

AP English Language and Composition Reading List

GENERAL NONFICTION

Ambrose, Stephen. *Undaunted Courage*. Follows the Lewis and Clark expedition from Thomas Jefferson's hope of finding a waterway to the Pacific, through the heart-stopping moments of the actual trip, to Lewis's lonely demise on the Natchez Trace. For readers who love detailed history.

Barry, John M. *The Great Influenza*. A detailed description of the scourge of the "Spanish flu" of 1918 with interesting elements of the practice of medicine and medical school in those days. Especially appealing for students who are science oriented.

Rising Tide. An account of the flood of the Mississippi River in 1927. Elements are remarkably similar to the Katrina disaster. Students whose bent is engineering will find the fight of man vs. nature interesting. Connects well to American history, politics.

Capote, Truman. *In Cold Blood*. Truman Capote reconstructs the 1959 murder of a Kansas farm family and the investigation that led to the capture, trial, and execution of the killers...the story of the lives and deaths of these six people, the victims and the murderers. Ground breaking journalism that reads like fiction.

Collins, Larry and Dominique Lapierre. *Is Paris Burning?* How Paris Miraculously Escaped Adolf Hitler's Sentence of Death in August, 1944. The dramatic story of the liberation of Paris...exciting, emotionally charged history, impeccably researched and written. 2

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.

Gladwell, Malcolm. *Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference*. Explores the tipping point phenomenon—what causes a fashion trend, the popularity of a new product, or a drop in the crime rate.

Blink: The Power of Thinking Without Thinking. A book about how we think without thinking, about choices that seem to be made in an instant...that aren't as simple as they seem...cutting edge neuroscience and psychology

Outliers: The Story of Success. Outlier" is a scientific term to describe things or phenomena that lie outside normal experience. In the summer, in Paris, we expect most days to be somewhere between warm and very hot. But imagine if you had a day in the middle of August where the temperature fell below freezing. That day would be outlier. And while we have a very good understanding of why summer days in Paris are warm or hot, we know a good deal less about why a summer day in Paris might be freezing cold. In this book I'm interested in people who are outliers—in men and women who, for one reason or another, are so accomplished and so extraordinary and so outside of ordinary experience that they are as puzzling to the rest of us as a cold day in August.

What the Dog Saw: Malcolm Gladwell's new book, presents nineteen brilliantly researched and provocative essays that exhibit the curiosity his readers love, each with a graceful narrative that leads to a thought-provoking analysis

Junger, Sebastian. *The Perfect Storm: A True Story of Men against the Sea*. Back cover description: In 1991, as Halloween nears, a cold front moves south from Canada, a hurricane swirls over Bermuda, and an intense storm builds over the Great Lakes...forces converge to create...a 100-year tempest that catches the North Atlantic fishing fleet off guard and unprotected. Readers weigh anchor with sailors struggling against the elements; they follow

meteorologists, who watch helplessly as the storm builds; and, by helicopter and boat, they navigate 100-foot seas and 120-mph winds to attempt rescue against harrowing odds.

Krakauer, Jon. *Into Thin Air: A Personal Account of the Mt Everest Disaster.* —A harrowing tale of the perils of high-altitude climbing, a story of bad luck and worse judgment and heart-breaking heroism || (*People*) The stuff of classic adventure tales...

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

Levitt, Steven D. and Stephen J. Dubner. *Freakonomics: A Rogue Economist Explores the Hidden Side of Everything.* Highly acclaimed, this book won numerous, highly prestigious prizes...considered readable, interesting, ground-breaking, and —dazzling by critics.

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.

Sacks, Oliver. *The Man Who Mistook His Wife For a Hat: And Other Clinical Tales.* Psychology one of the great clinical writers of the 20th century (New York Times) recounts the case histories of patients lost in the bizarre, apparently inescapable world of neurological disorders...stories of individuals afflicted with fantastic perceptual and intellectual aberrations.

Stanton, Doug. *Into Harm's Way: The Sinking of the U.S.S. Indianapolis and the Extraordinary Story of Its Survivors.* Best selling account of WW II naval disaster, (Japanese submarine torpedo's US ship in 1945)...a classic tale of war, survival, and extraordinary courage.

Soja, Edward. *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places.* The book's central argument is that spatial thinking, or what has been called the geographical or spatial imagination, has tended to be bicameral, or confined to two approaches. Spatiality is either seen as concrete material forms to be mapped, analyzed, and explained; or as mental constructs, ideas about and representations of space and its social significance. Edward Soja critically re-evaluates this dualism to create an alternative approach, one that comprehends both the material and mental dimensions of spatiality but also extends beyond them to new and different modes of spatial thinking.

Twenge, Jean M. *Generation Me: Why Today's Young Americans Are More Confident, Assertive, Entitled—And More Miserable Than Ever Before (2007).*
The Narcissism Epidemic: Living in the Age of Entitlement (2009)

Zakaria, Fareed. *Post-America World.* An important book by one of today's most influential journalists.

Woolfe, Virginia. *A Room of Own's One:* Surprisingly, this long essay about society and art sexism is one of Woolfe's most accessible works. Woolfe, a major modernist writer and critic, takes us on an erudite yet conversational--and completely entertaining--walk around the history of women in writing, smoothly comparing the architecture of sentences by the likes of [William Shakespeare](#) and [Jane Austen](#), all the while lampooning the chauvinistic state of university education in the England of her day. When she concluded that to achieve their full greatness as writers, women will need a solid income and a privacy, Woolfe pretty much invented modern feminist criticism.

Three Guineas: Like Virginia Woolfe's better known *A Room of One's Own*, *Three Guineas* is still timely and well worth the effort required to read it. In this book-length essay, an English writer responds to a letter - from a society for preventing war and protecting culture and intellectual liberty - which asks "How in your opinion are we to prevent war?" and requests a one guinea donation.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY, BIOGRAPHY AND MEMOIR

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, comes to life in pictures...and in the words of the men who lived the extraordinary Antarctic adventure...an exhilarating account of one of the greatest episodes in the history of polar exploration...one of history's all-time great survival stories.

Chen, Da. *Colors of the Mountain*. —"I was born in Southern China in 1962, in the tiny town of Yellow Stone..."

Dillard, Annie. *An American Childhood*. Autobiography of 1950s childhood in Pittsburgh...combines the child's sense of wonder with adult's intelligence and is written in some of the finest prose that exists in contemporary American writing...a joyous ode to [Dillard's] childhood

Frankl, Viktor E. *Man's Search for Meaning*. Psychiatrist's memoir of life in Nazi death camps and its lessons for spiritual survival. Has sold more than 10 million copies in twenty-four languages...listed in a Library of Congress survey as among the ten most influential books in America as —a book that made a difference in your life. May be of special interest to students who liked Elie Wiesel's *Night*.

Hillenbrand, Laura. *Seabiscuit*. Sports biography of a great American race horse in Depression era America.

Kennedy, Caroline. *Profiles in Courage for our Time*. From Publishers Weekly: —"In 1990, the Kennedy family resurrected the concept and established the Profiles in Courage Award for selfless public service. Now, in this expertly packaged anthology, Caroline Kennedy and over a dozen prominent writers bring the sacrifices of those award winners to life...a stirring look at people who rarely thought about what they could do for themselves, but always about what they could do for their country."

Kennedy, John F. *Profiles in Courage*. —"This is a book about the most admirable of human virtues—courage. 'Grace under pressure,' Ernest Hemingway defined it. And these are the stories of the pressures experienced by eight United States senators and the grace with which they endured them." (Kennedy). Pulitzer Prize, 1957. Of special interest to students interested in politics, public life...about the kind of courage America needs— moral courage, the courage of personal integrity.

Manchester, William. *American Caesar: Douglas MacArthur 1880-1964*: Inspiring, outrageous...
A thundering paradox of a man. Douglas MacArthur, one of only five men in history to have achieved the rank of General of the United States Army. He served in World Wars I, II, and the Korean War, and is famous for stating that "in war, there is no substitute for victory." AMERICANCAESAR examines the exemplary army career, the stunning successes (and lapses) on the battlefield, and the turbulent private life of the soldier-hero whose mystery and appeal created a uniquely American legend.

Markham, Beryl. *West With the Night*. Moving memoir of early 20th Century woman aviator in East Africa.

Sheff, David. *Beautiful Boy*. A memoir about a father's struggle with his son's meth addiction. Gives insight into the lack of treatment and options for this kind of addiction. Includes research and personal narration.

Other Suggestions:

The Color of Water by James McBride (1995)
The Omnivore's Dilemma by Michael Pollan (2006)
Flash Boys: a Wall Street Revolt by Michael Lewis (2014)
The Boys in the Boat by Daniel James Brown (2013)
Walden by Henry David Thoreau (1854)
The Glass Castle by Jeanette Walls (2006)
Longitude by Dava Sobel (1995)
Night by Elie Wiesel (1958)
Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee by Dee Brown (1970)
The Federalist Papers by John Jay, Alexander Hamilton and James Madison (1787)
Silent Spring by Rachel Carson (1962) (e-book available at school library website)
The Rights of Man by Thomas Paine (1791)
A Vindication of the Rights of Woman by Mary Wollstonecraft (1792)
The Innocents Abroad by Mark Twain (1869)
I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings by Maya Angelou (1970)
The Right Stuff by Tom Wolfe (1979)
Castaways by Alvar Nunez Cabeza de Vaca (1542)
Hunger for Memory by Richard Rodriguez (1982)
Undaunted Courage by Stephen Ambrose (1997)
Founding Brothers by Joseph J. Ellis (2003)
A Short History of Nearly Everything by Bill Bryson (2004)

Fiction

Before 1900

Austen	<i>Mansfield Park</i>
Balzac	<i>Pere Goirot</i>
Bronte, E.	<i>Wuthering Heights</i>
Bronte, C.	<i>Jane Eyre</i>
Cervantes	<i>Don Quixote</i>
Dickens	<i>David Copperfield</i> <i>Great Expectations</i>
Dinesen	<i>Out of Africa</i>
Dostoyevsky	<i>Crime and Punishment</i> <i>The Brothers Karamazov</i>
Dreiser	<i>An American Tragedy</i>
Dumas	<i>The Count of Monte Cristo</i>
Eliot	<i>Adam Bede</i> <i>Silas Marner</i> <i>The Mill on the Floss</i> <i>Middlemarch</i>
Flaubert	<i>Madame Bovary</i>
Forester	<i>Howard's End</i> <i>Passage to India</i>
Goldsmith	<i>The Vicar of Wakefield</i>
Hardy	<i>Far From the Maddening Crowd</i>

	<i>The Mayor of Casterbridge</i>
	<i>Jude the Obscure</i>
	<i>Tess of the d'Urbervilles</i>
Hugo	<i>Les Miserables</i>
Marlowe	<i>Dr. Faustus</i>
Moliere	<i>The Misanthrope</i>
Shakespeare	<i>Antony and Cleopatra</i>
Shelley	<i>Frankenstein</i>
Swift	<i>Gulliver's Travels</i>
Tolstoy	<i>War and Peace</i>
	<i>Anna Karenina</i>
Turgenev	<i>Fathers and Sons</i>
Voltaire	<i>Candide</i>
Wharton	<i>The Age of Innocence</i>
	<i>The House of Mirth</i>
Wilde	<i>An Ideal Husband</i>
After 1900	
Agee	<i>A Death in the Family</i>
Allende	<i>The House of Spirits</i>
Alvarez	<i>How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents</i>
Atkinson	<i>Behind the Scenes at the Museum</i>
Bausch	<i>Violence</i>
Beattie	<i>Chilly Scenes of Winter</i>
Bellow	<i>Henderson The Rain King</i>
Bowen	<i>Death of the Heart</i>
Brown	<i>Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee</i>
Camus	<i>The Stranger</i>
	<i>The Plague</i>
Cather	<i>Death Comes for the Arch Bishop</i>
Christie	<i>Murder on The Orient Express</i>
Dorris	<i>A Yellow Raft in Blue Water</i>
Esquivel	<i>Like Water for Chocolate</i>
Fowles	<i>The French Lieutenant's Woman</i>
Garcia-Marquez	<i>One Hundred years of Solitude</i>
	<i>Love in the Time of Cholera</i>
Gardner	<i>Grendel</i>
Goldman	<i>Memoirs of a Geisha</i>
Green	<i>The Heart of the Matter</i>
Hamilton	<i>The Book of Ruth</i>
Heller	<i>Catch 22</i>
Hesse	<i>Siddartha</i>
Ishiguro	<i>The Remains of the Day</i>
James	<i>An Unsuitable Job for a Woman</i>
Kidd	<i>The Secret Life of Bees</i>
Kingsolver	<i>The Poisonwood Bible</i>
McCarthy	<i>The Crossing</i>
McCourt	<i>Angela's Ashes</i>
McCullers	<i>The Heart is a Lonely Hunter</i>
Malamud	<i>The Assistant</i>

Maugham	<i>Of Human Bondage</i>
McEwan	<i>Atonement</i>
Morrison	<i>Beloved</i>
O'Conner	<i>The Violent Bear it Away</i>
Otto	<i>How to Make an American Quilt</i>
Pasternak	<i>Doctor Zhivago</i>
Patchet	<i>Bel Canto</i>
Plath	<i>The Bell Jar</i>
Potok	<i>My Name is Asher Lev</i>
Rand	<i>The Fountainhead</i>
Russo	<i>Empire Falls</i>
Salinger	<i>The Catcher and the Rye</i>
Smiley	<i>A Thousand Acres</i>
Solzhenitsen	<i>One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich</i>
	<i>The Gulag Archipelago</i>
Steinbeck	<i>East of Eden</i>
Tan	<i>The Joy Luck Club</i>
	<i>The Kitchen God's Wife</i>
Toole	<i>A Confederacy of Dunces</i>
Updike	<i>The Centaur</i>
Vonnegut	<i>Slaughter House Five</i>
Welty	<i>The Optimist's Daughter</i>
Willis	<i>The Doomsday Book</i>
Woolfe	<i>Mrs. Dalloway</i>
	<i>To the Lighthouse</i>