

AP English Language and Composition
Summer Reading Assignment 2019

Read each of the following works thoughtfully and thoroughly and complete the essay prompt (found on the back of this sheet). The essay should be handwritten in dark blue or black ink and on one side of the page only. Failure to follow these instructions will adversely affect your grade.

1984 by George Orwell
Brave New World by Aldous Huxley

Be prepared for an **objective reading test** on each of the books beginning the first day of class.

The essay will be taken up on the **first day of class**.

The two test grades will be averaged together as a major grade. The essay will be a separate major grade.

Failure to complete the essay or to turn it in on the first day of class will have a significant impact on your first quarter grade. (A 10 point per day deduction will be taken for late papers.)

I strongly suggest that you take notes for yourself (regarding, for example, themes, character, plot, elements of language), either in the text itself or in a notebook, that will be helpful to you during class discussion. Bring copies of both texts as well as your notes to class **every day beginning with the first day of class**.

Our readings next year will be primarily non-fiction and part of our study will involve the idea that “everything’s an argument” – from advertising to novels. In addition to developing a clear understanding of plot, character, and setting, as you read think about the *message* of each book; what does the author want you to understand, to think, or to think about? How do you know? Think especially about what the authors suggest about language, technology, education, happiness, privacy and identity as they relate to our humanity.

This essay assignment is my first impression of you – of your thinking and your writing. You have the entire summer to complete it. It should be reflective of your best work. If you tend to skim works or rely solely on some version of SparkNotes and are generally satisfied with a superficial understanding of texts, this summer is a good opportunity to begin training yourself to read closely for nuance of language and complexity of ideas.

Feel free to email with questions (bbroadwe@greenville.k12.sc.us) or stop by room 107 before the end of school. This assignment will be posted on my website as well as the EHS website.

I look forward to seeing you in the fall!
Mrs. Broadwell

In the following passage, the social critic Neil Postman contrasts George Orwell’s vision of the future, as expressed in the novel *1984* (written in 1948), with that of Aldous Huxley in the novel *Brave New World* (1936). Read the passage, considering Postman’s assertion that Huxley’s vision is more relevant today than is Orwell’s. **Then, using your own critical understanding of contemporary society as evidence as well as evidence from the novels *1984* and *Brave New World*, write a carefully argued essay that agrees or disagrees with Postman’s attitude.**

We were keeping our eye on 1984. When the year came and the prophecy didn’t, thoughtful Americans sang softly in praise of themselves. The roots of liberal democracy had held. Wherever else the terror had happened, we, at least, had not been visited by Orwellian nightmares.

But we had forgotten that alongside Orwell’s dark vision, there was another—slightly older, slightly less well known, equally chilling: Aldous Huxley’s *Brave New World*. Contrary to common belief even among the educated, Huxley and Orwell did not prophesy the same thing. Orwell warns that we will be overcome by an externally imposed oppression. But in Huxley’s vision, no Big Brother is required to deprive people of their autonomy, maturity, and history. As he saw it, people will come to love their oppression, to adore the technologies that undo their capacities to think.

What Orwell feared were those who would ban books. What Huxley feared was that there would be no reason to ban a book, for there would be no one who wanted to read one. Orwell feared those who would deprive us of information. Huxley feared those who would give us so much that we would be reduced to passivity and egoism. Orwell feared that the truth would be concealed from us. Huxley feared the truth would be drowned in a sea of irrelevance. Orwell feared we would become a captive culture. Huxley feared we would become a trivial culture, preoccupied with some equivalent of the feelies, the orgy porgy, and the centrifugal bumblepuppy. As Huxley remarked in *Brave New World Revisited*, the civil libertarians and rationalists who are ever on the alert to oppose tyranny “failed to take into account man’s almost infinite appetite for distractions.” In *1984*, Huxley added, people are controlled by inflicting pain. In *Brave New World*, they are controlled by inflicting pleasure. In short, Orwell feared that what we hate will ruin us. Huxley feared that what we love will ruin us.

(1985)

AP English Language Summer Reading Essay Rubric

	100	89	79	69
Argument	Clearly takes a position in relation to Postman’s.	Takes a position in relation to Postman’s.	Takes a position but it is not clearly in relation to Postman’s.	Student’s position is not clear.
Mechanics	Effectively follows the conventions of standard written English with no or very few grammatical errors.	Adequately follows the conventions of standard written English. May contain lapses in sentence structure and grammar but they do not severely interfere with understanding the student’s ideas.	Follows most of the conventions of standard written English but frequent lapses in sentence structure and grammar may make ideas difficult to follow.	Awkward sentence structures and excessive grammatical errors make the essay difficult to follow.
Coherence	Ideas within and between paragraphs are clearly connected.	Although the prose is generally clear, connections between ideas are occasionally unclear.	Although the prose usually conveys the student’s ideas, connections between ideas are frequently unclear.	Connections between ideas within and between paragraphs are weak or nonexistent. Ideas may be limited to vague, general statements.
Evidence	Offers clearly relevant and specific evidence drawn from the novels and contemporary society.	Offers relevant evidence drawn from the novels and contemporary society.	Offers limited evidence drawn from the novels and contemporary society or may neglect to provide evidence from either the novels or contemporary society.	Offers little to no evidence drawn from the novels or contemporary society. May offer mostly plot summary.

Essays that fail to fulfill the requirements of the prompt may receive a failing grade. Plagiarism may result in a grade of 0.