



## AP ENGLISH LANGUAGE SUMMER READING 2015

Welcome to AP English 11! We're delighted you've chosen to take on the challenge of this exciting and rewarding course. It's different from any English course you've ever taken before, and we will be asking a lot of you, even before the school year begins. There are **two parts** to your assignment, and while they will take some time and effort, we hope you will find the experience intellectually stimulating and engaging. One of our themes for the year is "entering the conversation" — being aware of what's going on in the world around you and learning to comment and argue intelligently on important issues. **Be sure to read the directions below very carefully; you are expected to follow them exactly.** Feel free to email us if you have any questions.

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### PART 1 – FOLLOWING A NATIONALLY-KNOWN COLUMNIST

**Directions:** During the summer holiday\*, you are required to choose **one political columnist** from a **major news publication** (for example, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Washington Times*, or *The Wall Street Journal*) to follow. You may choose from **nationally-recognized columnists who regularly appear at least once a week in national publications.** Some examples of well-known political columnists are: Gail Collins, Maureen Dowd, David Brooks, Charles Krauthammer, Eugene Robinson, Thomas Friedman, and George Will, but **you may choose a different political columnist provided he or she writes a regular column on serious political or social issues for a national publication. (Do NOT choose a sports columnist or humor columnist.)**

Once you choose your publication and political columnist, you can follow his or her pieces in the traditional format of a newspaper or online. Complete the following steps:

1. Be sure to read **over the course of the summer at least five\*\*** pieces by your chosen columnist and **retain a copy of each.** (Note: Political columnists write **opinion pieces on political or social issues – not news stories!**)
2. **After you print out a copy of the column or cut it out of the newspaper, underline** what you believe to be the thesis or central idea of each piece. **These annotated copies of the five opinion pieces are due on the first day of school. (Please note the due date: The first day of school!)**
3. Please arrive on the first day with the columns **assembled in chronological order.**
4. In addition, **have a cover sheet prepared** with your name, the name of your political columnist, the name of the publication, and the five (or more) dates of the columns you read and annotated. Next to the date of each column, write a sentence or two about the topic covered in the piece. **(The cover sheet should be typed and is also due on the first day of school.)**

\*To get the most out of this assignment, it is important to not leave it until the last week of vacation. As you follow your columnist over the summer, learn about the issues under debate by reading news stories about them. While you are required to read, annotate, and submit a minimum of five pieces, you are encouraged to do more.

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## PART 2 – PERSONAL MEMOIR

**Directions:** Early in the semester, we will explore the concept of Voice—a writer’s use of personal expression to reveal larger political or social truths. **Read at least one**\*\* of the following memoirs, which should be available at local libraries or accessible elsewhere.

- *The Woman Warrior* by Maxine Hong Kingston
- *Survival in Auschwitz* by Primo Levy
- *The Color of Water* by James McBride
- *Teacher Man* by Frank McCourt
- *My Beloved World* by Sonia Sotomayor

**As you read, observe the writer’s methods of expression and the larger issues the writer addresses through his or her own story.** Taking notes while reading is always a good idea; it will allow you to remember your ideas and reactions when we convene in August. Use Post-It notes in your book; keep a few sheets of paper tucked inside your book; underline passages and make notes in the margins if you choose to purchase your own copy. **Whatever your method, record anything and everything that seems interesting, unusual, or significant in some way. Note specific statements and passages that are especially descriptive or meaningful, sections in which the writer reveals political or social truths, and any portions that raise questions for you.** In the first few days of school, you will receive a writing assignment based on this reading.

\*\* Again, consider going beyond the minimum and reading more than one of the works listed here. Taking an Advanced English course implies an eagerness to read; moreover, we will explore passages from each of these works as part of our Voice Unit, so familiarity with the full stories will be beneficial to you.

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