

### AP English Language and Composition Summer Assignment

Your summer reading assignment has four components:

1. Reading the Text
2. Application of Diction
3. Argumentative Essay
4. Socratic Discussion

#### The Assignment:

Do a close reading of the text—*Outliers: The Story of Success* by Malcolm Gladwell. You must purchase this text on your own (widely available at bookstores, on Amazon, etc.), as you will be writing in the book and keeping it. A close reading means to keep a pen or pencil in your hand as you read and make notes in the margins, underline confusing and/or favourite passages, highlight interesting information, and comment on significant language.

1. As you read, concentrate on Gladwell's unique definition of success. Notice how he uniquely defines and presents this abstract concept through his creative chapter titles, research, personal stories, and observations. As you read, pay attention to the moments when Gladwell's definition of success conflicts with your own. Try to track how and when his argument starts to re-shape your own thinking.

2. Use the attached questions to guide you through the entire novel, and be prepared to discuss each question in a Socratic forum upon your return to school. A Socratic forum is a scholarly discussion of an essential question in which student opinions are shared, proven, refuted, and refined through dialogue with other students. You will need to come to the seminar on the first day of class with your answers prepared for discussion. This discussion will count as your first test grade for the trimester.

3. Top 20 Vocabulary Words—**due August 25<sup>th</sup>**. Select twenty examples of interesting diction from the text. For each word:

- a. Write the sentence, complete with page number citation.
- b. Define the word. Some words have multiple definitions; be sure to write down the definition that applies to the sentence that you have selected.
- c. Analyze the use of this word in the context of the text. Why was that specific word chosen over its near synonyms? What effect does that word choice have?
- d. Use this word in your own sentence.

4. Write an argumentative essay. Your essay will be used to assess your writing and ability to synthesize reading material. This essay is also **due the first day of class**.

- a. Write an essay which defends or challenges or qualifies Gladwell's assertion that, "if you work hard enough and assert yourself, and use your mind and imagination, you can shape the world to your desires" (Gladwell, 151).
  - i. Present your ideas clearly and with organization following MLA format.
  - ii. Use facts, examples, personal experience, and connections from your reading to support your claim (do you or don't you agree with Gladwell's assertion?). I am challenging you to think deeply about your readings and apply them to a bigger and personal idea.
  - iii. Be sure to make specific connections to Gladwell and any other sources you may include in your argument.
  - iv. Your essay should be 4-5 pages long and will be graded using the attached Argument Rubric Checklist

**Guided Reading Questions for *Outliers***  
(used for preparing for Socratic seminar)

**Introduction: The Roseto Mystery**

1. What is the Roseto Mystery? What overarching idea is Gladwell establishing in his introduction?

**Chapter 1: The Matthew Effect**

2. Explain the author's viewpoint regarding "The Story of Success." Are personal qualities the sole reason one becomes an outlier?
3. What is the consequence of "prematurely writing people off as failures"?

**Chapter 2: The 10,000-Hour Rule**

4. Explain the 10,000-Hour Rule.
5. Consider the following: "Practice isn't the thing you done once you're good. It's the thing you do that makes you good." Explain how this philosophy was at work for Bill Joy, The Beatles, and Bill Gates.

**Chapter 3: The Trouble with Geniuses, Part 1**

6. Describe the difference between 'divergence testing' and 'convergence testing'. Is one more significant than the other?
7. Gladwell states that communities and companies in American society "are convinced that those at the very top of the IQ scale have the greatest potential." After reading the chapter, explain why you either agree or disagree with this statement.

**Chapter 4: The Trouble with Geniuses, Part 2**

8. Compare and contrast Langan and Oppenheimer.
9. What is the difference between 'concerted cultivation' and "accomplishment of natural growth"?

**Chapter 5: The Three Lessons of Joe Flom**

10. Explain Gladwell's statement as it relates to Joe Flom: "Buried in that setback was a golden opportunity."
11. Consider the following quotation: "Hard work is a prison sentence only if it does not have meaning." Explain how this quotation relates to the chapter.

**Chapter 6: Harlan, Kentucky**

12. Describe the "culture of honor" that exists in the Appalachian Mountains.
13. What are the 'cultural legacies' as described in this chapter? Why are they significant to understand when dealing with people?

**Chapter 7: The Ethnic Theory of Plane Crashes**

14. Describe the significance of the "willingness to change" as it relates to Korean Air.
15. What is Gladwell explaining about the importance of communication?
16. How does this chapter compare to others in terms of its strength of argument?

**Chapter 8: Rice Paddies and Math Tests**

17. After reading this section of the book, have your opinions changed about math classes and math ability? Explain why or why not.
18. Describe the connection between the 10,000-Hour Rule and the wet-rice farmers in Asia.

**Chapter 9: Marita's Bargain**

19. Describe the significance of summer vacation as it relates to difference groups of students. Why is this significant?
20. Gladwell states, "success follows a predictable course." How does this apply to Marita? How does this apply to you?

**Epilogue: A Jamaican Story**

21. What does Gladwell mean when he states, "The outlier in the end is not an outlier at all"?
22. Explain what Gladwell means when he states, "That is the story of my mother's path to success—and it isn't true."

## AP English Language Argument Rubric Checklist

### High Range Essays (9-8)

- Indicates complete understanding of the requirements of the prompt.
- Reveals full understanding of the ideas conveyed in the passage and the implications.
- Effectively develops a position on the assigned topic.
- The argument is convincing.
- Does not generalize but employs appropriate evidence and develops that evidence fully and comprehensively, follows through; fully addresses “So what?” question.
- Is clear, well-organized, and coherent—is a complete “stand alone” argumentative essay rather than an exam response.
- The prose demonstrates an ability to control a wide range of the elements of effective writing.
- Contains very few errors or flaws, if any.

### Middle-Range Essays (7-6-5)

- Indicates adequate understanding of the requirements of the prompt.
- Demonstrates some or considerable understanding of the ideas conveyed in the passage and the implications.
- Effectively develops a position on the assigned topic.
- The argument is generally convincing but less cogent or developed.
- Employs appropriate evidence and develops that evidence adequately; follows through; addresses “So what?” question. Level 5 essays may be uneven or may digress.
- Is clear, well-organized, and coherent for the most part.
- The language may contain lapses in diction or syntax but is generally clear.
- Contains only minor errors or flaws.

#### Tips:

- The Level 7 paper demonstrates a more consistent command of college-level writing than does the 5 or 6 paper.
- A 5 paper does the minimum required by the prompt. It relies on generalizations and sketchy analysis. It is often sidetracked by summary, and the reference may be limited or simplistic. It often loses focus and digresses from the topic.

### Low-Range Essay (4-3-2-1)

- Inadequately develops a position on the assigned topic.
- May misunderstand, misrepresent, or oversimplify the ideas developed in the passage.
- The link between the argument and the passage may be weak. Writer does not follow through.
- Evidence provided may be insufficient, inappropriate, or misused—a superficial response to the task.
- Essay may suggest immature control of writing—weak control of the elements of diction, syntax, and organization.
- Essay is riddled with mechanical/grammatical/spelling errors.

#### Tips:

- A 4 or 3 essay may do no more than assert an argument without developing it.
- A 2 essay may misunderstand the prompt or substitute a simpler task by responding to the prompt tangentially with unrelated, inaccurate or inappropriate evidence.
- A 1-2 essay indicates a major lack of understanding and control. It fails to comprehend the prompt and/or the passage. It may also indicate severe writing problems.