

LRCHS Advanced Placement Language and Composition

AP Language and Composition, a study of rhetoric, is the equivalent of a composition course at a college or university. That is, this is a college course, not a college preparatory class. Students receive weighted grades in this class; therefore, letter grades are more difficult to earn than in pre-AP courses. As stated in the *Advanced Placement Course Description* for the English exams, the AP Language and Composition course's purpose is "to enable students to read complex texts with understanding and to write prose of sufficient richness and complexity to communicate effectively with mature readers." Mastery of this course, as demonstrated by an acceptable score of 3 or higher on the AP Language and Composition Exam, indicates that the student has performed college level work and may exempt the student from one or more semesters of freshman composition, either through advanced placement or earned college credit.

To be successful in this course, students must do the following:

- Master sophisticated editing skills
- Willingly revise writing multiple times
- Read widely and respond intellectually to a wide range of prose—fiction and nonfiction
- Be willing to re-read material as many times as necessary to comprehend the material
- Look up vocabulary, terms, and allusions they do not fully understand
- Spend a MINIMUM of one hour each night for homework reading and writing
- Be disciplined and organized in study skills and habits
- Seldom, if ever, miss class, including school related absences
- Understand and abide by guidelines that deadlines must be met, that late work is not accepted for a grade
- Thoroughly read the assigned summer reading and mark the books as detailed by "How to Mark a Book"
- Be prepared for an assessment of the summer reading assignment the first week of School

Summer Reading: 2 books

1. *In Cold Blood* by Truman Capote

2. Choose **one** of the following memoirs. The brief descriptions will help you decide which one you might best enjoy reading.

Angela's Ashes by Frank McCourt

Born in Brooklyn in 1930 to recent Irish immigrants, Malachy and Angela McCourt, Frank grew up in Limerick after his parents returned to Ireland because of poor prospects in America. It turns out that prospects weren't so great back in the old country either--not with Malachy for a father. A chronically unemployed and nearly unemployable alcoholic, he appears to be the model on which many of our more insulting clichés about drunken Irish manhood are based. Mix in abject poverty and frequent death and illness and you have all the makings of a truly difficult early life. Fortunately, in McCourt's able hands it also has all the makings for a compelling memoir.

The Glass Castle: A Memoir by Jeanette Walls

In *The Glass Castle*, Walls chronicles her upbringing at the hands of eccentric, nomadic parents--Rose Mary, her frustrated-artist mother, and Rex, her brilliant, alcoholic father. To call the elder Walls's childrearing style laissez faire would be putting it mildly. As Rose Mary and Rex, motivated by whims and paranoia, uprooted their kids time and again, the youngsters (Walls, her brother and two sisters) were left largely to their own devices. But while Rex and Rose Mary firmly believed children learned best from their own mistakes, they themselves never seemed to do so, repeating the same disastrous patterns that eventually landed them on the streets. Walls describes what it was to be a child in this family, from the embarrassing to the horrific.

Into Thin Air: A Personal Account of the Mt. Everest Disaster by Jon Krakauer

This is a riveting first-hand account of a catastrophic expedition up Mount Everest. In March 1996, *Outside* magazine sent veteran journalist and seasoned climber Jon Krakauer on an expedition led by celebrated Everest guide Rob Hall. Despite the expertise of Hall and the other leaders, by the end of summit day eight people were dead. Krakauer's book is the story of the ill-fated adventure and an analysis of the factors leading up to its tragic end. Written within months of the events it chronicles, *Into Thin Air* clearly evokes the majestic Everest landscape. As the journey up the mountain progresses, Krakauer puts it in context by recalling the triumphs and perils of other Everest trips throughout history. The author's own anguish over what happened on the mountain is palpable as he leads readers to ponder timeless questions.

A Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius by Dave Eggers

At the age of 22, Eggers became both an orphan and a single-parent when his parents died within five months of one another and he is appointed unofficial guardian of his 8-year-old brother, Christopher. The two live together in semi-squalor, decaying food and sports equipment scattered about, while Eggers worries obsessively about child-welfare authorities, molesting babysitters, and his own health. His child-rearing strategy swings between making his brother's upbringing manically fun and performing bizarre developmental experiments on him. The book is also about being young and hip and out to conquer the world—in an ironic, media-savvy, Gen-X way, naturally).

Mississippi Solo: A River Quest by Eddy Harris

At 30 years old, Eddy Harris leaves his home in St. Louis and sets off into the chilly autumn for Lake Itasca. "I decided to canoe down the Mississippi River and to find out what I was made of," he writes. As the Mississippi grows from its tiny source to a wide and powerful flow, Harris gains confidence as a canoeist, faith in his endeavor, and an understanding of his varying identity as an African American traveling alone from north to south in the United States. His exact and brilliantly revealing prose shows us how each bend in this mighty river turns itself within the paddler, how person and river are entwined--and who is in charge. With an astute ear for irony, philosophy, and wisdom, as well as truths about the river, Harris takes the reader through locks and lakes on the northern Mississippi to the wild and swift and meandering river south of St. Louis. Like the river he travels, Harris cuts through to the core of himself and his country.