

Advanced Placement Language and Composition
Summer Reading Assignment 2017-2018

Over the summer, you are required to read BOTH texts listed below. You will be assessed on these books upon your return to school.

Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass by Frederick Douglass

Former slave, impassioned abolitionist, brilliant writer, newspaper editor and eloquent orator whose speeches fired the abolitionist cause, Frederick Douglass (1818–1895) led an astounding life. Physical abuse, deprivation and tragedy plagued his early years, yet through sheer force of character he was able to overcome these obstacles to become a leading spokesman for his people. In this, the first and most frequently read of his three autobiographies, Douglass provides graphic descriptions of his childhood and horrifying experiences as a slave as well as a harrowing record of his dramatic escape to the North and eventual freedom.

Published in 1845 to quell doubts about his origins — since few slaves of that period could write — the *Narrative* is admired today for its extraordinary passion, sensitive and vivid descriptions and storytelling power. It belongs in the library of anyone interested in American history and the life of one of the country's most courageous and influential champions of civil rights.

The Prince by Machiavelli

As a young Florentine envoy to the courts of France and the Italian principalities, Niccolò Machiavelli (1469–1527) was able to observe firsthand the lives of people strongly united under one powerful ruler. His fascination with that political rarity and his intense desire to see the Medici family assume a similar role in Italy provided the foundation for his "primer for princes." In this classic guide to acquiring and maintaining political power, Machiavelli used a rational approach to advise prospective rulers, developing logical arguments and alternatives for a number of potential problems, among them governing hereditary monarchies, dealing with colonies and the treatment of conquered peoples. Refreshing in its directness, yet often disturbing in its cold practicality, *The Prince* sets down a frighteningly pragmatic formula for political fortune. Starkly relevant to the political upheavals of the 20th century, this calculating prescription for power remains today, nearly 500 years after it was written, a timely and startling lesson in the practice of autocratic rule that continues to be much read and studied by students, scholars and general readers as well.