

AP English Language and Composition Summer Reading Assignment

This summer you will read ONE of the following THREE books: *Overachievers: the Secret Lives of Driven Kids* by Alexandra Robinson, *The Geeks Shall Inherit the Earth* by Alexandra Robinson, OR *Blink* by Malcolm Gladwell. These books each explore similar themes, but I want you to be able to choose the book you are most interested in reading.

On the first day of school, you will write an in-class essay on the book you chose to read this summer. You will compose an essay on one of the themes in the text that you have chosen to annotate.

Overachievers

- Competition
- Standardized Testing
- Student Stress
- Cheating

Geeks

- Social life
- Parents
- Bullying
- Education/Teachers

Blink

- Decision making
- Personal Relationships
- Bias
- Job Effectiveness

Your essay will focus on only **one** of the four themes for the book you select.

Your essay will be scored with the attached rubric. Please read it. You will see that, to earn the highest score, your essay must do the following:

- make a compelling argument – how does the author develop the theme over the course of the entire book.
- quote frequently and thoughtfully from the book
- cite those quotations according to MLA guidelines
- **analyze** those quotations thoroughly and thoughtfully
- make it clear that you read the book through your inclusion and analysis of details

You will **not** be able to use your book to write the essay. However, as you read, you may record as many annotations as you'd like. These annotations must be handwritten on sticky notes or index cards. They may **not** be typed. They may **not** be written on sheets of paper. Your teacher will collect ALL of these notes with your essay on day one of class.

You may format your annotations however you want, but if you want to earn the highest score on the essay, I recommend that each annotation include the following:

- some brief context for the quotation
- the direct quotation itself, followed by the page number in parentheses
- brief analysis of the quotation

When you write the essay, you will be required to remove the annotations from your book and use them as you write. Again, **you will not be able to use the book when you write the essay.**

You may NOT choose to skip annotating the text; if you do - bear in mind this will severely impact your grade. You cannot receive higher than a 70% on the essay without direct quotations from the book – annotate accordingly.

Academic Integrity

I expect that you utilize the utmost academic integrity when it comes to this and ALL assignments for AP English Language and Composition.

Academic integrity is honesty and responsibility in scholarship.

Every assignment you do in school is meant to measure your knowledge of something or your ability to do something. The grade you receive on the assignment should reflect that knowledge or ability. But an assignment cannot truly measure your knowledge or ability if you have not done your own work.

The summer reading assignment should be the product solely of **your** thoughts, effort, and ideas. Do not use websites. Sites like Wikipedia and SparkNotes serve a purpose, but using them for an assignment like this one is dishonest. Furthermore, your teachers are not interested in what SparkNotes says. We are interested in *your* ideas, interpretations, and arguments. We want to know what *you* think. Your ideas are far more interesting than the ones regurgitated again and again on the internet, and looking at those websites will color your thinking and prevent you from developing your own ideas.

Although there will doubtless be collaborative assignments throughout the school year, this is not one of them. Do your own work. You may not in any way work with someone else on this assignment.

If your annotations show any evidence of your having copied from a website, a classmate, or any other source, you will receive a zero on the essay.

Quoting from Literature

We will spend a lot of time during the school year perfecting your ability to quote effectively from literature. Think of this as a primer--pronounced *primmer*, the word refers to a short introductory text on a topic—to get you started.

There are three ways to quote from literature. The third one deals with dialogue; we'll cover that later. The first two methods, which you will find yourself using over and over, are **integration** and **complete sentence signal phrase**.

All of my examples use the first paragraph of S.E. Hinton's 1967 book *The Outsiders*, on page 3 of the book:

When I stepped out into the bright sunlight from the darkness of the movie house, I had only two things on my mind: Paul Newman and a ride home. I was wishing I looked like Paul Newman--- he looks tough and I don't--- but I guess my own looks aren't so bad. I have light-brown, almost-red hair and greenish-gray eyes. I wish they were grayer, because I hate most guys that have green eyes, but I have to be content with what I have. My hair is longer than a lot of boys wear theirs, squared off in back and long at the front and sides, but I am a greaser and most of my neighborhood rarely bothers to get a haircut. Besides, I look better with long hair.

Let's talk about **integration** first. When we write about literature, we discuss it in the present tense. Ponyboy (the main character in the book) *walks* out of the movie theater. He *is thinking* about a ride home. He *is* a greaser. His eyes *are* gray.

And when we write about literature, we discuss it in the third person. Look at my sentences. I use *Ponyboy*, *he*, *he*, and *his*, all third-person nouns.

When we integrate quotations, we are taking pieces of those quotations and making them part of our sentences. Those pieces must make grammatical sense within our sentences. That means making changes sometimes. Look at my examples below:

- When Ponyboy leaves the movie theater he has "only two things on [his] mind: Paul Newman and ride home" (Hinton 3).
- He thinks that his "own looks aren't so bad" (Hinton 3).
- He has "light-brown, almost-red hair." His eyes are "greenish-gray" (Hinton 3).
- Ponyboy wishes his eyes were "more gray," but he realizes that he has "to be content with what [he has]" (Hinton 3).
- His hair is "squared off in back and long at the front and sides" (Hinton 3).
- Most of the kids who live by Ponyboy "rarely [bother] to get a haircut" (Hinton 3).

When you use a **complete sentence signal phrase**, the quotation does not become part of your sentence; therefore, you don't have to make changes to it. In other words, you will quote it exactly as it appears in the book.

A complete sentence signal phrase is just that: a complete sentence that sets up the quotation, followed by a comma. Look at these examples:

- Pony is thinking about his looks when he leaves the movie theater, “I was wishing I looked like Paul Newman--- he looks tough and I don't--- but I guess my own looks aren't so bad” (Hinton 3).
- Ponyboy accepts the way he looks even though he's not content with it, “I have light-brown, almost-red hair and greenish-gray eyes. I wish they were more gray, because I hate most guys that have green eyes, but I have to be content with what I have” (Hinton 3).
- The last reason that Ponyboy gives for his long hair is simple, “Besides, I look better with long hair” (Hinton 3).

Let's Recap: You will read one of the books listed above. You will follow and make annotations on one of the given themes as you read the text this summer. On day one of class in the fall, you will compose an essay using only the notes that you took, not the actual text to **discuss how the author develops the theme of the text**. Be sure to read these directions carefully so that you are able to earn the most possible points when using your notes and quoting from the text.

How to Write a Literary Essay

When writing an essay with evidence to support a statement you make about a book, poem, or other text, follow the format below for each body paragraph:

T	Topic – This is your topic sentence. You must always have one sentence in which you clearly explain what you will prove or say. Use the SVE formula – Subject, Verb, and Effect.
E	Evidence – Provide a passage from your text to support whatever your opinion is. You must always properly quote it using MLA format and have a signal phrase to introduce the passage.
E	Explain – This part is crucial. You cannot have a quotation that does not explain the passage. This explanation should be 2-3 sentences in which you explain the specific language, thoughts, or ideas in your paper.
S	Significance – This is the “so what?” question. Why does what you just wrote about matter. How does your opinion impact the thoughts on the text as a whole? What is the value of what you are saying?

- We will use this format all year long. Please become familiar with it!!