

Summer Reading Assignment – AP English Language & Composition Juniors: 2023-2024

Assigned Texts:

- *Killers of the Flower Moon*, by David Grann
- *In Cold Blood*, by Truman Capote

Welcome to AP English Language and Composition! This class focuses on the development and revision of evidence-based analytic and argumentative writing, the rhetorical analysis of nonfiction texts, and the decisions writers make as they compose and revise. In order to increase your chances for success as an AP student, it is important for you to stay intellectually engaged over the summer so that you continue to grow as a scholar. Moreover, statistics prove that reading widely and deeply increases student success both in college and in their future careers.

This course is unlike your previous English classes because it focuses on nonfiction and rhetoric: you will learn to read with an eye toward the choices writers make to convey their messages and achieve their purposes, and your writing will be guided by an awareness of the choices available to you to create your intended effect and achieve your purpose.

Both books are true-crime narratives. However, the authors have different purposes for writing. As you read, try to ascertain each author's purpose. As well consider the rhetorical situation of each text. *Flowers of the Killer Moon* was published in 2017 about the mysterious murders of many Osage Indians in the 1920s; it was written by journalist David Grann whose books and essays tend to focus on true stories involving mystery. *In Cold Blood* was also written by a journalist, Truman Capote. Capote read about a quadruple homicide in the newspaper in 1959, traveled from New York to Kansas where the murders took place, spent years there interviewing people involved (i.e., friends and neighbors of the victims, detectives working on the case, and eventually the killers themselves), and finally published the book about the murders in 1966. You should ask yourself questions like, *What is the author's purpose for this piece of writing? What is his message? Who is the intended audience for this piece of writing? How does the author's background affect his writing? How does the author's relationship with the topic and with his audience affect his writing?* Seriously consider and attempt to answer these questions before and while you are reading each book.

As you read both books, mark them up: make comments in the margins and write yourself notes about what you are thinking and noticing both during and after reading. Your annotations will promote engaged reading, assist you in reviewing for the test you will take in the first week of school, and help you generate ideas and specific textual evidence for the project you will complete when school begins. Make your annotations in the books, on sticky notes throughout the books, or in a notebook. Approach your reading as a writer by asking questions about context, audience, purpose, language, evidence, organization, techniques, etc.

Remember that annotations are notes. They are your thoughts. To be successful, you should do more than underline and highlight. Keep a written record of your thoughts, questions, and reactions.

Assessment: Your summer reading will be assessed in two ways:

- **A creative project**—to be explained once school begins and due in the first week
 - Part of this project will entail selecting four meaningful quotes from both books and writing about why they are important and how they contribute to the meaning of the text, so annotate your books with this assignment in mind.
 - Another part of the project will involve selecting a fifth passage from both books (about 2/3-1 page in length) to analyze for rhetorical strategies—how each author achieves his purpose through the writing, so annotate with this assignment in mind.
- **An exam**—to be taken in the first few days of school—focusing on comprehension, analysis, and retention of what you read (the annotations will help with this test).