

Advanced Placement English Language and Composition
11th Grade & 12th Grade
Summer Reading Assignment 2010

Overview: Because the Advanced Placement English Language and Composition course is a study of language similar to the requirements found in a college level freshman composition class, and because most of the texts for this course are non-fictional, our summer reading assignment is designed to acquaint you with the language and style of authors of biographical narratives. It is important that you read your chosen texts carefully; the prose in the titles suggested below, your mere engagement with the texts, and the related assignments will give you meaningful introduction to our first unit of study, the analysis of prose narratives.

General Requirements: Students enrolled in 11th grade and 12th grade AP English Language and Composition are required to choose and read two biographical narratives (one of which must be at least 200 pages in length) from the list below or other biographical narratives of comparable length and intensity. A biographical narrative is a written account of actual events in a person's life, a life history, an account in prose of actual events or a sequence of such events.

*****Please do not choose *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass: An America Slave* by Frederick Douglass since this will be our core text for the first unit of study in the fall.**

Suggested Titles of Biographical Narratives

1. *There Are No Children Here* by Alex Kotlowitz
2. *Endurance: Shackleton's Incredible Voyage* by Alfred Lansing
3. *Growing Up* by Russell Baker
4. *The Last Lecture* by Randy Pauche
5. *One Writer's Beginnings* by Eudora Welty
6. *The Solace of Open Spaces* by Gretel Ehrlich
7. *A Walker in the City* Alfred Kazin
8. *Angela's Ashes* by Frank McCourt
9. *Kabul Beauty School: An American Woman Goes Behind the Veil* by Deborah Rodriguez
10. *Fault Lines* by Meena Alexander

ASSIGNMENTS

Part I: Out-of-Class Assignments. The assignments listed under A & B below are due on August 31, 2010.

A. Response Journal on Longer Narrative—200 pages or more: Choose eight key quotes (all from different chapters or sections of the text) from your longer biographical text. Then use the quotes to provide a critical analysis of the book. Choose quotes that have thematic and interpretive significance to the author's message and purpose. Each response must be at least one full paragraph (a 100 to 150 word-entry) and the quote should be two to three sentences long (without any omission in between) to provide context for your reader. Each quote must be followed by its journal response. Use any three of the questions below in each response and be sure to touch on all of the questions at least once by the end of your journal entries.

1. What does the quote mean? How does the quote make you feel?
2. What does the quote mean in relationship to the author's overall purpose?
3. Why do the key characters in the quote do what they do? Examine their motivation.
4. Put yourself in the speaker's place and recall a comparable experience with the one in the quote. What personal connections can you make with the experiences in the quote? What fundamental differences can you raise between your chosen experience and the speaker's?
5. How important is this quote to the overall meaning or theme of the text? That is, what messages about the author's challenges and/or triumphs are implied?

B. Issue Identification and Analysis Chart on Second Narrative: As you read your second biographical narrative, keep a running list of the personal and/or societal issues, conflicts and challenges raised in the book and of relevant quotes that illustrate these topics. When you finish reading, create an issue identification and analysis chart to show your interaction and engagement with the book. In one of the texts listed above, for example, inner city violence is one of the societal concerns raised by Alex Kotlowitz, author of *There Are No Children Here*. The quotes in the chart below have been analyzed as concrete examples on which to pattern your own analysis.

You must analyze at least 8 representative quotes from different sections of your second book, 2 quotes on each issue, a total of 4 issues.

Personal or Societal Issue	2 Quotes on Issue— Quotes must be 1-2 sentences long.	Context of Quote—a quick explanation of participants and events	Author’s Attitude? How does the author show his views on the subject? Comment on word choice, tone, devices of comparison, & others.
<p>Example # 1: Inner city violence</p>	<p>Quote #1 -- “Residents so feared and respected the gang’s control that they refused to call 911.... Snitching could get you killed” (Kotlowitz 35).</p> <p>Quote #2 – “Twenty-four-year-old Willie Elliot had stepped from between two packed cars and aimed a pistol at Bird Leg. The bullet tore through Bird Leg’s chest. He clutched his wound and ran through the breezeway of one high-rise” (Kotlowitz46).</p> <p>**Please do not use the quotes given here as your own examples.</p>	<p>In this chapter, the writer explains the problem of gangs at Henry Horner Housing Complex, etc.</p> <p>Bird Leg, Lafayette’s older friend, has just been shot at close range by Willie Elliot, a rival gang member. Ironically, Bird Leg came to Henry Horner “despite his mother’s protestations” (Kotlowitz 46).</p>	<p>The author uses direct wordings and sentences to show the dangers faced by the residents at Henry Horner. The blunt tone used signifies the desperate situation of the residents -- you snitch, you die.</p> <p>The author’s descriptions and word choice are very categorical. Willie’s precision with the shot is captured in the word “aimed,” while the lethal effect on Bird Leg is shown in the imagery of the [tearing] of the victim’s chest, etc.</p>

Part II: In-Class Activities:

- A. During the first week of school, we will complete seminar discussions on the summer reading assignments, using both your journal responses and your issues chart as springboards for discussion. These activities will serve as introduction to our first unit of study.
- B. Also within the first few weeks, you will write your own biographical narrative for your AP English Language teacher. This will give you the opportunity to introduce yourself to your teacher as a writer and as a student, but more importantly, it will give your teacher a glimpse into your uniqueness as a person. It is thus imperative that you complete these assignments to expose you to good models of biographical narratives.
- C. **Please note that students entering 11th grade and 12th grade AP English Language and Composition are exempt from the school wide assignments.**