

AP Language and Composition (JUNIOR) - Summer Reading 2017

General Comments: Much of the reading you will be doing in AP Language and Composition will be nonfiction, a departure from your first two years that have focused on fiction. This means that you must adjust your attitude toward the subject matter and the writing styles of the authors, starting with your summer reading.

You should read your book of choice during June. Select from the list on the handout and on the website. This year's AP students had various reactions to the books they chose. Students interested in history often chose books by Tuchman; others said that Winchester's books were interesting but challenging. Works by E.B. White and Baldwin were not widely chosen but did receive favorable comments from several readers. Didion's works also received praise from several students, although these books, too, were not always what readers expected. Be prepared for some surprises. At the end of June you must send me an e-mail of several paragraphs explaining your reactions to the book that you have read: kstapleton@serrahs.com.

During July you should read *Assembling California* by John McPhee. This reading can be pleasurable if you focus on what should be of interest to any California reader. Do not get hung up on the scientific or technical terms. Focus on McPhee's writing style and what is interesting to you – you will be tested on these aspects of the book but not on the science of plate tectonics. **Hint:** If you do not find the chapters dealing with the Gold Rush interesting, you are not reading carefully enough or thoughtfully.

All AP Language students must read:

- [*Assembling California* by John McPhee](#)

ALL AP Language students are also required to read ONE additional book from the list below:

James Baldwin

[*Vintage Baldwin* \(2004\)](#)

Collects eight short stories, essays, excerpts, and other writings by American author James Baldwin, including "Nobody Knows My Name: A Letter from the South," exploring race, identity, politics and what it means to be an American.

No Name in the Street (2000)

A personal account of the sixties and seventies displaying Baldwin's fury and despair including the murders of Martin Luther King and Malcolm X, his sojourns in Europe and in Hollywood, and his return to America's South.

Joan Didion

[*Slouching Toward Bethlehem* \(2008\)](#)

American novelist Joan Didion's first volume of nonfiction essays, first published in 1968, consisting of twenty works that reflect the atmosphere in America during the 1960s, especially in California.

[*Where I Was From* \(2003\)](#)

The author parallels the history of her family with that of California, focusing on the contradictions between how California is idealized and the reality of conditions in the state.

E.B. White

[*Essays of E.B. White* \(1999\)](#)

Contains over thirty essays written by author E.B. White over the course of many years on a wide variety of topics including the farm, the planet, the city, Florida, memories, diversions and obsessions, and books, men, and writing.

Anne Dillard

[For the Time Being \(1995\)](#)

A collection of personal narratives by Annie Dillard.

[Pilgrim at Tinker Creek \(2007\)](#)

The author philosophizes on the positive and negative sides of nature while observing life near Tinker Creek, in a valley in Virginia's Blue Ridge Mountains.

John McPhee (other than *Assembling California*)

[The Founding Fish \(2002\)](#)

John McPhee recounts his obsession with fishing, discussing how it has helped him cope with difficult times in his life.

[Uncommon Carriers \(2006\)](#)

John McPhee profiles the people who work in freight transportation that he has met throughout his travels, describing their lifestyle, work, and traditions.

Barbara Tuchman

[The First Salute \(1989\)](#)

Examines pivotal events of the American Revolution and how Europe was affected by it.

[Practicing History: Selected Essays \(1982\)](#)

A collection of essays in three categories: how a historian approaches the writing of history, samples of the author's historical inquiries, and thoughts on the use of historical investigation.

N. Scott Momaday

[The Man of Words: Essays, Stories, Passages \(1998\)](#)

Collection of essays and articles in which the author explores such themes as Indian-white relations, land, language, and identity.

[The Names: a Memoir \(1997\)](#)

Author's memoir about his boyhood in Oklahoma, at Shiprock in the Navajo country.

Edward Hoagland

[Tigers & Ice: Reflections on Nature and Life \(2000\)](#)

Presents an autobiographical collection of essays by American essayist, Edward Hoagland in which he recounts his blindness, depression and isolation, and his history travels around the world after regaining his sight.

[Compass Points: How I Lived \(2002\)](#)

An autobiographical account of the life of author Edward Hoagland, discussing his personal relationships, his literary influences, his world travels, and other related topics.

Eduardo Galeano

[Soccer in Sun and Shadow \(1998\)](#)

A collection of brief commentaries, translated from the original Spanish text, in which Latin American writer Eduardo Galeano reflects upon life and death in the game of soccer.

Mirrors: Stories of Almost Everyone (May 2009)

Recalling the lives of artists, writers, gods, and visionaries, from the Garden of Eden to twenty-first-century New York, of the black slaves who built the White House and the women erased by men's fears, and told in hundreds of kaleidoscopic vignettes, *Mirrors* is a magic mosaic of our humanity.

Simon Winchester

Krakatoa: the Day the World Exploded, August 27, 1883 (2005)

In August 1883, a catastrophic volcanic eruption off the coast of Java was followed by a tsunami that killed nearly 40,000 people. The author brings new perspective to this iconic event, showing how it marked a change in East-West relations.

A Crack in the Edge of the World: America and the Great California Earthquake of 1906 (2006)

Discusses how the San Francisco earthquake of 1906 led to a greater scientific study of earthquakes in an attempt to understand the movements of the earth, and explains plate tectonics theory, the creation of the San Andreas Fault, and the social and political shifts caused by the disaster.