

Hillgrove High School English Department AP Language Pre-Course Reading 2017-2018

To help establish the necessary foundations and facilitate initial classroom instruction for both honors and AP level classes, each student is required to complete a pre-course reading assignment prior to the start of their English class next year. This reading requirement is different than traditional summer reading in that the text(s) will be an integral part of the semester curriculum, specifically the first unit of study. There will be multiple graded assignments based on the assigned pre-course reading rather than one stand-alone assessment of your reading. **It is imperative that students have a copy of the required text the FIRST week of the semester.** Teachers will provide more information regarding curriculum implementation of these texts at the start of the class.

Reading Assignments

Read the assigned text(s) for AP Language/American Literature, the English course you are taking in the 2017-2018 school year **before** the start of the semester. Additional assignments and/or guidance for your reading are provided on the following pages.

11th Grade AP Language and American Literature

Scratch Beginnings: Me, \$25, and the Search for the American Dream by Adam Shepard

From Amazon.com:

“Adam Shepard graduated from college in the summer of 2006 feeling disillusioned by the apathy he saw around him and incensed after reading Barbara Ehrenreich's famous works *Nickel and Dimed* and *Bait and Switch*—books that gave him a feeling of hopelessness over the state of the working class in America. Eager to see if he could make something out of nothing, he set out to prove wrong Ehrenreich's theory that those who start at the bottom stay at the bottom, and to see if the American Dream can still be a reality.

Shepard's plan was simple. Carrying only a sleeping bag, the clothes on his back, and \$25 in cash, and restricted from using previous contacts or relying on his college education, he set out for a randomly selected city with one objective: work his way out of homelessness and into a life that would give him the opportunity for success. His goal was to have, after one year, \$2,500, a working automobile, and a furnished apartment.

But from the start, things didn't go as smoothly as Shepard had planned. Working his way up from a Charleston, South Carolina homeless shelter proved to be more difficult than he anticipated, with pressure to take low-paying, exploitive jobs from labor companies, and a job market that didn't respond with enthusiasm to homeless applicants. Shepard even began donating plasma to make fast cash. To his surprise, he found himself depending most on fellow shelter residents for inspiration and advice.

Earnest, passionate, and hard to put down, *Scratch Beginnings* is a story that will not only inspire readers, but will also remind them that success can come to anyone who is willing to work hard—and that America is still one of the most hopeful and inspiring countries in the world.”

**See below for the assignment that accompanies your reading.

Complete the Following Assignments for the text.

A. Top Five Vocabulary Words

Select five examples of interesting diction in the text. These could be words that Shepard repeats, or diction that reveals his biases and world-view regarding his relationship to working class America. They could also be terms that represent his attempt to immerse himself into an unfamiliar environment.

For each word:

1. Write the sentence, complete with page number citation in MLA format.

2. Define the word. Some words have multiple definitions. Be sure to write down the definition that applies to the sentence you have selected.
3. Discuss how the use of this word (in the context of the text) impacts the reader in a specific way. Pay particular attention to words with a specific connotation.
4. Use this word in your own sentence

B. **Top Five Passages**

Select the five most influential passages that illustrate interesting arguments in the text. For each passage:

1. Write the sentence (or sentences), complete with page number citation in MLA format.
2. Discuss the use of this sentence or sentences in the context of the text. Why did you select this passage? How does a thorough understanding of this passage play an important role in understanding the author's purpose?
3. Label the tone of this passage. How does the author use specific strategies to create this tone?

C. **Related Articles**

To begin to create a foundation of examples and ideas to support the arguments you will be asked to make, you need to read a quality news source, such as *The New York Times*, *Time*, *Newsweek*, or *US News & World Report*, throughout the summer. "The Week in Review" section of the Sunday *New York Times* provides an excellent look at the main events and arguments of the week. Any newspapers or magazines written in English will suffice to complete this part of the assignment, but be sure to use a variety of sources.

Collect three current event articles that relate to issues in the text. You may select op-ed (opinion/editorial) pieces or news/feature articles, but you may not select more than one piece by the same author. Be sure to select articles from a variety of newspapers and/or magazines.

Copy or print out each piece.

For **EACH** article, write a response that contains two parts. The first part should be a three to four sentence response to the article—what did you think or feel after reading the article? Give your personal response to the points made in the piece. The second part should be a three to four sentence paragraph that connects the article to the book you chose. How does the article support or contradict arguments made in the book?

***It is important to note that a thorough understanding of current events gives students a strong advantage in this course, so although you need to collect at least three articles, the more articles you read, the better.