

AP English Language and Composition Summer 2019 Assignment

Welcome to APLAC! This summer, you will read Tobias Wolff's memoir *This Boy's Life* and C.S. Lewis's book *Mere Christianity*. (They are not novels, so don't call them that in your essays.) You must come to school armed with a working knowledge of both texts, ready to discuss them. You must also complete the three assignments below. **NOTE: First due date occurs during the summer.**

Due Dates

TBL Essay: 8/4

MC Essay: 8/21

All Reading Qs: 8/21

- Type them on separate sheets of paper, in 12-pt **DOUBLE-SPACED** Times New Roman font, surrounded by 1" margins on all sides (no title pages or elaborate headings, please; your name and an essay title will suffice). Staple all 15 reading questions together, separate from the essays.
- Support your answers to all questions with specific, **cited** (Author #) material from the books. The best essays will include quotes as well as paraphrasing.
- Because these essays are short, limit your introduction and conclusion to **one sentence each**. Please use multiple paragraphs.
- Note that these are not literary analysis essays. Do not pad your essay with gratuitous references to foreshadowing, irony, symbolism, or other literary terms. Answer the prompt.
- **NOTE: All assignments must be completed independently, using only the two books as sources (no online sources, not even for "inspiration"). All students' answers should be unique. These books will collectively account for over 100 points in your first-semester grade. Skimming or skipping them is enormously unwise.**

This Boy's Life – Tobias Wolff – Argumentative Essay

This Boy's Life begins with epigraph quotes from Oscar Wilde and Saul Alinsky. **Choose one of these quotations and, in a well-organized essay, affirm, challenge, or qualify¹ the argument in the quote.** You need not use those exact terms, but your position on the quote's validity should be clear from your thesis. **Mention the quote, but don't recopy it in your essay.** Support your answer with specific material spanning the breadth of *This Boy's Life*. (**Do not use** any evidence related to Toby changing his name. That's low-hanging fruit. Dig deeper.) Note that a thoughtful essay will manage to find support from the memoir no matter which position it takes on the quote, and will argue a position **on the quote**, not merely list examples of poses or corruption or make a claim about Toby. Write approximately one page. **Submit your essay to Turnitin.com by 11:59 pm on the due date. Specific Turnitin.com instructions for this assignment are attached. This is the only piece of the summer assignment that you need to submit to Turnitin.com by that date.**

Mere Christianity – C.S. Lewis – Rhetorical Analysis Essay

Unlike *This Boy's Life*, this book's focus is not primarily narration, but definition, description, classification, and ultimately, persuasion. As a prelude to our study of rhetoric in APLAC this year, choose one chapter of *Mere Christianity* (not the preface or Norris's foreword) that you believe is especially convincing, effective, or persuasive. **Identify the purpose of the chapter and analyze how Lewis accomplishes it.** Why does the chapter "work"? You might choose to examine word choice, sentence or paragraph structure, reasoning, organization, or any other strategy that contributes to its effectiveness. Write approximately one page. **Do not** A.) summarize the chapter, B.) write about what you personally connected with in the chapter, C.) praise C.S. Lewis for his amazing writing skills, or D.) try to blind the reader with effusive religious declarations. Instead, objectively analyze what techniques contribute to the meaning, purpose, or effect of the chapter.

Both Texts

Please bring typed, **cited** answers to the attached study questions on the first day of school.

Have an excellent summer!

¹ **Qualify:** (v.) to modify, limit, or restrict, as by giving exceptions.

APLAC Summer Reading Questions

MERE CHRISTIANITY

1. After reading the Preface, characterize C.S. Lewis's **purpose** in *Mere Christianity*. What is it, and what is it not?
2. According to Kathleen Norris's Foreword, how did the **context** in which *Mere Christianity* was written affect C.S. Lewis's approach? Find an example from one of the chapters of Lewis's text where this context affects the way he makes his point.
3. Describe Lewis's **persona** as he establishes it in Book I, Chapter 1. How does he want the reader to perceive him? Cite textual evidence to support your answer.
4. What does Lewis call "the most shocking thing that has ever been uttered by human lips"? Explain the logical argument by which Lewis uses this "shocking thing" to refute the view of Christ as merely a good moral teacher.
5. One of Lewis's most striking rhetorical characteristics is his use of **analogy**. Find and explain three places (each from different Books in the book—Book I, Book II, etc.) where he uses any type of analogy to make his arguments more accessible. (Do not use the analogy of the band and the ships, as it is the subject of the next question.)
6. Explain Lewis's analogies of the band and the ships. What **three** points about morality does he make by means of these analogies?
7. What is Lewis's explanation for the unpopularity of chastity? Cite two places in the relevant chapter where he refutes common arguments about sex.
8. At the beginning of Book IV, Lewis predicts he will be criticized for introducing theology into a work for the general public. By the end of Book IV, how would you characterize the purpose of this section? Why does Lewis include this section if he feels it will draw criticism? Why does he make a point of including his prediction of the criticism?
9. Cite one example in the book in which Lewis references his past as an atheist. How does it contribute to his argument?

"CRIPE! THERE'S NO PLOT!" (Optional Study Technique)

Because *Mere Christianity* is a nonfiction work, it's harder to absorb and retain its content. In order to better track your knowledge of the book (and improve your score on the upcoming Summer Reading Quiz), consider doing the following:

- For each chapter, write one sentence explaining the chapter title.
- Keep a running list of terms Lewis defines in the book (including terms he takes care to distinguish from their popular usage).

***Mere Christianity* is available on iTunes at this link:**

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/book/mere-christianity/id360638379?mt=11>

You may buy the book in any format and from any company you choose.

THIS BOY'S LIFE

NOTE: Although in this memoir, the narrator prefers to be called “Jack,” his true name—and the name he was known by both before and after this period of his life—is Toby. You may pick either name when referencing him, but familiarize yourself with the difference between the two.

1. Note the particular **anecdote** with which the memoir begins. After reading the book, explain why this is an appropriate way to begin the story, and how this beginning contributes to the story as a whole.
2. How does Wolff the author create a **persona** in the memoir for his young self? What sort of boy is Toby/Jack? Support your answer with three separate scenes in the memoir that help to determine how we are intended to view “this boy.” (Do not use the scene referenced in #4.)
3. Dwight is not a perfect fit for the archetype of antagonistic “evil step-father.” But what *is* he? Define Dwight by completing this statement: “Dwight is a(n)...” Finish the sentence with more than a single word, and find three specific examples or scenes to support your definition.
4. Toby/Jack tries to impress a certain persona upon Mr. Howard. How does this persona differ from the Toby/Jack we had previously come to know?
5. Note the **structure** of the memoir’s conclusion; Wolff no longer tells the story in chronological order. Explain how the concluding pages are organized, and what the purpose behind that organization may be.
6. Cite two examples in the book of “fine sentences”—that is, sentences whose **diction** (word choice) and **syntax** (sentence structure) you find especially elegant, effective, or affecting. Reword and rewrite each sentence to express the same information as simply and plainly as you can, and then explain what makes each of Wolff’s original sentences “fine.” Note that you are evaluating the sentence based on **HOW** it says what it says, not its meaning or the argument it makes. You may **NOT** use the sentence that begins with the words, “When we are green...”

EX: (Use this format for your fine sentences.)

Wolff’s original: “Some of the tasks were reasonable, some unreasonable, some bizarre as the meanest whims of a gnome setting tasks to a treasure seeker” (97).

Simple and plain: “The tasks ranged from reasonable to unreasonable to strange.”

Wolff’s sentence divides the list of tasks into three sections, beginning each section with “some” to organize the list and separating them with commas to force the reader to pause and examine each one. Wolff omits “of the tasks were” in the second section in order to streamline the writing and save time in preparation for the massive third section, which grabs most of the attention thanks to its relative length, detail, vivid and adventurous imagery (“setting tasks to a treasure seeker”), and extreme, negative diction (“bizarre,” “meanest whims,” “gnome”), casting Dwight as a fantastical, villainous creature tormenting the heroic Toby for his own pleasure.

***This Boy’s Life* is available on iTunes at this link:**

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/book/this-boys-life/id430662338?mt=11>

You may buy the book in any format and from any company you choose.

This Boy's Life Essay Grading Criteria

| | Effective | Developing | Inadequate | Little Success |
|------------------------------|--|--|--|---|
| Argument | Takes a clear position affirming, refuting, or qualifying one epigraph quote | Pontificates on quote or lists examples of poses / corruption without taking a position | Does not address either quote, or tries to address both | Does not address either quote, or tries to address both. |
| Support | Numerous specific, cited details provide clear support for position and evidence of reading the book | Some details support argument, but may not be sufficient or relevant. Some generalizations. | Little to no relevant support for the writer's supposed position; contains factual errors; | Little to no support; factual errors; Suggests lack of reading or comprehension. |
| Organization | Clear organization that walks the reader through the paper | Organization strays slightly. Awkward or choppy transitions. | Organization unclear; Overshoots length limit by a significant margin | Strays off topic egregiously or repeatedly. |
| Style | Variety of sentence structure, mature and varied vocabulary, shows exemplary command of language. | Some variety in sentence structure and vocab, command of language effective or slightly flawed. Some awkward phrasing. | Sentence structure and vocab elementary; command of language is deeply flawed and full of awkwardness. | Sentence structure and vocab demonstrate utter lack of AP-level skill and effort. |
| Grammar / Conventions | Few or no errors, none distracting | Some careless errors that may distract | Numerous major errors that confuse the meaning. | Full of basic errors that render the essay incoherent; not AP-level work. |

Mere Christianity Essay Grading Criteria

| | Effective | Inadequate | Little Success |
|------------------------------|--|--|---|
| Organization | Clear organization walks reader through paper; multiple ¶s with appropriate transitions (1-sentence intro) | Organization strays slightly at times. Over 1.5 pages. Transitions tired or awkward. | Organization is unclear and may stray off topic. One giant paragraph, or wildly exceeds length limit |
| Analysis | Clearly defines chapter's specific purpose and thoroughly, accurately analyzes methods of achieving it. | Purpose is unclear, or analysis is lacking. Incorrect terms, or a laundry list of unexplained devices. Some summary. | Purpose is unclear. Essay summarizes or praises without analyzing. Inadequate analysis of how purpose is achieved. |
| Support | Numerous specific, cited details provide clear support for the writer's analysis and evidence of reading the book. | Details at times insufficient, irrelevant, or misinterpreted. Insufficient citations, no quotes, or super-long quotes. | Little to no relevant support for analysis. Full of vagueness and generalities or factual errors. No citations or quotes (0). |
| Style | Mature and varied vocabulary and sentence structure. Shows exemplary command of language. | Command of language slightly flawed. Some wordiness, informality, redundancy, or awkward phrasing. | Limited in vocab and sentence structure. Command of language deeply flawed, full of wordiness and awkwardness. |
| Grammar / Conventions | Few or no errors, none distracting | Some careless errors that may distract; not double-spaced TNR 12 | Numerous major, distracting, basic, or careless errors; citation format incorrect; not AP-level work |

REMINDER: College-level courses demand college-level work. If your assignment displays any of the following middle-school-level errors, expect severe point deductions.

- *Misspellings (esp. character/author names)*
- *Run-on sentences and comma splices*
- *Gross misuse of punctuation/capitalization*
- *Mangled syntax (no evidence of proofreading)*

Student Directions to Register and Use Turnitin.com

1. Go to www.turnitin.com.

If you want to create a totally new account:

2. In the upper-right corner, below the login box, click “Create Account.”
3. Under “Create a New Account,” click on “student.”
4. Enter the class I.D. as indicated below. The class enrollment password is **viator**.
5. You must use your #####xx@saintviator.com **email address** to create the account. When you choose a password for your account, **make sure it is something you will remember**. It must contain at least one letter and one number.
6. Continue to fill in the online form. When all the information is complete, click “I agree – create profile” at the bottom. You’re in!

If you want to add this class to an existing account you already created:

(You may only do this if you already have an account that uses your Viator email.)

7. Enter your **Viator e-mail address** and password in the upper-right corner. (If you have forgotten your password, click “Retrieve password” below the password box and answer the security question. This will allow you to set a new password.)
8. Click the button marked “enroll in a class.” Enter the class ID (listed below) and enrollment password (**viator**). You’re in!

If you want to submit an assignment to Turnitin.com:

9. When you log in, the class name should appear in the middle of the page. Click it.
10. An assignment list will appear. Next to the assignment you want to submit, click the “Submit” button.
11. Select “single file upload” and continue to fill in your information. When you click the “Browse” button, search your computer for the correct file. (This is very similar to attaching a document to an e-mail.) When you choose the correct file, click “Submit” only one time.
12. A preview of your assignment will appear. Double-check that you are viewing the correct assignment that you intend to turn in. Click “Submit” one more time.
13. A Turnitin digital receipt of your submission will appear immediately. At the top of the screen, a message will appear saying you successfully submitted the paper.
14. Sign out of Turnitin and check your email. A receipt should appear in your inbox.

Class I.D. **Class Name**

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| 20633797 | APLAC Summer Assignment 2019 |
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Class enrollment password: viator

NOTE: For the purposes of this assignment, all students are using the same Turnitin class. When classes begin in mid-August, you will re-register with a new Turnitin class for the year.