

**Oakland Catholic High School**  
**AP Language and Composition Summer Assignment 2020**

Texts to be read over the summer:

**1. F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby***

As one of the most-referenced American novels, *The Great Gatsby* is a high-school rite of passage. Fitzgerald's gorgeous prose offers a glimpse into the lives of the privileged (and not-so-privileged) in 1920s American society and shakes the foundations of the "American Dream."

**2. George Orwell, *1984***

Published in 1949, the book offers political satirist George Orwell's nightmarish vision of a totalitarian, bureaucratic world and one poor stiff's attempt to find individuality. The brilliance of the novel is Orwell's prescience of modern life—the ubiquity of television, the distortion of language—which still resonates long after the anticipated date.

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While I will assign various other print and electronic texts (including iBooks) through the school year, I require my students to have print copies of the above texts because traditional print texts allow for undistracted, slow reading and re-reading, as well as consistent citation. When we study these texts in class, you will be expected to have your own copy with you each day.

You can get your copies of these books from various sources: local brick & mortar bookstores and online booksellers. Any edition is acceptable. It is important that you feel free to make your own annotations in the text, so used books are just fine (and desirable for those of you hesitant to "mark up" a brand new book). Inexpensive used copies of both books are easily available. I owe a significant portion of my library to Half Price Books! Groups of students who place orders together can share the cost of shipping. Students may also be able to borrow or purchase books from upperclassmen.

PLEASE NOTE: At the AP level, I do not expect you to need *SparkNotes* or any other guides to understand the text. Working out the details yourself, especially when they seem hard to follow at first, will train your brain for our work in AP Lang.

**3. Current newspaper editorials, to be emailed throughout the summer (6 total)**

In addition to reading these required texts, you will have the greatest success in my class if you do significant independent reading, both fiction and nonfiction, during the summer, according to your own interests and abilities. I encourage you to visit your local library or bookstore, where you will find great suggestions for your own summer reading.

Assignments to guide reading are on the next page. All assignments must be completed by the first day of classes.

Assignment details:

Prepare *The Great Gatsby* and *1984* for discussion. By this I mean that you should take good notes right in each book, identifying important plot details and key passages, which will enable you to speak and write with accuracy. Take the kind of notes that will effectively jog your memory if you flip through a couple weeks (or months) after reading.

**1. *The Great Gatsby***

We will begin the year with *The Great Gatsby*, so review your annotations on this text before the first day of school. Our first classes will involve discussion of the text and **within a week you will write an in-class thesis paper**, so be prepared.

**2. *1984***

Once you have read through the whole of *1984*, return to the chapters that focus on the construction (and deconstruction) of language and the consequences of those activities. Focus your attention on the **process** (how) and the **objective** (why) of the manipulation of language, marking passages relevant to each. This will be our topic of discussion, and eventually, your topic for a thesis paper.

**3. Current newspaper editorials**

Over the course of AP Lang, you will learn to analyze what makes others' arguments convincing or confusing, engaging or dull, persuasive or powerless. Eventually, you will turn to the act of composition yourselves, seeking to emulate effective argumentation you have encountered in your reading and analysis.

Therefore, over the summer I ask you to read 6 newspaper editorials, where authors will state their cases on important, current issues in our world. You will use these editorials to start thinking critically about the basic elements of argument: each argument has a **claim** articulating the author's stance, and **evidence** to support that claim.

These editorials will be sent to you over the course of the summer, one every few weeks. Check your email on the following dates.

Mon., June 1	Mon., July 6	Mon., August 3
Mon., June 15	Mon., July 20	Mon., August 17

For each article, I ask that you make annotations as you read. Then, once you have read through the whole article a couple of times, **make yourself an outline** on a separate sheet of paper. On the outline, you should identify the author's **claim** and list all **evidence** provided. I will provide a template with the first email.

If you have any questions about these texts or assignments throughout the summer, email me at [jjeffries@oaklandcatholic.org](mailto:jjeffries@oaklandcatholic.org). I will check my school email at least once a week the rest of the summer, and be back to email every day by August 17.