Hi, everyone! Welcome to AP! 😊

I am looking forward to working with this year’s upcoming AP class and watching your growth. In the midst of the hard work required to pass the AP English Language and Composition exam in May, we will also have fun while challenging each other in new ways. I look forward to seeing you in action in animated class discussions, debates, group presentations, peer critiques, and even mock trials. Of course, we will also drill the obvious—timed writings and critical reading skills—but we will learn to approach such tasks with not only confidence but zest.

The first of our challenges will give you a taste of all four essential AP Language skills—critical reading, argument, analysis, and synthesis—through the summer reading project. Keep an open mind as you **explore a similar theme through both nonfiction and fiction.** Sense the raw power of the slave narrative of Frederick Douglass, the angst of Victor Frankl’s holocaust survival experience, and the innocence of Scout’s narration in Harper Lee’s *To Kill a Mockingbird.* **Look for irony in the human story as synthesized by the study of these works together.**

Take detailed notes for each work on the literary elements of plot, setting, characterization, point of view, and especially theme. In addition, pay special attention to author’s style. After you have carefully read and annotated each work, look for patterns emerging among them: what do you see in common? What is unique? **Write a well-structured synthesis paper of 800 words or more in which you connect each of these three works thematically, showing keen insights which you develop with plentiful detail.** In-text citation is not necessary, since you are not doing research. To prepare, write several thesis statements linking the works together before choosing and then proving your best one. Type your paper in strict MLA format, providing a creative title. Be prepared to present and to defend your paper in a group setting upon your first day back in August. The paper will count as your first test grade. Your additional notes will serve to fuel further discussions and assignments during first quarter.

In addition to your reading and formal paper, visit a minimum of five websites related to AP Language curriculum in other high schools across the nation, as approved by the College Board. Get a feel for the requirements for other AP Language students as you enter this course in the HPCA environment. Be ready to present your reasons for pursuing this course of study, and be prepared to voice your commitment to critical thinking, reading, and writing. Keep a formal list of websites visited, and take brief notes from each one. If you choose, you may even want to challenge yourself to attempt some of the AP Language free response prompts.

Finally, purchase your own copy of E. B. White’s classic, *The Elements of Style.* Read and study this little jewel in its entirety, preferably before writing your paper. You will also be held accountable for its contents on future occasions.

A word about honor: all work must be your own; do not discuss this assignment with your peers.

**Readings:**

- *The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*  
  Frederick Douglass

- *Man’s Search for Meaning* (Plan to omit Part II.)  
  Viktor Frankl

- *To Kill a Mockingbird*  
  Harper Lee

- *The Elements of Style, Fourth Edition*  
  William Strunk Jr.; E. B. White

Blessings on your summer!

Miss Warner

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