

AP Lang  
Summer Reading and Writing Assignment  
Manlius Pebble Hill School  
June 2017  
Mr. Montas

Welcome to AP Lang! I hope you're having a great summer so far, and I'm very excited to guide you on this journey of studying the arts of persuasion. The blog for this course is <http://mphaplang.blogspot.com>, and there you'll find helpful information about the course as well as external links. You can also find assignments and materials from previous years by scrolling through the posts, but keep in mind that key parts of the course change from year to year.

Your summer reading and writing assignment consists of four parts; you can complete them in any order. Feel free to read the summer reading books on an electronic reader; just be sure to annotate your book whether you read it digitally or in print.

**Part 1:** Choose and read one of the following books. You may choose another book, but you must ask me about it first. If you do look for a book that isn't on this list, I'll only approve a book that is nonfiction and serious (including satire). On Thursday, September 7, or Friday, September 8, whichever day you have class, you will write an in-class essay on this book.

Jonathan Abrams, *Boys Among Men: How the Prep-to-Pro Generation Redefined the NBA and Sparked a Basketball Revolution*. 352 pages.

Clayton Christensen, *The Innovator's Dilemma: When New Technologies Cause Great Firms to Fail*. 288 pages.

Jessa Crispin, *Why I Am Not a Feminist: A Feminist Manifesto*. 176 pages.

David Eagleman, *The Brain: The Story of You*. 256 pages.

Jay-Z, *Decoded*. 352 pages.

Steven Johnson, *How We Got to Now: Six Innovations That Changed the World*. 320 pages.

John B. Judis, *The Populist Explosion: How the Great Recession Transformed American and European Politics*. 180 pages.

Maria Konnikova, *The Confidence Game: Why We Fall for It . . . Every Time*. 352 pages.

Janna Levin, *Black Hole Blues and Other Songs from Outer Space*. 256 pages.

Carol J. Loomis, *Tap Dancing to Work: Warren Buffett on Practically Everything, 1966-2013*. 380 pages.

Patti Smith. *M Train*. 288 pages.

**Part 2:** One of the key differences between AP Lang and all of your other English classes is its emphasis on rhetoric, which is often defined as the art of persuasion. You've encountered some

aspects of rhetoric in your previous English classes, particularly the classical rhetorical appeals known as ethos, logos, and pathos. To help you get a strong start to understanding how writers choose and arrange words to move their audiences, read the preface and chapters 1-10 of Jay Heinrichs's *Word Hero: A Fiendishly Clever Guide to Crafting Lines that Get Laughs, Go Viral, and Live Forever*.

**Part 3:** Write three short essays for the *New York Times* Summer Reading Contest

(<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/27/learning/the-eighth-annual-new-york-times-summer-reading-contest.html>) or respond to three of the activities listed below in the Make Your World a Better Place grid. Each response should be about five hundred words (roughly a page-and-a-half) in length, and they will receive higher grades if you incorporate strategies from *Word Hero*. Email your responses to me as you complete them (fmontas@mph.net). With the *New York Times* contest, you can submit one entry per week, so don't leave it until the last week of the summer. With the Make Your World a Better Place activities, simply write about what you did and how you felt about it.

**Part 4** concerns the STP, which has an important change. While you will still need to conduct a significant amount of research on your topic, you will have several options to demonstrate the understanding and insight you gained from researching and thinking about your subject. In short, you may still write a research paper if you want to, but you will have several other options: research paper, a website (e.g., a book or online exhibition that demonstrates your learning), a short documentary (about eight minutes in length), a TED talk (no notes, at least twenty minutes long, before a large audience), a museum exhibition (for which you'll have to find an appropriate space), a business plan, a performance with program notes, or notes for your pieces in end-of-year art show. (If there is another way you think you can demonstrate your mastery of your subject, feel free to ask me about it over the summer.) With these options in mind, make preliminary notes that in response to the following questions: Which of these options will pursue? How will you complete it by the end of March? What will your month-to-month progress look like? What will you need to complete it? Bring these notes with to the first day of class.

If you have any questions about the course or this summer assignment, don't hesitate to get in touch with me by email ([fmontas@mph.net](mailto:fmontas@mph.net)) or text (315-263-2231).

Have a great summer!

MAKE YOUR WORLD A BETTER PLACE — SUMMER 2017

Try to accomplish as many of these activities as you can, and have fun doing so!

Offer to help someone who won't ask for help, and actually help that person.	Read a book aloud to someone at least five years younger or fifty years older than you.	Write to your congressional representative about an issue that matters greatly to you.	Do someone else's household chore(s) without being asked and without expecting anything in return.
Cook a meal or make a dessert for a friend or your family to make them happy.	Sort out belongings that you no longer need and give them to charity.	Watch two films from the American Film Institute (AFI) Top 100 Movies list, one of which must be in black and white.*	Lie on the grass and gaze at the clouds or stars or both.
Write a letter to the editor of a local or national publication.	Make a list of all the positive things that you can be thankful for and write thank you notes or letters to the appropriate people.	Read a book or some stories or some poems by an author from a country you've never visited or can't locate on a map.	Think about something you've complained about at home, at school, in your neighborhood, or somewhere else. Now do something about it.
Learn to play a song on a musical instrument you don't already play.	Do something with someone you love but don't talk to very much.	Watch the news and share stories that you think need more attention.	Turn off your online presence and avoid social media for three days.
Grow something you can eat and share it with others.	Learn a poem or a passage of writing (including a speech) by heart.	Have a conversation in a language you don't speak at home.	Handwrite a letter to someone special and mail it.

\*This list is available at <http://mphaplant.blogspot.com> or <http://mphseniorseminar.blogspot.com>.