I Samuel 16: 17-23 (David Soothes Saul); 17: 21-58 (David Slays Goliath); 18: 1-27 (Saul Seeks to Kill David); 19: 1-7 (Jonathan Saves David)
- II Samuel 11: 2-27 (David and Bathsheba); 12: 1-25 (David’s Son Solomon); 14: 24-25 (Absalom); chapter 15 (Absalom’s Conspiracy); chapter 18 (David Mourns Absalom)
- I Kings 3: 16-28 (Solomon’s Judgment); 12: 1-13 (Queen of Sheba)
- The Book of Job
- Daniel chapters 1-2 (Daniel, Nebuchadnezzar’s Dreams); 3: 1-25, 46-51, 90-97 (Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego); chapter 5 (The Writing on the Wall); 6: 2-24 (In the Lion’s Den)

THE NEW TESTAMENT (CHRISTIAN BIBLE)

- The Book of Matthew (includes Three Wise Men, John the Baptist, Temptation of Christ, Teachings of Christ, Disciples, Parables, Death of John the Baptist, Blind Leading the Blind, Authority of Jesus, Righteousness, the Last Supper: The Covenant, Crucifixion, Resurrection)
- Mark chapter 6 (includes Rejection at Nazareth, Feeding of the Five Thousand, Walking on Water)
- Luke 1:26-56 (Annunciation); 2: 1-20 (Birth of Jesus); 10: 25-37 (The Good Samaritan); 16: 19-31 (Rich Man and Lazarus); 19: 1-10 (Zacchaeus); 23: 32-56 (Crucifixion)
- John 1:1-14 (The Word Made Flesh), 23-42 (The Lamb of God, Simon Peter); 2: 1-11 (Wedding at Cana); 8: 1-11 (Judging Others); 11: 1-44 (Raising of Lazarus of Bethany); 13: 1-17 (Jesus Washes Disciples’ Feet); 20: 11-29 (Doubting Thomas)

- The Acts of the Apostles (also known as Acts) 2: 1-12 (Coming of the Spirit/Pentecost); 8: 1-3 (Saul's Persecution of the Church); 9: 1-20 (Saul's Conversion); 13: 9 (Saul Becomes Paul)
- The First Letter (Epistle) to the Corinthians (also known as I Corinthians) chapter 13 (Love)
- Revelation chapter 6 (Opening of Seals/Four Horses); chapter 8 (Seventh Seal: Judgment); 21: 1-8 (New Heaven and New Earth)

3. Reading Assignments

The Scarlet Letter, Nathaniel Hawthorne

The Crucible, Arthur Miller

The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, Mark Twain

Into the Wild, Jon Krakauer*****

Books are available for checkout in room 125 upon return of the signed contract. Be prepared to discuss and/or write about these books during the first weeks of school.

4. Reading Response Journal/Literature Log—(See Attachment 6)

Using one blank book/journal, create a reading response journal with at least fifteen journal entries (per assigned book—but not *Into the Wild*) and original artwork that reflects upon your reading of each book. Because serious thinking and writing deserves a serious presentation, all entries should be compiled in a bound (not spiral) journal-type book. I WILL NOT accept work in a spiral notebook. Journals and blank books are available in stores ranging from Barnes & Noble Booksellers to Wal-Mart. The journal is due the first day of school.

Guidelines:

- Each journal entry should focus on a personal response or analysis of the book; the entry SHOULD NOT be a summary.
- Each entry should include a date, chapters covered, and title. (Use a catchy phrase to sum up your entry, perhaps like a headline or an email subject line.)
- Although there is not a length requirement, entries that lack substance and thought WILL NOT receive credit.
- Journals should be neat and creative—incorporate artwork (hand drawn, collage-type, photography, etc., but NOT computer generated) to emphasize key points.

Suggestions:

- Discuss how a key line has made an impression on you.
- Describe an event/character to which/whom you can relate.
- Give your personal reaction to a choice/decision.
- Describe powerful uses of imagery in the text.
- Explain why you were attracted to a particular line or passage.
- Discuss how a theme has left an impression on you.
- Explain how an example of figurative language is significant.

- Discuss whether or not you enjoyed the selection.
- Describe the writing style of the author, paying particular attention to diction and syntax; discuss how you find the style either effective or ineffective.

5. Dialectic Journal

****This is for *Into the Wild* only (see Attachment 5) This is to be done instead of the Reading Response Journal.

6. Vocabulary Journal

I fully expect you to define words you do not know as you encounter them in your reading; one of my favorite things to do is to give a pop quiz on vocabulary from a particular passage. You cannot possibly grasp the depth of an author's meaning if you have no clue what his or her words mean. In my own experience, when I encounter a word I don't know, I stop reading, circle the word, look it up, write the definition in the margin (only if it is my own book, of course!), and reread the sentence armed with my new knowledge. If these are not your books, define the words in your Reading Response Journal, but do it AS YOU READ. Because you will be expected to keep a vocabulary journal throughout the school year, it might be a good idea to purchase a separate bound book for this purpose, but that is up to you.

7. Contact Information

If you have questions about any part of this assignment over the summer, email me at a.dale.desarro@vbschools.com. I will respond as soon as possible, usually within a day. Enjoy your knowledge building!

NOTE: Any student who registers for this course during the first three weeks of school is responsible for completing this assignment by a date to be determined by the instructor.