

Summer Project 2017-2018

WHAT

Engage in reading and a project tied to reading over the summer months to keep current on thinking, analyzing and reading/writing skills necessary for the college environment.

GOAL

Use books from summer reading as a platform to engage in discussion of ideas, development of quality writing based on that reading/learning, and have fun while displaying your learning in a public forum.

HOW

The Technology

We will use the online tool Edmodo. It works similar to Facebook and allows for student interaction via discussion, sharing of writing, ideas and work as well as communication via e-mail and text. In addition, there will be separate groups (each book has a group) that you may discuss with others about (see Edmodo Registration sheet for details on registering).

Book Selection

You will read 2 of the six titles available. *Bird by Bird* is required for all students. You then choose one additional title to read—reading more is encouraged!

Online Discussion/Sharing

Please make at least 5 discussion board entries (in any of the groups based on the books). These should be meaningful entries that serve as a mode of discussion, thought and analysis. Please **DO NOT SUMMARIZE**. Your responses should be a personal reflection of feelings, thoughts, central themes, opinions and other forms of analysis. The responses should each be **at least a solid paragraph in length**. In addition, you are encouraged to respond to peer responses as well. This promotes discussion of the book and the ideas surrounding the titles.

The Annotation

While reading each book, you should annotate either directly in the book or on paper (example: 2-column notes). Annotation of the text as you read may serve as part of your online discussion. The ideas, questions and analysis you annotate should be reflected in your online posts. **This part of the project will be reviewed when you return to school in the fall.** (See Annotation Guide for details).

The Essay Prompt

After having read at least 2 of the books, you should develop a quality essay prompt you feel many students would want to respond to in the form of an analysis paper. (See sample prompt page for examples of prompts you might obtain ideas from.)

The essay prompt should:

- Be meaningful and connect to the novel(s) theme(s) or central ideas
- Allow you to address those ideas through analysis, evidence and examples from the book
- Provide the reader with insight into the goals of the book as well as **your** insight based on reading

You should then work to **respond to the prompt by drafting an analysis paper**. Keep in mind that the draft doesn't have to be perfect.

- The final copy of your essay should be a **2-3 page analysis paper** (MLA format) that focuses on at least one of the books. When you work to finalize your essay, you are encouraged to conference with someone that can give you feedback on your writing. There will be a place on Edmodo for you to turn in your finished essay. It will be called **"Final Copy of Summer Essay"**. You simply click the box that says "TURN IN" under assignments on Edmodo.
- Keep the checklist of items to complete with you as a reminder of the project requirements.

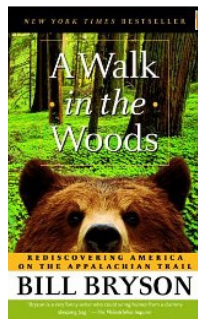
AP Language & Composition - Summer Reading Selections

WHAT

Each student is required to read *Bird by Bird*, by Anne Lamott. Select at least ONE of the other five to read. Reading additional selections is encouraged.

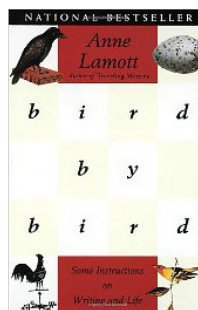
HOW

Annotate each text as you read, providing thoughts, analysis and questions of the text. These annotations may serve as part of your online discussion.



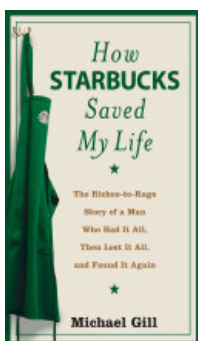
A Walk in the Woods: Rediscovering America on the Appalachian Trail by Bill Bryson

Returning to the U.S. after 20 years in England, Iowa native Bryson decided to reconnect with his mother country by hiking the length of the 2100-mile Appalachian Trail. Awed by merely the camping section of his local sporting goods store, he nevertheless plunges into the wilderness and emerges with a consistently comical account of a neophyte woodsman learning hard lessons about self-reliance. Bryson (*The Lost Continent*) carries himself in an irresistibly bewildered manner, accepting each new calamity with wonder and hilarity. He reviews the characters of the AT (as the trail is called), from a pack of incompetent Boy Scouts to a perpetually lost geezer named Chicken John. Most amusing is his cranky, crude and inestimable companion, Katz, a reformed substance abuser who once had single-handedly “become, in effect, Iowa’s drug culture.” The uneasy but always entertaining relationship between Bryson and Katz keeps their walk interesting, even during the flat stretches. Bryson completes the trail as planned, and he records the misadventure with insight and elegance. He is a popular author in Britain and his impeccably graceful and witty style deserves a large American audience as well.



Bird by Bird: Some Instructions on Writing and Life by Anne Lamott

Lamott’s (*Operating Instructions*) miscellany of guidance and reflection should appeal to writers struggling with demons large and slight. Among the pearls she offers is to start small, as their father once advised her 10-year-old brother, who was agonizing over a book report on birds: “Just take it bird by bird.” Lamott’s suggestion on the craft of fiction is down-to-earth: worry about the characters, not the plot. But she’s even better on psychological questions. She has learned that writing is more rewarding than publication, but that even writing’s rewards may not lead to contentment. As a former “Leona Helmsley of jealousy,” she’s come to will herself past pettiness and to fight writer’s block by living “as if I am dying.” She counsels writers to form support groups and wisely observes that, even if your audience is small, “to have written your version is an honorable thing.”



How Starbucks Saved My Life by Michael Gill

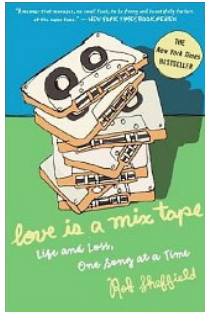
A candid, moving and inspirational memoir about a high-flying business man who is forced to re-evaluate his life and values when he suddenly loses everything and goes to work in Starbucks.

Michael Gill had it made. He was educated, wealthy and well-connected. He had a creative and lucrative advertising job, which he loved and which he was good at, and a model family and home life. Then he loses it all. He is fired by a young exec whom he had mentored. He has an extramarital affair that destroys his family and results in a newborn son. Then he is diagnosed with brain cancer. He has no insurance, no income.

One day he wanders into Starbucks and by chance signs up for a job interview. His would-be boss is a young black woman who gives him a job, and sets about training him and mentoring him. What follows is an inspirational eye-opener as Gill experiences a whole new world compared to his former life – with people from completely different ethnic and social backgrounds.

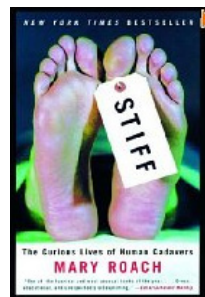
‘How Starbucks Saved My Life’ follows Gill’s journey of discovery as gradually he is forced to question his ingrained assumptions, prejudices and habits. Gill emerges from his fall from grace with humility and gratitude. His new-found empathy teaches him how anyone who has lost their way, or made a mistake, can start again.

Summer Reading Selections



Love Is a Mix Tape: Life and Loss, One Song at a Time by Rob Sheffield

Sheffield was a “shy, skinny, Irish Catholic geek from Boston” when he first met Renee. Southern born and bred, “she was warm and loud and impulsive.” They had nothing in common except a love of music. Since he made music tapes for all occasions, he and Renee listened together, shared tapes, and though never formally planning to, married. On May 11, 1997, everything changed. He was in the kitchen making lunch. Suddenly, she collapsed, dying instantly of a pulmonary embolism. Devastated, he quickly realized that he couldn’t listen to certain songs again, and that life as he knew it would never be the same. Fun and funny, moving and unbearably sad, Sheffield’s account at its quirkiest, and because of his penchant for lists, is reminiscent of Nick Hornby’s novel *High Fidelity* (1995). Anyone who loves music and appreciates the unspoken ways that music can bring people together will respond warmly to this gentle, bittersweet reflection on love won and love irrevocably lost. June Sawyers



Stiff: The Curious Lives of Human Cadavers by Mary Roach

“Uproariously funny” doesn’t seem a likely description for a book on cadavers. However, Roach, a *Salon* and *Reader’s Digest* columnist, has done the nearly impossible and written a book as informative and respectful as it is irreverent and witty. From her opening lines (“The way I see it, being dead is not terribly far off from being on a cruise ship. Most of your time is spent lying on your back”), it is clear that she’s taking a unique approach to issues surrounding death. Roach delves into the many productive uses to which cadavers have been put, from medical experimentation to applications in transportation safety research (in a chapter archly called “Dead Man Driving”) to work by forensic scientists quantifying rates of decay under a wide array of bizarre circumstances. There are also chapters on cannibalism, including an aside on dumplings allegedly filled with human remains from a Chinese crematorium, methods of disposal (burial, cremation, composting) and “beating-heart” cadavers used in organ transplants. Roach has a fabulous eye and a wonderful voice as she describes such macabre situations as a plastic surgery seminar with doctors practicing face-lifts on decapitated human heads and her trip to China in search of the cannibalistic dumpling makers. Even Roach’s digressions and footnotes are captivating, helping to make the book impossible to put down.



The Glass Castle by Jeannette Walls

This is a startling memoir of a successful journalist’s journey from the deserted and dusty mining towns of the American Southwest, to an antique filled apartment on Park Avenue. Jeanette Walls narrates her nomadic and adventurous childhood with her dreaming, ‘brilliant’ but alcoholic parents. At the age of seventeen she escapes on a Greyhound bus to New York with her older sister; her younger siblings follow later. After pursuing the education and civilisation her parents sought to escape, Jeanette eventually succeeds in her quest for the ‘mundane, middle class existence’ she had always craved. In her apartment, overlooked by ‘a portrait of someone else’s ancestor’ she recounts poignant remembered images of star watching with her father, juxtaposed with recollections of irregular meals, accidents and police-car chases and reveals her complex feelings of shame, guilt, pity and pride toward her parents.

Annotations & Online Submission

Your annotations of the books can and should help facilitate the online conversation you are required to participate in over the summer months. Engage actively in talking to the text, asking good questions, making comments and connections—this shows you, the engaged reader, are getting the most out of the reading you’re doing.

A WALK IN THE WOODS – BILL BRYSON

One of the more unique aspects of this book is the bond that forms between unlikely friends, Bryson and Katz. Examine the aspects of their relationship that contribute to the true definition of friendship. Note that all individuals have a different definition of friendship. Consider particular events, such as the episode in Main when Katz gets lost. The friendship becomes morphed at this point. How does Bryson's attitude and demeanor change throughout the book? How does Katz change? What is Katz's motivation for walking the AT? Be sure to include specific details about this and acknowledge and refute a counterargument in your response. Please consider your audience. All language should be appropriate.

BIRD BY BIRD – ANNE LAMOTT

Lamott draws on her own personal relationships and often quotes friends and fellow writers at length. Lamott's books suggest that writing is a cathartic way of dealing with life's troubles and problems. Fans of *Bird by Bird* are both aspiring writers and non-writers moved by Lamott's uniquely conversational style and unsparing wit. Many writers use writing as an outlet to express their feelings and opinions. Examine the ways Lamott suggests writing is a therapeutic process. Provide examples from the text supporting your claims as to why you believe this is true or not. Be sure to acknowledge and refute a counter argument. When using examples, you may consider how the following affect the quality of the writing: author purpose, message and intent. Please consider your audience. All language should be appropriate.

HOW STARBUCKS SAVED MY LIFE – MICHAEL GILL

Gill examines his experiences of his own assumptions, and prejudices in his life. He comes to learn that anyone who has ever made a mistake has opportunity to recover and start fresh. Explore the experiences Gill discusses and show how this can be a lesson for all in terms of prejudices and being a more open minded person. Connect these to personal experiences of your own. Be sure to include specific details about this and acknowledge and refute any possible counterargument you may make in your response. Please consider your audience. All language should be appropriate.

LOVE IS A MIX TAPE – ROB SHEFFIELD

Sheffield's account of life through music that includes the often unspeakable words requires some deep thought. Discuss and examine the ways he uses music to connect to events and his life. Provide examples from the text as to how music is so interconnected to people. You **may** consider how the author's purpose, message and connections affect the reader. Be sure to acknowledge and refute a counterargument (for example: those that may not find music connected to their life). Please consider your audience. Language should be appropriate.

STIFF – MARY ROACH

Death is inevitable. A cadaver or "stiff" represents death or the eventual fate of all humankind. The idea is so fundamental to the human experience that it necessarily invokes a personal response in the reader. Implicit in every passage is the realization that every human being will eventually be "it" or the cadaver, the decaying remains of what once was a human being. This experience is something that reader brings to the text before the book is opened. Examine and analyze the theme death in this book. Make connections from the text as examples to support whether you agree or disagree with how Roach presents death. Be sure to acknowledge and refute a counterargument. Please consider your audience. All language should be appropriate.

THE GLASS CASTLE – JEANNETTE WALLS

Literary works often depict characters caught between colliding cultures—national, regional, ethnic, religious, institutional. Such collisions can call a character's sense of identity into question. Select two such characters from Walls' *The Glass Castle* and write a well-organized essay in which you describe each character's response and explain its relevance to the work as a whole. What theme do these two characters represent? Be sure to include specific details about this and acknowledge and refute any possible counterargument you may make in your response. Please consider your audience. All language should be appropriate.

Whether you choose one of these prompts, modify one of these, or create your own, you should use proper in-text citation and MLA formatting in your final analysis. Academic honesty is a requirement. You may use information from the author, but make sure you provide adequate citations to give credit to the original author.

Text Annotation Guidelines/Strategies

BEFORE READING

- > Examine the front and back covers (books)
- > Read the title and any subtitles
- > Examine the illustrations
- > Examine the print (bold, italics, etc.)
- > Examine the way the text is set up (book, short story, diary, dialogue, article, etc.)

As you examine and read these, write questions, and make predictions and/or connections near these parts of the text.

DURING READING

Mark in the text:

- > Characters (who)
- > When (setting)
- > Where (setting)
- > Vocabulary
- > Important information

Write in the margins:

- > Summarize
- > Make predictions
- > Formulate opinions
- > Make connections
- > Ask questions
- > Analyze the author's craft
- > Write reflections/reactions/comments
- > Look for patterns/repetitions

AFTER READING

- > Reread annotations—draw conclusions
- > Reread introduction and conclusion—try to figure out something new
- > Examine patterns/repetitions—determine possible meanings
- > Determine what the title might mean

TEXT CODING

Why Do It?

Proficient readers often have ways of **marking or coding text** they want to remember. Maybe they use a yellow highlighter, underline or box words, or put marks in the margins to flag questions or exclamations as they read. In school, however, students are often discouraged from making any marks in their books. In fact, the more challenging the material (like science or history textbooks), the less likely that kids will be allowed to use this effective tool for enhancing comprehension. However, **Post-its** may be the solution teachers need for students to annotate their texts.

Whether books or other materials can be marked up or not, it's important for students to have a useful set of response codes. When addressing such **tough text, students need to attack the page, penetrate the surface, and dig out the meaning with very active strategies.**

Text-Marking Code

- ✓ Confirms what you thought
- X Contradicts what you thought
- ? Raises a question
- ?? Confuses you
- ☆ Seems important
- ! Is new or interesting

If a word gets repeated, seems important or is unknown – Box it

Remember, text annotation is the same thing as “talking to the text”. Keep in mind, if you have alternate strategies that work for you, you have freedom to use those strategies. Come to class prepared to share those strategies with your peers.

AP English Language & Composition

BURLINGAME

Summer Project Checklist 2017-2018

- Register an account on Edmodo by **Friday, June 9, 2017** (<http://www.edmodo.com>) and make sure you include your e-mail address. For reminders to be sent to your phone, make sure you change your reminder settings using the necessary instructions. **EDMODO CODE IS: 3trm22**
 - Read *Bird by Bird*, by Anne Lamott.
 - Choose one other title from the list to read.
 - As you read, annotate the text either directly in the book or separately from it.
 - Make at least **five entries** to the discussion boards (on any title—but be sure to find the correct group for the book you're talking about). See project details for response requirements.
 - Create your essay prompt. Provide the goals you seek to establish and meet with your prompt
 - Write your essay which will be a 2-3 page analysis paper (see project details for more information).
 - Turn in your final essay on **Edmodo** in the assignment space provided in the newsfeed.
This is due by **Friday, September 1, 2017, 11:59pm.**
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