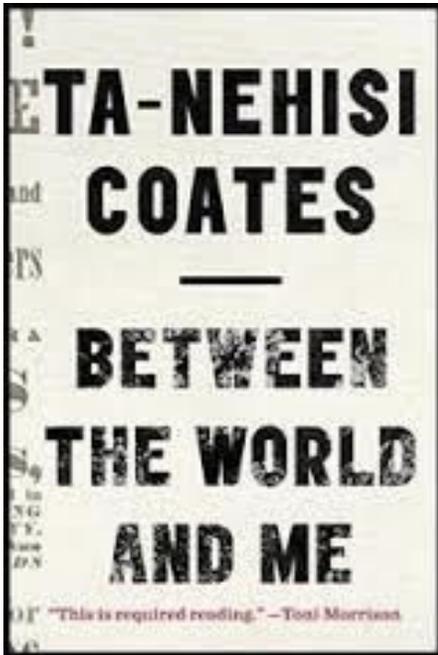


AP Language & Composition: Summer Reading, 2020-2021

Greetings from Mr. Green:

Greetings, junior AP Language and Composition students—I welcome you to the summer reading project that will officially begin our 2020 - 2021 journey together! The essential skills that we are going to practice together are reading, writing, listening and speaking. In this college-level course, one of our most important goals will be to heighten our awareness of the specific language choices writers make in the shaping of their art. To reach this end, we will utilize critical textual annotation and analysis, share thoughts on facets of the American experience, and evaluate ways in which writers use language to craft the sound and sense—the form and meaning—of their works.

Summer Reading Text: *Between the World and Me* by Ta-Nehisi Coates



From *School Library Journal*:

In a series of essays, written as a letter to his son, Coates confronts the notion of race in America and how it has shaped American history, many times at the cost of black bodies and lives. Thoughtfully exploring personal and historical events, from his time at Howard University to the Civil War, the author poignantly asks and attempts to answer difficult questions that plague modern society. In this short memoir, the Atlantic writer explains that the tragic examples of Michael Brown, Trayvon Martin, and those killed in South Carolina are the results of a systematically constructed and maintained assault to black people—a structure that includes slavery, mass incarceration, and police brutality as part of its foundation. From his passionate and deliberate breakdown of the concept of race itself to the importance of the Black Lives Matter movement, Coates powerfully sums up the terrible history of the subjugation of black people in the United States. A timely work, this title will resonate with all teens—those who have experienced racism as well as those who have followed the recent news coverage on violence against people of color [...] This stunning, National Book Award-winning memoir should be required reading for high school students and adults alike.—Shelley Diaz.

Assignment:

Please obtain a copy of the text and read it before August 18th: from the library or purchased, digital, physical or even audio. As you read, you will need to take ample notes in preparation for discussion and an essay that you will write in the first two weeks of class.

If you purchase a copy and annotate, that is great (it is what I would do), but I will not be collecting those annotations. Similarly, I will not be collecting your notes or lists of important quotes, responses, or critical comments. These will be valuable to you for completing the first assignments, so you must have them.

I will collect a typed dialectical journal. In the journal, every 20-30 pages (for the entire book, between 5 and 8 entries total) you will provide a brief summary of the claim he makes, explain **patterns** that you observe, and the **strategies** he uses in order to convince his readers. These explanations need not be long, but I will be checking these for points, so be sure to represent the complexity of Coates's work fairly and thoroughly.

When school begins, I will assign you one section of the book. In a brief essay, you will answer the following prompt:

How does Coates define the African American experience for his son? How does he tailor that message for his son in particular, as well as for more general audiences?*

Please contact me (Patrick Green) at Central (pgreen@d127.org) if you have questions. Have a wonderful summer!

* - It should be noted that one man's experience cannot – and should not – be taken as the all-encompassing, universal experience of an entire group of people. Even so, we will examine how Coates attempts to define some of the common and significant shared experiences of the African American community

Sample Analysis of *BtW&M*

Claim	Strategies
<p>(Pages 5-21) *</p> <p>In the beginning of the book, Coates examines the belief in the constructed idea of race and how it has been employed, consciously and unconsciously, to justify power hierarchies and excuse the exploitation and mistreatment of black Americans. He then continues by explaining the inherent fear this dynamic instills in black Americans, and how their behaviors are often a direct response to this fear.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Coates frames the failure of privileged white Americans to understand the plight of black Americans by sharing a story of his experience in an interview with a news outlet, thus illustrating the naiveté and ignorance that the media perpetuates. The fact that the media – which is designed to spread information – is mired in blindness and ignorance illustrates the extent to which society has become brainwashed into seeing race as a natural, and thus inevitable issue to be negotiated. ● Coates appeals directly to his son, telling him a family story that illustrates how seemingly abusive behavior from parents is actually a response to the fear they have of their families being abused or exploited by a society that has been instilled with the belief that color carries inherent value in society. The family story in turn illustrates that this issue is not a distant one outside the realm of his – and, by extension, his son’s – experience, but one which he has experienced firsthand ● After sharing the story of his father’s disciplinary measures, Coates shares the images he saw at his son’s age, allowing his son to understand the fear-ridden environment he witnessed as a child and that he may have sheltered his son from in raising him. In fact, he acknowledges this difference in their experience directly so as to help his son understand that he carries some ignorance as to the strife of black Americans today.

* Please note that this sample is NOT an actual representation of pages 5-21, so you will need to cover those pages in your analysis.

A special thanks to Mr. Hamilton at Central for creating this assignment. I have adapted it.