

**West Roxbury Academy**

**Summer Reading Assignment 2017: *Malcolm Gladwell***

**College English 11/AP Language and Composition**

**Young**

**Why Summer Reading?**

High school and college students across the country are expected to complete summer reading in preparation for the next school year. Each summer, students lose two to three months of reading skills, leaving students two to three years behind. This learning loss is known as “summer slide,” and it can leave students at a serious disadvantage. One way to address this disadvantage is summer reading, along with writing and thinking about what you read. Summer Reading prevents learning loss and helps you gain, not lose, skills. Summer Reading helps you prepare for the following year and build skills necessary for high school graduation and college. Summer Reading is not a punishment; it’s an opportunity for you to invest in your skills. For more on the “summer slide,” check out the following resources:

<http://www.summerlearning.org/?page=know_the_facts>

<http://blog.ed.gov/2014/03/stopping-the-summer-slide/>

**What You Will Do:**

Read *Outliers,* by Malcolm Gladwell. In your journal, it is expected that you analyze the main points of each chapter. There are guide questions to help aid your analysis.

**Why this book?**

*The Outliers* by Malcolm Gladwell is an insightful study of the nature of success.

What is an outlier?: ***Outlier is a scientific term to describe things or phenomena that lie outside normal experience****. In the summer, in Paris, we expect most days to be somewhere between warm and very hot. But imagine if you had a day in the middle of August where the temperature fell below freezing. That day would be outlier. And while we have a very good understanding of why summer days in Paris are warm or hot, we know a good deal less about why a summer day in Paris might be freezing cold. In this book I’m interested in people who are outliers—in men and women who, for one reason or another, are so accomplished and so extraordinary and so outside of ordinary experience that they are as puzzling to the rest of us as a cold day in August.*-Malcolm Gladwell

**Do I still have to complete Summer Reading assignments if I am enrolled in Summer School?**

Yes! Our summer reading assignments provide a common experience for our class to start the year, and we will use the experience of reading these books in discussions throughout the year.

**Where do I find the book?**

*Outlier is* available to borrow from the library. You can also borrow a copy from WRA through Mr. Young starting June 15. In order to borrow a copy from WRA, you must sign a book slip and agree to return the book to the school in September. You can borrow an e-book version (digital) via the Boston Public Library here: <https://www.bpl.org/electronic/ebook.asp>. Additionally, you can buy the used book on [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)

**College English 11 Summer Assignments: *The Outliers***

**Your summer reading assignment has three major components:**

**1. Reading and annotating the text**

**2. Collecting examples of strong Diction**

**3. Argumentative Essay**

Here is a brief review found on Amazon.com:

...Malcolm Gladwell poses a... provocative question in *Outliers*: why do some people succeed, living remarkably productive and impactful lives, while so many more never reach their potential? Challenging our cherished belief of the "self-made man," he makes the democratic assertion that superstars don't arise out of nowhere, propelled by genius and talent: "They are invariably the beneficiaries of hidden advantages and extraordinary opportunities and cultural legacies that allow them to learn and work hard and make sense of the world in ways others cannot." Examining the lives of outliers from Mozart to Bill Gates, he builds a convincing case for how successful people rise on a tide of advantages, "some deserved, some not, some earned, some just plain lucky." -*Mari Malcolm*

*The reading assignment for the summer*

Do a close reading of the text. **A close reading means to keep a pencil or pen in your hand as you read and make notes in the margins, underline confusing and/or favorite passages, highlight interesting information, and comment on significant language.**

1. As you read, concentrate on Gladwell’s unique definition of success. Notice how he defines and presents this abstract concept through his creative chapter titles, research, personal stories, and observations. You’ll be surprised about how much you will learn from this original perspective on success.
2. Use the attached questions to guide you through the entire novel, and be prepared to discuss each question in a classroom forum.
3. Top 20 Vocabulary Words (This will be due the first day of class.)—Select twenty examples of interesting diction from the text. **Diction: word choice**

* a. Write the sentence from the text, complete with page number citation.
* b. Define the word. Some words have multiple denotations. 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  other potential synonyms? What effect does that word choice have on the ideas being presented?
* d. Use this word in your own sentence.

4. Be prepared to write an argumentative essay when you return to school. Your essay will be used to assess your writing and ability to synthesize reading material. *You will complete this essay the first week of class.*

* Write an essay that defends(agree) or challenges(disagree) 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).

If you have any questions, concerns or ideas with the reading/assignment, please e-mail me at wyoung@bostonpublicschools.org.

**Have a good summer!**

**GUIDED READING QUESTIONS**

**Introduction**

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

**Chapter One “The Matthew Effect”**

1. 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 Two “The 10,000-Hour Rule”**

3. Explain the 10,000-Hour Rule.

1. Consider the following: “Practice isn’t the thing you do 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 Three “The Trouble with Geniuses, Part 1”**

5. Describe the difference between ‘divergence testing’ and ‘convergence testing’. Is one more significant than the other?

6. 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 Four “The Trouble with Geniuses, Part 2”**

7. Compare and contrast Langan and Oppenheimer.

8. What is the difference between “concerted cultivation” and “accomplishment of natural growth”?

**Chapter Five ”The Three Lessons of Joe Flom”**

9. Explain Gladwell’s statement as it relates to Joe Flom: “Buried in that setback was a golden opportunity.”

10. Consider the following quote: “Hard work is a prison sentence only if it does not have meaning.” Explain how this quote relates to the chapter.

**Chapter Six “”Harlan, Kentucky”**

11. Describe the “culture of honor” that exists in the Appalachian Mountains.

12. What are the “cultural legacies” as described in this chapter? Why are they significant to understand when dealing with people?

**Chapter Seven “The Ethnic Theory of Plane Crashes”**

13. Describe the significance of the “willingness to change” as it relates to Korean Air.

14. What is Gladwell explaining about the importance of communication?

**Chapter Eight “Rice Paddies and Math Tests”**

15. After reading this section of the book, have your opinions changed about math classes and math ability? Explain why or why not.

16. Describe the connection between the “10,000-Hour Rule” and the wet-rice farmers in Asia.

**Chapter Nine “Marita’s Bargain”**

17. Describe the significance of summer vacation as it relates to different groups of students. Why is this significant?

18. Gladwell states “success follows a predictable course.” How does this quote apply to Marita? How does this apply to you?

**Epilogue “A Jamaican Story”:**

19. What does Gladwell mean when he states, “The outlier in the end is not an outlier at all.”

20. Explain what Gladwell means when he states, “That is the story of my mother’s path to success – and it isn’t true.”