

June 2020

**Dear Student and Families,**

Welcome to the Advanced Placement Language & Composition/Honors American History program for the upcoming school year. We are excited you have decided to join us this year! Students will learn to analyze, discuss, and critically think about a wide variety of texts in preparation for the AP exam in May (*all students are required to take this exam*) and college. To help start the year on solid footing, you will find requirements below for the summer reading assignment and a list of books and supplies for the school year. *All the books are required reading for the class. Due to the current uncertainty around Covid-19, we recommend waiting to purchase books 4-6 until they are assigned.* However, please purchase Between the World and Me and Dear America.

1. Students need to get copies of the following books for the school year:
  1. **(SUMMER READING)** *Between the World and Me* by Ta-Nehisi Coates
  2. *Dear America: Notes of an Undocumented Citizen* by Jose Antonio Vargas (do **not** buy the Young Reader's Edition)
  3. *Song of Solomon* by Toni Morrison
  4. *They Called Us Enemy* by George Takei
  5. *The Things They Carried* by Tim O'Brien
  6. *Born a Crime* by Trevor Noah
  7. \*One additional book may be required
  
2. Students will need to get the following supplies
  - 1 notebook with at least 100 pages. Buy one that suits your writing style and organization
  - Black and blue pens
  - Post-it notes
  - 1 three ring binder for keeping a portfolio of your classroom work with a minimum 5 dividers
  
3. Students will read the non-fiction memoir *Between the World and Me* by Ta-Nehisi Coates over the summer and complete the attached homework. During the first week of school, you will be asked to turn in this work and prepare for informal discussion and activities using evidence you have gathered and thoughts and ideas you had while reading this powerful memoir. On the next page, you will find an example of our expectations of the summer homework.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Ms. deVidal at [cdevidal@lwsd.org](mailto:cdevidal@lwsd.org) or Ms. Visperas at [cvisperas@lwsd.org](mailto:cvisperas@lwsd.org) over the summer. Bring your summer assignment with you on the first day of school. Have a great summer! We look forward to the new school year!

In Solidarity,  
Ms. Christina deVidal, NBCT  
Ms. Crystal Visperas

### Biography of Ta-Nehisi Coates and His Memoir, *Between the World and Me*

“In a profound work that pivots from the most pressing questions about American history and ideals to the most intimate concerns of an African American father for his son, Ta-Nehisi Coates offers a powerful new framework for understanding our nation’s painful racial history and our current civil rights crisis. Americans have built an entire society on the idea of “race,” a false construct whose ramifications damage us, but fall most heavily on the bodies of black women and men— bodies exploited through slavery and segregation, and, today, threatened, locked up, and murdered out of all proportion to their number in the population. What is it like to inhabit a black body and find a way to live within it? And how can we all honestly reckon with this fraught history and free ourselves from its burden? *Between the World and Me* is Ta-Nehisi Coates’s attempt to answer these questions, in the form of a letter to his adolescent son. Coates shares with his son—and readers—the story of his awakening to the truth about his place in American culture through a series of revelatory experiences, from Howard University to Civil War battlefields, from the South Side of Chicago to Paris, from his childhood home to the living rooms of mothers whose children’s lives were taken far too soon, as American plunder. Beautifully woven from personal narrative, reimagined history, and fresh, emotionally charged reportage, *Between the World and Me* clearly illuminates the past, bravely confronts our present, and offers a transcendent vision for a way forward.

Coates explores several broad themes, including race, racism, and systemic oppression; fear; father-son relationships; the search for identity; education; and justice, among others. Trace the development of one or more of these themes throughout the text. How does Coates develop this theme? What events or details are most central to his development of this theme?

*Between the World and Me* can be divided into three sections, each focused on a different era in Coates’s life: his early life, before attending Howard University; his time at Howard; and his life after Howard. What is Coates’s primary claim throughout the book? What is his key purpose in writing this book? As he narrates his experiences, what techniques (rhetorical, literary, etc.) does Coates use to make his ideas coherent and to organize his information?” (Parker).

**Habit of Mind for this reading: Seek to understand. Focus your initial reading on understanding Coates’ arguments and ideas. Rather than evaluating if you agree with Coates’ point of view and commenatry, analyze HOW he makes those arguments.**

- His website: <https://ta-nehisicoates.com/>
- Stories and articles by Ta-Nehisi Coates <https://www.theatlantic.com/author/ta-nehisi-coates/>

## Part 1 of Summer Assignment:

### The Dialectical Journal on *Between the World and Me*

**What is a Dialectical Journal?** This is a tool you can use to interact with the text as you are actively and closely reading. Dialectical Journals allows you to capture continual social commentary the author creates through diction, rhetorical appeals, imagery, and anecdotes while keeping your findings above a mere plot synopsis. In addition, Dialectical Journals help you to stay organized with your own thoughts and striking sentences you want to engage in. You will need these pieces of evidence and analysis of that evidence for your first week's discussion in class.

#### Guidelines:

- You can either create your Dialectical Journal in your AP Language and American History Notebook OR you can type it in a Word/Google Document and print it. Either is fine!
- You will be completing 3 Dialectical Journals (or 3 “rows”) for each section (Part I, Part II, and Part III) so this will be 9 Dialectical Journals overall.
- **Please include PAGE NUMBERS, complete sentences, and proper grammar. We love to see it!**
- While reading, you are analyzing how Coates develops his argument and reveals his beliefs and values (social commentary) on various topics. Use the topics lists below to guide your reading.

#### Social Commentary Topics:

- Family
- The College Experience
- Gender
- Race
- American Culture & History
- Policing
- The Criminal Justice System
- The Role of Media
- Racism
- Systemic Oppression
- Fear
- Father-son Relationships
- Coming-of-Age
- The Search for Identity
- Education
- The Black Lived Experience
- Black Lives Matter
- Justice

Example of Dialectical Journal with Evidence AND Social Commentary

Part I: pg. 4-71 of *Between the World and Me* by Ta-Nehisi Coates

EVIDENCE WITH PAGE NUMBERS	SOCIAL COMMENTARY TOPIC	ANALYSIS OF TA-NEHISI COATES' MESSAGE OF SOCIAL COMMENTARY TOPIC
<p>“I felt the fear in the visits to my Nana’s home in Philadelphia. You never knew her. I barely knew her, but what I remember is her hard manner, her rough voice. And I knew that my father’s father was dead and that my Uncle Oscar was dead and that my Uncle David was dead and that each of these instances was unnatural. And I saw it in my own father, who loves you, who counsels you, who slipped me money to care for you. My father was so very afraid. I felt it in the sting of his black leather belt, which he applied with more anxiety than anger, my father who beat me as if someone might steal me away, because that is exactly what was happening all around us. Everyone had lost a child, somehow, to the streets, to jail, to drugs, to guns. It was said that these lost girls were sweet as honey and would not hurt a fly. It was said that these lost boys had just received a GED and had begun to turn their lives around. And now they were gone, and their legacy was a great fear.” – page 15</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family</li> <li>• Fear</li> <li>• The Black Lived Experience</li> </ul>	<p>Ta-Nehisi Coates, in his letter to his son, navigates how historical and institutional trauma causes tensions within in his family, his neighborhood and amongst the larger black community. This is the cloud that looms over black people in their everyday actions, the fear of being black, with the inclusion of the harsh diction of “rough voice” and “someone might steal me away.” Coates reiterates that the legacy and honor of being a black person is stripped away as soon as one enters the culture that is teeming with hate towards the color of his skin. Black men and women are vulnerable. They are scared. And the American system has willfully created this system. Coates warns his son this is the world that he is in and that no matter how educated, how hard one fights or how hard you love one another, the fear of being a black man in America is real.</p>

**Use the TEMPLATE BELOW for your  
Dialectical Journal with Evidence AND Social Commentary**

Part I: pg. 4-71 of *Between the World and Me* by Ta-Nehisi Coates

EVIDENCE WITH PAGE NUMBERS	SOCIAL COMMENTARY TOPIC	ANALYSIS OF TA-NEHISI COATES' MESSAGE OF SOCIAL COMMENTARY TOPIC

Part II: pg. 74 – 132 of *Between the World and Me* by Ta-Nehisi Coates

EVIDENCE WITH PAGE NUMBERS	SOCIAL COMMENTARY TOPIC	ANALYSIS OF TA-NEHISI COATES' MESSAGE OF SOCIAL COMMENTARY TOPIC

Part III: pg. 133 – 152 of *Between the World and Me* by Ta-Nehisi Coates

EVIDENCE WITH PAGE NUMBERS	SOCIAL COMMENTARY TOPIC	ANALYSIS OF TA-NEHISI COATES' MESSAGE OF SOCIAL COMMENTARY TOPIC

**Part 2 of Summer Assignment:**  
**AP Language Flashcards**

Directions: On flashcards, write the word on the front and a VISUAL to help you and the definition on the other side of the card. You will use these words throughout AP Language next year. Write a definition you can understand and learn. Don't just Google it and write it down without internalizing the word/term.

**Words to Define:**

- Appeal to Religion
- Appeal to Morality
- Appeal to Duty
- Appeal to Justice
- Historical Allusion
- Literary Allusion
- Concessions
- Counterarguments
- Rebuttals
- Irony
- Humor
- Satire
- Juxtaposition
- Tone
- Tone Shift
- Author's Purpose
- Author's Message
- Context
- Audience
- Exigence
- Ethos
- Pathos
- Logos
- Periodic Sentences

**Rhetorical Modes:**

- Narration
- Definition
- Description
- Classification
- Process analysis
- Testimonial
- Exemplification
- Cause and effect
- Compare and contrast
- Analysis
- Persuasion
- Argumentation

## Sources

Coates, Ta-Nehisi. *Between the World and Me*. First edition. New York: Spiegel & Grau, 2015.

Parker, Dr. Kimberly N. "Between the World and Me by Ta-Nehisi Coates - Teacher's Guide: 9780812993547 - PenguinRandomHouse.com: Books." *PenguinRandomhouse.com*, Random House Group, [www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/220290/between-the-world-and-me-by-ta-nehisi-coates/9780812993547/teachers-guide/](http://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/220290/between-the-world-and-me-by-ta-nehisi-coates/9780812993547/teachers-guide/).