

## AP Language and Composition Summer Reading 2017

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An AP course in English Language and Composition is a highly challenging course designed to engage students in becoming skilled critical readers and writers of prose written for a variety of rhetorical contexts, audiences, and purposes.

### **Required Texts:**

- *Bird by Bird: Some Instructions on Writing and Life*, Anne Lamott
- *Writing to Learn*: William Howard Zinsser. Please read the following excerpts: Preface, Chapter 1 (“Hermes and the Periodic Table”), and Chapter 4 (“Writing to Learn”).

Students must also choose to read one of the following pairs of titles. As you read, you should take thorough, detailed notes on each book. (I recommend at least 3 pages of notes for each book). We will be working with your chosen texts in class in the beginning of the year.

### ***Pair 1: Food and Agriculture***

*Animal, Vegetable, Miracle*, Barbara Kingsolver  
*The Unsettling of America*, Wendell Berry

### ***Pair 2: Cognition and Consciousness***

*Thinking, Fast and Slow*, Daniel Kahneman  
*Other Minds: The Octopus, The Sea, and the Deep Origins of Consciousness*, Peter Godfrey-Smith

### ***Pair 3: Climate Ecology***

*The World Without Us*, Alan Weisman  
*The Sixth Extinction: An Unnatural History*, Elizabeth Kolbert

### ***Pair 4: Sports History***

*Seabiscuit*, Laura Hillenbrand  
*The Boys in the Boat*, Daniel James Brown

### ***Pair 5: Medicine and Culture***

*The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*, Rebecca Skloot  
*The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down*, Anne Fadiman

**Writing Assignments** : Due on First Day of School

### **1. Writing Identity Reflection (5% of first quarter grade)**

After reading *Bird by Bird*, write a 1-2 page reflection in the form of a letter to Ms. Pace. The reflection’s topic should be who you are as a writer: your strengths, your challenges, your favorite ways to write, and your goals. You should discuss your academic writing in high school as well as any personal or professional writing that you have done. Your letter should incorporate

something that you have learned from Lamott's book. You will be assessed on your writing voice and the fluency of your writing.

## 2. **Writing to Learn Assignment** (5% of first quarter grade)

William Zinsser applauds writers who show clear thinking and precision in their writing. He also believes that writing well is important across all disciplines in education. Your assignments after reading the excerpts of Zinsser's book are as follows:

- A. Identify a passage from one of your paired non-fiction books which you think exemplifies Zinsser's ideal of precise, knowledgeable writing. Write a paragraph explaining why you believe this passage is an exemplary piece of writing.
- Your passage should be 1-2 paragraphs in length. You must either photocopy the page from your book *or* retype the passage into a document.
  - Your explanation should be a well-written analysis of the passage in question. You should not write your opinion on the topic.
- B. Find a piece of writing that you have done for a non-English class in high school so far and bring a hard copy of it to our first day of class. It can be for any subject. The piece should be at least one page long, but it does not have to be a formal essay and does not have to be a final assessment grade.