AP Language and Composition  
Summer Reading 2014

Texts:
*Contemporary & Classic Arguments: A Portable Anthology,* Sylvan Barnet and Hugo Bedau  
(ISBN-10: 0-312-43628-9)  
*Note: I suggest ordering this book from Amazon.com as soon as possible.*  
*Feel free to order a used book (approx $4) to save some money!*  
*Or, find a previous AP student and offer to purchase his/her book.*

Assessments:
None; purchase book for class

*(Page 1) *Into the Wild,* Jon Krakauer  
Notes, Creative Project

*(Pages 3-6) 21st century non-fiction text of your choice*  
Notes, Excerpt, Reflection

*(Pages 7-end) Packet of essays*  
Synthesis essay

Assignments:
*All assignments must be completed for the first day of class*  
*All essays must be written in MLA format: Times New Roman, size 12 font, double spaced, appropriate heading and title.*  
*Familiarize yourself with the following site: Purdue Owl, MLA. (Use: http://owl.english.purdue.edu/ and search MLA.) This is an EXCELLENT source for explaining MLA format and even provides you with a sample MLA essay. We will reference this site often in class, so make sure you are comfortable with it.*

1. *Into the Wild*

- Closely read and annotate this book (for notes on annotating, see below), as it will be a reference point throughout the year; be able to demonstrate evidence of your notes (i.e. notes that are written directly into the book; notes written on post-its in the books; notes that are typed separately but move through each chapter; etc). You should plan on at least one thoughtful and insightful note per chapter. It is not necessary to annotate every page! See “Helpful Hints for Note Taking/Annotating” below.

- As you read this book, consider what path you are on in life. What does it mean to be on a journey as an individual? What journey are you on? How does that journey fit in with society’s expectations? What impact does your past have on where you are now and where you are going? How does your past, present, and future connect?

Creative Project:
- Develop a creative piece that explores your own personal journey – Who are you? What is important to you? This is your chance to introduce yourself as Chris McCandless has introduced himself to us.

- Ideas: scrapbook (7-10 pages), poetry book (4-5 poems), photography portfolio with reflections (15+ photographs), reflective essay using “I” (approximately 3 pages), narrative (approximately 3 pages), art collection/piece of art.

Helpful Hints for Note Taking/Annotating:
Annotating: (For personal understanding and class discussions,)
Do not highlight the entire text. Instead, write your own thoughts, questions, connections, and understandings in the margins (or on a post-it.) Mark specific quotes or passages that seem important to you and be ready to discuss them in class. This is a way to capture your thoughts and connect them directly to the passage; this will be of the utmost importance when we have class discussions as you will be responsible for them.

Some thoughts regarding annotating, from English for the IB Diploma:
“It is very easy, when studying a novel, to begin to talk about the characters and situations as if they were real. After all, one of the writer’s intentions is to create convincing characters which the reader can believe in and to create a world into which the reader can enter through the imagination. However, when studying literature it is important that we see the novel as a ‘text’, as a created work of art, and look at it in a much more detached and analytical way. Characters are devices which the author uses and manipulates to create a particular effect. Their only existence is in the precise words on the page. Studying with this attitude, [you] will be more likely to consider what a character’s role is in the construction of a plot, or the effect of using particular language to describe a place or person.”

In the case of Into the Wild, the main “character,” Chris McCandless, aka Alexander Supertramp, is a real person. Still, our focus is on Krakauer’s choices in writing the non-fiction text as a “created work of art.” We will be discussing the book in terms of the transcendentalist philosophy embodied by McCandless and illuminated by Krakauer. We will also discuss McCandless’ journey as revealed by Krakauer. Therefore, when you take your notes, you need not mark up every page with every point of interest. Focus on the tasks at hand. Make note of passages that particularly speak to themes of the personal journey and philosophy Krakauer depicts. Notes should focus on your reactions, questions, and thoughts about the journey and philosophy.

Suggestions for close reading and analysis:
When studying a novel, there are several aspects which you will need to know well. Most examination questions, though they may be worded in different ways, will focus on one of these:

• **An overview:** You need to have a clear understanding of the plot and central ideas, how events follow on and are related, and how the text is structured. Questions might ask you to show how the text’s structure affects the reader’s response, particularly if it is not a straightforward chronological narrative.

• **Narrative viewpoint:** Who tells the story? Why has the writer chosen this viewpoint? How does this affect the reader’s response? Is there more than one narrator?

• **Characters:** Questions often focus on one or more characters and the ways in which the writer presents them.

• **Themes, issues, and ideas** that the novel raises and deals with.

• **The society, setting or world** in which the action of the novel takes place. Questions may center on this, or may ask about the relationship between a character and the society in which he or she lives.

• **Language and style:** There may be distinctive qualities in the writer’s choice of language, for example in the use of imagery or comic exaggeration. Questions may ask you to consider why the writer has made these choices. What is their purpose and effect?

2. **Non-fiction text of your choice**

Read one contemporary non-fiction book from the list below.
-Read closely: If you own the book, feel free to underline important points or passages that mean a lot to you. Come up with 5-8 main points that you could discuss at a later date. You may highlight or write these directly in your book, on post-its, or on a separate sheet.

-Type one passage, a couple/few hundred words in length, from the book that you think is representative of the writer’s style, or that you thought was particularly interesting or well-written. Bring this passage and your notes with you on the first day of class. During the first week of school, you will need to be prepared to speak knowledgeably about this book.

-Write a reflection considering what the author’s purpose was in writing the book. Explain why you think s/he wrote it and reflect on how s/he wrote it (consider stylistic choices the author makes). Feel free to use first person as you delve into your opinion regarding why and how the author wrote the book. You may choose to write about one or more elements from the above suggestions for close reading. (Approx. 2 pages; MLA format; typed). Consider this persona: You are a writer evaluating how another writer (author of your book) writes.

1. **Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America by Barbara Ehrenreich**: In this first-hand account of a series of working poor situations, Ehrenreich provides a modern news flash on the affordability of living off minimum wage. By observing the application process through working at the various retail jobs, and pricing out the cost of living in various states, the author records and analyzes how to get by in America (barely.) - KZ

2. **The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks by Rebecca Skloot**: This investigative journalism immediately caught my attention with its interesting (true) story, and gruesome detail into the medical situation faced by the main character. The character development between the author and the Lacks family kept my interest and I was constantly wondering what would happen next. - HL

3. **Zeitoun by Dave Eggers**: One of my favorite books of all time. The author tells the story of Abdulrahman Zeitoun, who stayed in his house and helped people during Hurricane Katrina. I thought every single chapter was interesting in different ways and I couldn’t put it down. - CD

4. **Dreams From My Father by Barack Obama**: In this lyrical, unsentimental, and compelling memoir, the son of a black African father and a white American mother searches for a workable meaning to his life as a black American. It begins in New York, where Barack Obama learns that his father a figure he knows more as a myth than as a man has been killed in a car accident. This sudden death inspires an emotional odyssey first to a small town in Kansas, from which he retraces the migration of his mother s family to Hawaii, and then to Kenya, where he meets the African side of his family, confronts the bitter truth of his father s life, and at last reconciles his divided inheritance. - Amazon book description

5. **Unbroken: A World War II Story of Survival, Resilience, and Redemption by Laura Hillenbrand**: The story of Louis Zamperini, an Olympic athlete who becomes a soldier fighting in the Pacific during World War II. During the war, he faces thousands of miles of open on a floundering raft, fending off sharks, thirst, starvation, and enemy aircraft. - JT

6. **A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier by Ishmael Beah**: This is how wars are fought now: by children, hopped-up on drugs and wielding AK-47s. Children have become soldiers of choice. In the more than fifty conflicts going on worldwide, it is estimated that there are some 300,000 child soldiers. Ishmael Beah used to be one of them. What is war like through the eyes of a child soldier? How does one become a killer? How does one stop? Child soldiers have been profiled by journalists, and novelists have struggled to imagine their lives. But until now, there has not been a first-person account from someone who came through this hell and survived. - Amazon Book Description

7. **The Innocent Man by John Grisham**: In the town of Ada, Oklahoma, Ron Williamson was going to be the next Mickey Mantle. But on his way to the Big Leagues, Ron stumbled, his dreams broken by drinking, drugs, and women. Then, on a winter night in 1982, not far from Ron’s home, a young cocktail waitress named Debra Sue Carter was
savagely murdered. The investigation led nowhere. Until, on the flimsiest evidence, it led to Ron Williamson. The washed-up small-town hero was charged, tried, and sentenced to death—in a trial littered with lying witnesses and tainted evidence that would shatter a man’s already broken life, and let a true killer go free. Impeccably researched, grippingly told, filled with eleventh-hour drama, John Grisham’s first work of nonfiction reads like a page-turning legal thriller. It is a book that will terrify anyone who believes in the presumption of innocence—a book no American can afford to miss. -Amazon book description

8. **Lucky Man: A Memoir by Michael J. Fox:** This book discusses Michael J. Fox’s journey to become an actor. He delves into the highs and lows of this competitive business; however, his struggle becomes even more unique when he develops Parkinson’s disease and struggles through first trying to hide his disease and ultimately coming to terms with it and becoming open with the public. -AD

9. **Fast Food Nation by Eric Schlosser:** Fast Food Nation is a NY Times best seller that reveals the harsh truth of every aspect of the fast food industry in America. Schlosser breaks down each danger of the industry that all Americans should know about for their own health. This enlightening read will reveal the truth regarding what we’re actually putting into our bodies. -KP and TM

10. **Triangle: The Fire that Changed America by David von Drehle:** Triangle is a poignantly detailed account of the 1911 disaster that horrified the country and changed the course of twentieth-century politics and labor relations. On March 25, 1911, as workers were getting ready to leave for the day, a fire broke out in the Triangle Shirtwaist factory in New York’s Greenwich Village. Within minutes it spread to consume the building’s upper three stories. Firemen who arrived at the scene were unable to rescue those trapped inside: their ladders simply weren’t tall enough. People on the street watched in horror as desperate workers jumped to their deaths. The final toll was 146 people—123 of them women. It was the worst disaster in New York City history. Triangle is a vibrant and immensely moving account that Bob Woodward calls, “A riveting history written with flare and precision.” - Amazon book description

11. **Chronicles: Volume One by Bob Dylan:** If you like Bob Dylan, even a tiny bit, read this book. It’s pretty lengthy and sometimes slow, but other than that it’s perfect. You will learn so much about him and even about modern folk music as a whole. Dylan strongly incorporates his poetic song-writing style within his memoir. You won’t be able to put this book down if you find Bob Dylan interesting. If not, don’t bother. -MC

12. **Three Cups of Tea: One Man’s Mission to Promote Peace One School at a Time by Greg Mortenson:** The astonishing, uplifting story of a real-life Indiana Jones and his humanitarian campaign to use education to combat terrorism in the Taliban’s backyard. Anyone who despairs of the individual’s power to change lives has to read the story of Greg Mortenson, a homeless mountaineer who, following a 1993 climb of Pakistan’s treacherous K2, was inspired by a chance encounter with impoverished mountain villagers and promised to build them a school. Over the next decade he built fifty-five schools—especially for girls—that offer a balanced education in one of the most isolated and dangerous regions on earth. As it chronicles Mortenson’s quest, which has brought him into conflict with both enraged Islamists and uncomprehending Americans, Three Cups of Tea combines adventure with a celebration of the humanitarian spirit. -Amazon Book Description

13. **On Writing by Stephen King:** This is a good book for those who are interested in majoring in writing. It is especially recommended to those who have enjoyed any of Stephen King’s fiction writing or the horror genre. This does not read like a textbook at all; rather, Stephen King tells interesting personal stories that connect to important elements of writing. His writing style is fun and blunt as he does not sugar-coat the truth of real writing. -JO

14. **The Freedom Writers: How a Teacher and 150 Teens Used Writing to Change Themselves and the World Around Them by The Freedom Writers, Zlata Filipovic, and Erin Gruwell:** This is the true story of teens growing up in Long Beach, California in the 1990’s. Erin Gruwell, the teens’ high school English teacher, is aware of how troubled the teens are, and she eventually invites them to write in journals. This book is a culmination of the journals, which demonstrate how the teens’ outlook on life changes throughout their four years of high school. - AD
15. **Black Like Me by John Howard:** This is about a white man who wants to know what it would be like to be black during the time of severe segregation. Howard dyes his skin black and conducts social experiments in different locations. This is a captivating read that demonstrates an interesting point of view as the author endeavors to reveals true feelings toward race from multiple perspectives. - SC

16. **The Rise of Enlightened Sexism by Susan J. Douglas:** Focuses on how our society and media have transitioned from open sexism to feminism to sexism under the guise of new age “feminism.” This is written with hilarious voice and relevant examples from today, making this book an enjoyable and thought provoking read. – TF and AW

17. **A Child Called It by David Pelzer:** This is the story of the tragic childhood of David Pelzer. When he was younger, he had the “American Dream” family; everything was perfect until it wasn’t. This book take the reader through the horrendous ways Pelzer’s mother abuses and dehumanizes him and reveals the sad truth that no one stepped in to stop it for a very long time. - AD

18. **The Book Thief by Markus Zusak:** The extraordinary #1 New York Times bestseller that is now a major motion picture, Markus Zusak's unforgettable story is about the ability of books to feed the soul. It is 1939. Nazi Germany. The country is holding its breath. Death has never been busier, and will become busier still. Liesel Meminger is a foster girl living outside of Munich, who scratches out a meager existence for herself by stealing when she encounters something she can’t resist–books. With the help of her accordion-playing foster father, she learns to read and shares her stolen books with her neighbors during bombing raids as well as with the Jewish man hidden in her basement. In superbly crafted writing that burns with intensity, award-winning author Markus Zusak, author of *I Am the Messenger*, has given us one of the most enduring stories of our time. From the Hardcover edition. -Amazon Book Description

19. **Marley and Me by John Grogan:** A story of the true meaning of “a dog is a man’s best friend.” This book is an emotional roller coaster that will take you on a journey through the ups and downs of owning a dog. Even if you don’t love dogs, this book will pull at your heartstrings and make you understand the true meaning of family. I give it 4.5 out of 5 stars. - KD

20. **Angela's Ashes by Frank McCourt:** This book shows the struggles of Frank McCourt and his family as they try to survive poverty and sickness as they travel from Brooklyn, New York to Limerick, Ireland with the hoped of creating a new life. - KP

21. **Look Me in the Eye: My Life with Asperger's by John Elder Robison:** This is the story of the life of John Robison who grew up in a time when the diagnosis for Asperger’s did not exist. He reveals how he was treated and discusses the effects this had on him. - AD

22. **Survival of the Sickest by Sharon Moalem:** This is a book for those who enjoy science. It delves into the origin of diseases and how animals have evolved to combat these diseases. It uses the examples of these diseases to show how little we know about our own health and how we can live longer. - ZT

23. **The Pregnancy Project by Gaby Rodriguez:** The true story of Gaby Rodriguez, a young woman with a shocking school project: faking her own pregnancy as a high school senior to see how her family, friends, and community would react. -AP

24. **Eat, Pray, Love: One Woman’s Search for Everything Across Italy, India and Indonesia by Elizabeth Gilbert:** This beautifully written, heartfelt memoir touched a nerve among both readers and reviewers. Elizabeth Gilbert tells how she made the difficult choice to leave behind all the trappings of modern American success (marriage, house in the country, career) and find, instead, what she truly wanted from life. Setting out for a year to study three different aspects of her nature amid three different cultures, Gilbert explored the art of pleasure in Italy and the art of devotion in India, and then a balance between the two on the Indonesian island of Bali. By turns rapturous and rueful, this wise and funny author (whom Booklist calls “Anne Lamott’s hip, yoga-practicing, footloose younger sister”) is poised to garner yet more adoring fans. - Amazon Book Description
25. **Bossypants** by Tina Fey: Before Liz Lemon, before "Weekend Update," before "Sarah Palin," Tina Fey was just a young girl with a dream: a recurring stress dream that she was being chased through a local airport by her middle-school gym teacher. She also had a dream that one day she would be a comedian on TV. She has seen both these dreams come true. At last, Tina Fey's story can be told. From her youthful days as a vicious nerd to her tour of duty on *Saturday Night Live*; from her passionately halfhearted pursuit of physical beauty to her life as a mother eating things off the floor; from her one-sided college romance to her nearly fatal honeymoon -- from the beginning of this paragraph to this final sentence. Tina Fey reveals all, and proves what we've all suspected: you're no one until someone calls you bossy. -Amazon Book Review

26. **Three Weeks with my Brother** by Nicholas Sparks and Micah Sparks: This book will take you on a wild journey around the world with two adventurous brothers. This story focuses on the importance of family and sticking together through thick and thin. The emotional memoir will change the way you see your family and make you cherish every moment with them. Even though Nicholas Sparks is typically a romance novelist, this book will appeal to boys as well as it discusses the importance of brotherhood through action and adventure. We give it 5 out of 5 stars. – JO and KD

27. **Breaking Night** by Liz Murray: This is a memoir about the life of Liz Murray, a young girl who was brought up in the Bronx by loving but drug-addicted parents. This book takes you through her life as she experiences homelessness and poverty and eventually being accepted into Harvard university. -RC

28. **I am Malala: The Girl Who Stood Up for Education and was Shot by the Taliban** by Malala Yousafzai and Christina Lamb: When the Taliban took control of the Swat Valley in Pakistan, one girl spoke out. Malala Yousafzai refused to be silenced and fought for her right to an education. On Tuesday, October 9, 2012, when she was fifteen, she almost paid the ultimate price. She was shot in the head at point-blank range while riding the bus home from school, and few expected her to survive. Instead, Malala's miraculous recovery has taken her on an extraordinary journey from a remote valley in northern Pakistan to the halls of the United Nations in New York. At sixteen, she has become a global symbol of peaceful protest and the youngest nominee ever for the Nobel Peace Prize. I AM MALALA is the remarkable tale of a family uprooted by global terrorism, of the fight for girls' education, of a father who, himself a school owner, championed and encouraged his daughter to write and attend school, and of brave parents who have a fierce love for their daughter in a society that prizes sons. I AM MALALA will make you believe in the power of one person's voice to inspire change in the world. -Amazon Book Description

29. **Columbine** by Dave Cullen. I thought this is a very insightful book and delivers the tragedy of the Columbine shooting in a more personal and psychological perspective. The author builds tension very effectively through real evidence and interviews up to the day of the shooting. If you do not enjoy psychology and social behavior, then this book might not be the one for you. Otherwise, enjoy. -LZ

30. **Bringing Down the House: The Inside Story of Six MIT Students Who Took Vegas for Millions** by Ben Mezrich. *Bringing Down the House* delves into the world of card counting. The story is based on a group of MIT students who used their mathematical capabilities to win millions of dollars in blackjack. It takes a first hand account of the exhilarating events that occurred on the MIT blackjack team. -EM

31. **The Blind Side: Evolution of a Game** by Michael Lewis. *The Blind Side* is an interesting book about football player Michael Oher and his life. This book gives more detail than the movie did about not only Oher, but also inside the game of football itself. *The Blind Side* is a heartwarming story full of love and the true meaning of family. - EH

32. **The Perfect Storm** by Sebastian Junger. With this gripping story of an ill-fated fishing expedition out of Gloucester, MA, Junger explores the personalities and motivations of the colorful crew as much as the science explaining the forces that caused 100-foot waves. This was one of the first best-sellers in the genre of contemporary investigative journalism. - DC

33. **Into Thin Air** by Jon Krakauer. If you enjoyed reading Into the Wild, you will find greater insight here into why some adventurers push themselves to extremes in quests for transcendent experiences. Originally, Krakauer was
commissioned to climb Mt. Everest and write about it; instead, he barely survived one of the peak’s most deadly expeditions. This is the author’s desperate and haunting attempt to make sense of the events. -DC

We are aware that there are film versions of some of these books, but the AP student knows the value of actually reading and should also expect that his/her teacher will be very interested in having the student answer very specific questions about the BOOK and not the movie. Be advised; when you are in AP, you will need to READ.

3. Synthesis Essay:

Please read ALL of the attached essays on “Food.” Then, select one of the following essays to complete. Make sure to include at least FOUR sources in your essay. Please underline your thesis statement in order to ensure that your argument is focused. Use MLA format which means that you must include in-text citations as well as a Works Cited page. As these are all essays from an anthology, we have included the cover and title page, so you have all the necessary information to cite these essays from the English Language and Composition: Analysis, Argument, and Synthesis anthology.

Please go to Owl Purdue MLA to look up how to cite a work from an anthology.

*In a prepared essay of 3-5 pages that refers to at least 4 sources, please respond to ONE of the following prompts:*

**Prompt 1:**

In The Gospel of Food (2007), Barry Glassner writes, “We Americans romanticize in our own way. We’re saps for phrases that begin with ‘family.’ Attach that word to a noun, and pouf! It becomes charmed, as witness the mileage Republicans have gotten from ‘family values’ over the past quarter century, food companies get from ‘family farms,’ and journalists and advocacy groups get from ‘family meals.”

In light of Glassner’s comment, write an essay that, first, characterizes the relationship between food and family in contemporary North American culture and then argues the extent to which that relationship is suitable and healthy. Draw upon your reading of the sources, observation, and personal experience to support your argument. Properly cite and account for sources used in your essay.

**Prompt 2:**

Michael Pollan writes in “Unhappy Meals” (2007), “In the wake of the recommendation that we cut down on saturated fat, Americans did indeed change their diets [...] The industrial food supply was promptly reformulated to reflect the official advice, giving us low-fat pork, low-fat Snackwell’s and all the low-fat pasta and high-fructose (yet low-fat!) corn syrup we could consume. Which turned out to be quite a lot. Oddly, America got really fat on its new low-fat diet — indeed, many date the current obesity and diabetes epidemic to the late 1970s, when Americans began binging on carbohydrates, ostensibly as a way to avoid the evils of fat.”

Consider Pollan’s observation in light of the food industry’s development and marketing of unhealthy products. Write an essay that, first, identifies an ethical conflict in the food industry and then takes a position on the extent to which the food industry should be held accountable for the choices of consumers. Draw upon your reading of the sources, observation, and personal experience to support your argument. Properly cite and account for sources used in your essay.

**Prompt 3:**
American political activism has long struggled to balance the rights of individuals with the needs of society. As Brie Mazurek notes in “Kitchen Table Talks: A Food Activist’s Guide to Growing the Movement” (2011), “While the expression “vote with your fork” has become a slogan for the modern food movement, many advocates struggle with how to move from conscientious consumerism to engaged citizenship.”

Write an essay that first, characterizes the conflict surrounding laws that limit individuals’ food choices, and then takes a position regarding the appropriateness of these laws in a democracy. Draw upon your reading of the sources, observation, and personal experience to support your argument. Properly cite and account for sources used in your essay.

Prompt 4:

A common cliche is “you are what you eat.” Yet, we increasingly must acknowledge that “what you eat” depends on numerous cultural, social, and economic factors well beyond the physiological appetite. Write an essay that, first, characterizes one or more social, cultural, and/or economic aspects of food consumption in America, and then argues the extent to which obesity is a societal responsibility. Draw upon your reading of the sources, observation, and personal experience to support your argument. Properly cite and account for sources used in your essay.

IDEAS IN THE WORKS - FEEL FREE TO EDIT AND ADD

Prompt 2:
A common cliche is “you are what you eat.” Examine the extent to which that holds true in an individual’s life…

Prompt 3:
Write an essay that, first characterizes the connection between food and the relationships (family, friend, romance, etc) we have and then argues the extent to which that connection defines a relationship...