

## Advanced Placement English Language and Composition Summer Reading

Congratulations on your decision to take AP English Language and Composition! This class will hone your skills in reading, writing, thinking, and speaking at a college level. AP Language focuses on understanding, analyzing, writing, and responding to nonfiction. We will read a mix of history, politics, social science, science, current events from a variety of time periods. We will analyze writing, develop sound reasoning and argumentation, and enter the academic conversation. This summer's reading will provide us with common texts, starting points for discussion, and a foundation from which to begin developing skills important for the AP exam.

### Required Reading

- *The Things They Carried* by Tim O'Brien **OR** *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* by Rebecca Skloot
- Columnist opinions throughout the summer (see description and links on page 4)

*The Things They Carried* is a non-traditional fictional text that is considered to be one of the best books about the Vietnam War. Written by veteran Tim O'Brien, this story focuses on the difficult issues of war. Since it was first published, *The Things They Carried* has become an unparalleled Vietnam War testament, a classic work of American literature, and a profound study of men at war that illuminates the capacity, and the limits, of the human heart and soul. As this is a war story, be prepared to encounter a few graphic war details and strong battlefield language, and to ponder deep questions about the nature of truth and storytelling. On Google Classroom, you will find a slang and military term dictionary, a brief video history of the Vietnam War, and an interview with Tim O'Brien.

*The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* is the story behind the HeLa cell line, an immortal line of cells that is responsible for some of the most important innovations in modern science, from the vaccine for polio to discoveries in cancer and AIDS. The HeLa cells were taken from an African American mother of five in Baltimore without her consent. She later died from a very aggressive cancer. Despite the importance of Ms. Lacks' cells, her family continued to live in poverty and ill health, knowing nothing of her great contributions. Rebecca Skloot spent ten years and great personal expense investigating this story and her book raises questions about ownership of one's cells and the ethics of medicine in the context of race, class, and education. You can find out more about the Lacks' family, Rebecca Skloot, hear the voice of George Gay, and even see a video of HeLa cells dividing from the links posted on Google Classroom.

**Google Classroom.** Join our class with the code **egldyzzr**. The writing should be submitted to Google Classroom by the first day of class. Feel free to turn your work in early as points will be deducted if it is late. If you have questions over the summer, please email me at [jspies@stcharless.org](mailto:jspies@stcharless.org).

## Required Writing

**Dialectical Journals.** A dialectical journal is a useful way to process what you're reading, gather textual evidence, and prepare yourself for group discussion. As you closely and critically read your selected book, **use post-its or bookmarks** to identify and annotate compelling passages for your journal and discussions. After you finish reading, select **6 passages** for your dialectical journal, which is a typed chart that includes the passage, page number, and your response.

Rhetorical Analysis. **3** of your selections should analyze the author's craft and structure. Explain how the author utilizes rhetorical strategies such as interesting choices in

- figurative language (metaphor, symbolism, etc)
- diction (word choice)
- syntax (sentence structure)
- tone (attitude of the narrator)
- imagery
- methods of development (description, narration, compare/contrast, etc.)

Do not just summarize or explain the quotes. Instead, explain the purpose for using the strategy and the specific effect the choice has on the reader. See example.

Argumentative Response. **3** of your selections should respond to the issues raised in the text.

Imagine yourself in conversation with the author's ideas.

- In what aspects do you agree, disagree, or have other points of view?
- If you agree, explain why.
- What other evidence or points of view should be considered?
- Question the text. Do you believe the author/characters?

Do not just summarize or explain the quotes. Instead, respond with your own viewpoint.

Keep your post its/bookmarks in your books for discussion and to review for a possible quiz.

An example of a dialectical journal follows. \*Remember to use present tense verbs with rhetorical analysis and to avoid the 2<sup>nd</sup> person "you" in argumentative responses.

Quotation (author page citation).	Rhetorical Analysis (at least 3-5 sentences)
<p>"-they carried like freight trains; they carried it on their backs and shoulders- and for all the ambiguities of Vietnam, all the mysteries and unknowns, there was at least the single abiding certainty that they would never be at a loss for things to carry" (O'Brien 2).</p>	<p>O'Brien sets up the <b>purpose of his title</b> in his first chapter as the reader discovers the physical and psychological weight the soldiers were forced to carry. His <b>simile</b> "they carried like freight trains" dehumanizes the soldiers whose bodies seem functioned only to move freight. A sense of confusion about their purpose in the Vietnam war is established with <b>diction choices</b> like "ambiguities" and "mysteries and unknowns." These words contrast with the "single abiding certainty" that the soldiers would be carrying something--the only reality they could cling to. The <b>contrast</b> reveals that while carrying things can be toil and drudgery, carrying items also provide purpose and hope to the soldiers in time of war.</p>
	<p>Argumentative Response (at least 3-5 sentences)</p>
<p>"It was no surprise to him that she hadn't come back for a follow-up. For Henrietta, entering Hopkins was like entering a foreign country in which she didn't speak the language. She knew about harvesting tobacco and butchering a pig, but she'd never heard the words <i>cervix</i> or <i>biopsy</i>. She didn't read or write much, and she hadn't studied science in school. She, like most black patients, only went to Hopkins when she thought she had no choice" (Skloot 16).</p>	<p>It's disconcerting that Dr. Jones withheld medical information because of Henrietta's lack of education and race. The foreign country simile illustrates just how out of place Henrietta feels. In contrast, today, not only does every patient feel it is their right to be fully informed by their doctor, it is the patients themselves who have researched their ailments on the internet and walk in demanding a certain treatment. However, there are still uneducated people who are unable to research their illnesses. It's scary how much trust people place in their doctors, but it should come as no surprise that people who lack education are the most skeptical when faced with difficult facts. If anything, this book underscores the importance of an education, if for nothing else than to stay alive and healthy.</p>

**Opinion Analysis and Response.** Read columnist opinions throughout the summer. Then choose **three** columns to analyze and respond. The author should be named and probably paid to write opinions. I suggest New York Times, Washington Post, Wall Street Journal, National Public Radio, USA Today, Boston Globe, but any credible media outlet will be acceptable. Don't be afraid of politics; educate yourself on the issues this summer. Optional: choose opinions that take different positions on the same topic.

1. Use Easybib to create a MLA **citation** on Google Docs. Then "Export" and "Save to Google docs" for perfect formatting.
2. Provide a brief **summary** of the author's claims and explain how are the claims supported, such as with observation, personal experience, facts, statistics, interviews, speculation, humor, etc.
3. Explain one commendable aspect of the writing for **rhetorical analysis**. You could discuss an effective choice in diction, tone, emotional or logical appeal, credibility of the author, sentence structure, or figurative language. Explain why it was effective.
4. **Respond** to the author. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the author's claims?

### **Example Opinion Analysis and Response**

Brooks, David. "The Blindness of Social Wealth." *The New York Times*, The New York Times, 16 Apr. 2018, [www.nytimes.com/2018/04/16/opinion/facebook-social-wealth.html?action=click&contentCollection=columnists&contentPlacement=49&module=stream\\_unit&pgtype=sectionfront&region=stream&rref=collection%2Fsectioncollection%2Fopinion-columnists&version=latest](http://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/16/opinion/facebook-social-wealth.html?action=click&contentCollection=columnists&contentPlacement=49&module=stream_unit&pgtype=sectionfront&region=stream&rref=collection%2Fsectioncollection%2Fopinion-columnists&version=latest).

Columnist David Brooks asserts social media is increasing the disparity of social wealth. He begins with an example from the Great Depression of a rancher's family whose miserly neighbor agreed to co-sign a loan because the neighbor had great respect for the owner. Brooks's example illustrates the value of a relationship as social capital. To bolster his argument, Brooks cites statistics, a Surgeon General, and a fellow columnist. As for Zuckerberg's recent testimony on Capitol Hill, Brooks insists the big issue isn't privacy, but how social media is feeding loneliness, and points out heavy internet users are less likely to know their neighbors. Brooks closes his article by applying a British anthropologist's theory to modern society and concludes that people with differing social capital do not understand "how the other half lives" (Brooks).

One impressive aspect of his column is Brooks's effective use of emotional appeal. The reader feels sympathy for people whose loneliness is so severe, it makes them sick. Brooks's point about the isolation and invisibility of lonely people urges the reader to reconsider their time on social media, and possibly reach out to those who might be lonely.

I found Brooks's characterization of social wealth interesting, and I agree that social media is feeding loneliness. Today many people feel socially wealthy because they have numerous "friends," "followers," or "likes." Yet, the reverse true as well. If I don't have many "likes," I might assume people do not like my post, and by extension, maybe they don't like me. To make matters worse, I compare myself to the posts of another "friend" who seemingly has a perfect life with a generous amount of "likes" and supportive comments. It's no wonder young people feel lonely. Electronic communication can not replace the reassurance of a hug, the fun on a boat ride with friends, or help lifting a heavy object. While social media may help us feel connected, particularly to people who live far away, the connection often doesn't translate into what people actually need from friends.