

AP English III: Language and Composition
2019 Summer-Reading Assignment

Purpose: In Conroe ISD, we encourage all students to read over the summer in order to enrich learning and provoke thought. Summer reading strengthens reading skills, increases academic achievement, fosters a love for reading, and empowers students to become lifelong learners. Additionally, students who enroll in a pre-AP, AP, or DC English course are expected to engage in summer reading as it prepares students for the upcoming school year and creates an initial common framework for classroom discussion and instruction.

Directions:

- AP students are expected to be active, engaged readers. One of the most effective means by which to actively engage with a text is to annotate—to ask questions, provide insight, make connections, comment on a writer’s style. To that end, each student is responsible for purchasing his or her own copy of the summer-reading selection, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass: An American Slave* and annotating it while reading. All students are expected to begin bringing their copies of *Narrative* to school on the second day of class.

- Use the questions below to help you interpret Douglass’s work. These questions are intended to help you read actively as well as make connections between the text, contemporary society, and your own life. (Hint: Keep these questions in mind as you annotate; your responses to the written portion of the assignment will be richer for it.)

- Answer each of the following questions in complete sentences, writing to the best of your ability.
 1. One of the first things Frederick Douglass tells us about himself is that he doesn’t know who his father was, that his mother died when he was very young, and that he hardly recognized his biological siblings as relatives.
 - Discuss Douglass’s attempts at replacing these foundational family relationships.
 - What potential father or mother figures appear in the novel?
 - Who might we qualify as new brothers and sisters?
 - What, finally, can we say about Douglass’s search for relationship?
 - Is he finally successful, or not?
 - Be sure to explain the significance of your findings.

 2. In his preface to the *Narrative*, William Lloyd Garrison approves of the author’s "manliness."
 - Throughout the *Narrative*, Douglass himself gives constant attention to his desire to not only prove that he is human but also to prove that he is a "man."
 - What assumptions about gender (gender = what sort of expected cultural behaviors make a person masculine or feminine) are revealed by a close reading of the narrative? In other words, what does it mean to be a "man" (or to be "womanly"—cf. his description of Sophia Auld)?
 - Discuss how Douglass uses these assumptions to help him make his point about slavery (remember to identify the point you think Douglass is trying to make).

- Additionally, using Douglass’s insights and your own ideas, what qualities “make a man” today?
3. Think about the relationship between self and community.
- How does Douglass represent himself in relation to community?
 - Define the various communities that Douglass identifies in his text.
 - To what degree is he a part of these communities?
 - To what degree is he isolated from them?
 - Be sure to consider whether or not Douglass’s relation to community changes with time or location.
4. In addition to his own slave narrative, Frederick Douglass also narrates parts of the lives of his fellow slaves.
- Select a group of other slave stories that somehow fit together (such as those Douglass tells about women slaves), and explain the role those stories play in his own narrative. You might consider:
 - How does his use of others’ stories affect his own narrative?
 - Why does he choose to include them?
 - What do these stories help us understand about Douglass’s own experience?

- Responses to each question must include a minimum of three pieces of especially apt and relevant text evidence.
- Ample commentary is expected.
- Document text evidence using correct MLA parenthetical documentation. The Purdue Owl Writing Center is a good resource to help you:
<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>
- Written responses will be due within the first week of school.
- Students should be reminded that this is an independent assignment. Academic honesty is expected. Do not disappoint.

