

Cypress Creek High School
AP English Language and Composition 2020 Summer Assignment

Part I: Writing Sample: Who Are You? One Word and 500 more

We will spend much of the year talking about cultivating, crafting, and protecting the unique voice that is you. With this in mind, we would like you to arrive on the first week of school with a writing sample that lets me know something about you as a writer and as a person.

The genesis for this assignment came from a recent essay in The New York Times by Scott Korb, a writing instructor at the New School. In it, he notes:

Somewhere along the way, these young people were told by teachers that who they are in their writing ought to be divorced from who they are on their phones, or as the writer Grace Paley may have said, with their families and on their streets. They know a private “I” who experiences devotion and frustration. I see them text in class and talk and laugh and sometimes cry in the halls. They wear band T-shirts, often from my era, so I assume they have taste. I watch them read.

But no matter who they are in private, when I first encounter their writing, they use only the public passive voice: The text was read. The test was taken.

It’s never: I read the text. I took the test. And it is never ever: I loved the text with queer devotion!

It’s true that a student’s writing style isn’t everything and that much of what we call good writing cannot be taught. (Bad writing apparently has been.) One can be devoted to something — a band from the ’90s, surfing, YHWH— without being able to put that devotion into words.

But my experience with students has me worried that years of “texts being read” and “tests being taken” have created the sense in them that whatever they’re devoted to doesn’t matter much to the rest of us — so long as they know the answers to our questions, so long as they pass the test. Writing so passively and with what they’ve been taught is appropriate and “objective” distance from topics they often seem disinterested in, these young people signal to me that they’re still waiting for something important or real to happen to them.

Perhaps they feel that only someone who has lived through something momentous — like the teenagers who survived the Parkland, Fla., shooting — has earned the right to be heard. It’s hard to imagine any of those young activists writing, “The rally was held because Congress was lobbied and guns were purchased.”

But what about those queer devotions and frustrations, experiences and ideas that have stirred an individual heart into peculiarity?

In a 1-2 page essay (no more than 500 words), select ONE adjective that serves as both title and argument for your essay. Using first person, concrete details and examples from your life, and as much creativity and risk you can muster up at the end of summer, tell me how that ONE word defines you. The word can be positive or negative; however, if you chose a negative word think about how it could actually be positive (ex. Selfish— while often seen as a negative attribute, being selfish can create tremendous opportunities for success and, in practical terms, increase survival). You may be serious or silly; sarcastic or literal; irreverent or cautious; you pick the tone that works best for you. This is a writing sample; however, it should reflect your best effort. This essay is due Friday, August 14, 2020, however if you would like to submit early you may contact Mrs. Laufer at terrie.laufer@ocps.net for summer submission instructions.

CYPRESS CREEK HIGH SCHOOL
AP ENGLISH LANGUAGE SUMMER READING 2020

Part 2: Reading Assignment

For your summer reading assignment, examine the synopsis for each of the following three books. You will choose **TWO** to read. You will complete a **dialectical journal** (see directions below) for **ONE** and use the **SECOND** book for an activity that you will complete in class during the first week of school. **To be clear: the expectation is that by the first day of school, you will have read two of the three books on this list.** The journal should be submitted on **Friday, August 14, 2020**. Please be aware of the following: **Any plagiarism, from the Internet, other students, or any other resources will result in a zero, a phone call, and possible referral. Confused? Don't wait until August!** Email questions to terrie.laufer@ocps.net

	<p><i>Into the Wild</i> by Jon Krakauer--In April 1992 a young man from a well-to-do family hitchhiked to Alaska and walked alone into the wilderness north of Mt. McKinley. His name was Christopher Johnson McCandless. He had given \$25,000 in savings to charity, abandoned his car and most of his possessions, burned all the cash in his wallet, and invented a new life for himself. Four months later, his decomposed body was found by a moose hunter. How McCandless came to die is the unforgettable story of <i>Into the Wild</i>.</p>
	<p><i>Just Mercy</i> by Bryan Stevenson. Stevenson was a young lawyer when he founded the Equal Justice Initiative, a legal practice dedicated to defending those most desperate and in need: the poor, the wrongly condemned, and women and children trapped in the farthest reaches of our criminal justice system. One of his first cases was that of Walter McMillian, a young man who was sentenced to die for a notorious murder he insisted he didn't commit. The case drew Bryan into a tangle of conspiracy, political machination, and legal brinkmanship—and transformed his understanding of mercy and justice forever.</p> <p><i>Just Mercy</i> is at once an unforgettable account of an idealistic, gifted young lawyer's coming of age, a moving window into the lives of those he has defended, and an inspiring argument for compassion in the pursuit of true justice.</p>
	<p><i>The Glass Castle</i> by Jeannette Walls --<i>The Glass Castle</i> is a tender, moving tale of unconditional love in a family that, despite its profound flaws, gave the author the fiery determination to carve out a successful life on her own terms. The novel details the story of Jeannette Walls and her family. Constantly short on cash and food, the family moves around the country frequently and tries to re-settle. Though the family is dysfunctional, the memoir communicates itself without condemning either of the Walls parents.</p>

Dialectical Response Journal Directions

Dialectic means “the art or practice of arriving at the truth by using conversation involving question and answer.” What is a dialectical journal? "A dialectical journal is a conversation between you and what you are reading. You simply write down passages that make you think or interest you and write about your thoughts. This process is an important way to understand a piece of literature."

For this part of your summer assignment, you will complete a dialectical journal for one novel to aid in your understanding of the story and to demonstrate that understanding to your teacher.

Dialectical journals are not overly-complicated and will help you keep track of important points in the text as you read. Through them, you are essentially having a “conversation” with the text (jotting down insights, questions, ideas, and thoughts) and with yourself. Your goal is to make notes about points in the novel that you find significant, profound, noteworthy, ironic, troublesome, sad, interesting, confusing, etc...

For this summer reading assignment, you should use a composition book to keep your responses together. Create two columns on the page: the left side should contain quotes from the book and the right, your responses.

Directions: Choose one of the three books for your assignment. Keep a dialectical journal while reading. There is not a set number of entries per chapter or per book, but I am looking for ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT throughout the entire text. When you have completed the book, answer the following questions in a paragraph response completely and comprehensively. Your opinion is important! Use quotes to explain your answers.

The Glass Castle: (choose one question)

1. As a successful adult, the author finds her estranged mother digging for food out of dumpsters. When the author speaks to her mother, and voices her concern about her life, the mother tells the author that her values are misplaced. What does this mean?

2. Consider the quote: “Wherever you go, there you are.” Throughout the book, the author works to escape her poverty-stricken and unpredictable family life that her parents have developed. Yet, her memories still hold her strongly. What does this say about how strongly family ties can bind? How does the quote apply to this question?

Into the Wild: (choose one question)

1. Chris McCandless has a burning desire to live as independently as possible. Is he a true rebel, or does he simply want to test his abilities to the absolute limit? Explain with examples.
2. Chris McCandless’s choice to leave societal burdens resulted in heartache for his family and friends, yet he remained anything but anonymous. Were the final years of his life a transitional period of growth, or the acts of a selfish person? Explain.

Just Mercy:

1. Stevenson notes in his book that “the opposite of poverty is not wealth; the opposite of poverty is justice.” How did poverty play a pivotal role in the lives of the people in the book? Are poverty and justice able to exist together? Did we see any examples in the book? How should society work to right this grievous wrong?