

AP Language and Composition Summer Reading Assignment, 2017

This assignment will also be posted on sof.edu and my blog soflitandlife.blogspot.com

Introduction: There are some preparation requirements and three types of assignments, so please read all of the following pages carefully. In order to complete these assignments, you will need to pace them throughout the summer. It's crucial that you are reading regularly over the course of the next two months. If you have any questions, email me at jcandlin@sof.edu. All assignments are due on the first day of class.

Part I

All texts have purposes. They **entertain** us, **persuade** us to think in new ways or take action, and **inform** us about the world and ourselves. Memoir is a genre that often does all three and although it focuses on one person's experience, it is a genre that can open readers' eyes to important aspects of human nature and society. The memoirs on the list below have all been chosen because they are critical of some aspect of society. Some would even argue that they are a form of protest against the social norms of the times in which they were written. In fact, literature is widely considered one of the ways that people protest against social norms. The highly acclaimed writer Richard Wright once said, "All literature is protest. You can't name one literary work that isn't protest."

This summer, you will investigate how a literary work of your choosing confirms or refutes Wright's assertion. Read two of the following memoirs below. As you read, annotate the text, using everything you have learned about reading closely. Then, choose the memoir that you have more to say about and write a 500 word essay discussing how the memoir confirms or refutes Wright's statement. Consider the following series of questions: What is the writer protesting through their memoir? Where is their protest most visible? Ultimately, what does the writer want you to understand about American society in the conditions in which s/he experienced it?

Memoirs*

Girl Interrupted by Susannah Keyson

(<https://www.amazon.com/Girl-Interrupted-Susanna-Kaysen/dp/0679746048>)

Decoded by Jay-Z

(https://www.amazon.com/Decoded-Jay-Z/dp/0812981154/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1466027071&sr=1-1&keywords=Decoded)

Woman Warrior by Maxine Hong Kingston

(https://www.amazon.com/Woman-Warrior-Memoirs-Girlhood-Ghosts/dp/0780736842/ref=sr_1_2?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1466027166&sr=1-2&keywords=Woman+Warrior)

This Boy's Life by Tobias Wolff

<https://www.amazon.com/This-Boys-Life-Tobias-Wolff/dp/0802136680>

*If you have another memoir you would like to read, send me an email with the title and the reason you want to read it.

Part II. NOTEBOOK WORK: Reflection on your identity as a reader and writer, including:

- a. **Two pages about yourself as a reader and writer.** Who are you? Which books, images, songs, or films have influenced the way you think about the world? What are your areas of expertise? Feel free to be creative! You can draw, write a poem, write a more traditional first person narrative or an essay. It is up to you.
- b. **A two page expression of your impression of “America.”** Which words, images, people and tensions come to mind?

Part III. Read and Respond to Editorials. Sources are listed below. Please look up “editorial” if you are not sure what it means.

1. Find at least three editorials (not news articles or informational features) from reputable newspapers or issues-based magazines (you should mix-and-match, using at least two-three different sources). Choose articles that you have a strong opinion about that you can agree, disagree or qualify (you agree with some but not all) the author’s opinion. You may find articles online or from actual newspapers and magazines.
2. Write a response on each of the editorials. What aspects of the editorial were persuasive? What are your thoughts about the editorial or the issues presented? Your responses should be thoughtful, detailed and between 200-250 words in length (longer responses will not be read). See additional questions below the possible sources to guide you.

Sources for Editorials

The New York Times (US newspaper), *The Washington Post* (US newspaper), *National Review* (US political magazine), *The New Yorker* (US ideas magazine), *Atlantic Monthly* (US ideas magazine), *Harper's* (US ideas magazine), *Mother Jones* (US ideas magazine), *The Walrus* (Canadian ideas magazine), *Maclean's* (Canadian newsmagazine), *The Economist* (UK news magazine), *Time* (US news magazine), *Newsweek* (US news magazine), *The New Republic* (US political magazine), *Arts and Letters Daily* (an online compilation of items from around the English-speaking world)

Some questions to guide you: (You don't have to answer them all).

- What are the author's main points?
- Do you agree or disagree or qualify (you agree with some but not all) with the writer's viewpoints? Why?
- Did the editorial make you want to know more about the issue?
- Which parts of this article were particularly powerful? What techniques are used? What makes them good?
- Anything else this editorial makes you think about?
- How would you describe the author's tone? (the writer's attitude toward the subject)
- How would you describe the writer's style? (sentence constructions, word choice, rhetorical devices used, organization, etc.)