

2018 AP Language and Composition Summer Reading (Ms. Plaza)

Welcome to AP Language and Composition! This course strives to recreate a college composition class, focusing on analysis of literary non-fiction and college-level discussions of contemporary controversies. Summer reading for the class includes two books:

[Blink by Malcolm Gladwell](#)

[On Writing Well by William Zinsser](#) (30th Anniversary Edition)

We will be using both books at the beginning of class, and you will need to annotate them, so please purchase them and bring them the first day of class.

I. Assignment for *On Writing Well*: Read Introduction and Part 1, Chapters 1-7 (only 50 pages total)

1. Create a Google Doc for taking notes.
2. For each chapter, list three ideas about writing that resonate with you (complete sentences).
3. Highlight one item on that list that you would like to put into practice.
4. Turn in on our Google Classroom page. (**Class Code: mkat8jr**)

II. Assignment for *Blink*.

According to Malcolm Gladwell...

"[*Blink* is] a book about rapid cognition, about the kind of thinking that happens in a blink of an eye. When you meet someone for the first time, or walk into a house you are thinking of buying, or read the first few sentences of a book, your mind takes about two seconds to jump to a series of conclusions. Well, "*Blink*" is a book about those two seconds, because I think those instant conclusions that we reach are really powerful and really important and, occasionally, really good. You could also say that it's a book about intuition, except that I don't like that word. In fact it never appears in "*Blink*." Intuition strikes me as a concept we use to describe emotional reactions, gut feelings--thoughts and impressions that don't seem entirely rational. But I think that what goes on in that first two seconds is perfectly rational. It's thinking--its just thinking that moves a little faster and operates a little more mysteriously than the kind of deliberate,

conscious decision making that we usually associate with "thinking." In "Blink" I'm trying to understand those two seconds. What is going on inside our heads when we engage in rapid cognition? When are snap judgments good and when are they not? What kinds of things can we do to make our powers of rapid cognition better?"

Why read it? In addition to being a fascinating read, *Blink* ties in beautifully with our first-semester focus on whether objective truth exists. Understanding the way our unconscious mind affects our judgments and interpretations of reality--for both good and ill--will enrich our discussion of truth and subjectivity as we read essays by Francis Bacon, Plato, Hunter S. Thompson, Joan Didion, and others. It may also open a window into the underlying assumptions and implicit biases that writers bring to the texts they write.

1. Read *Blink* and answer the study questions below **in complete sentences**.* You must also **annotate the text**--not just highlight it. Thorough annotating is essential for textual analysis, and you should write notes, questions, and/or comments on the pages. [Minimum--approximately one significant annotation for every four pages.] Annotations should be meaningful sentences/detailed phrases, not single words.

NOTE: Each student must do his/her own work. Evidence to the contrary will result in consequences that affect both the student who offered her work to be copied, as well as the student who did the copying.

Even though some questions have multiple prompts, you do not need to write more than one-two detailed sentences in response.

2. Be prepared for a long, detailed quiz on the book, using your study questions for review, on the second day of class.

Introduction- The Statue That Didn't Look Right

Major Players

J. Paul Getty Art Museum

Stanley Margolis- a geologist from University of California

Federico Zeri- Italian Art Historian

Evelyn Harrison- one of the world's foremost experts on Greek Sculpture

1. What was the problem with the kouros?
2. Explain the Iowa experiment- Highlight the two things did researchers find about how our brains make sense of certain situations?
3. What is the adaptive unconscious? How does he metaphorically explain this?
4. What are the three tasks of Blink?

Chapter 1-The Theory of Thin Slices: how a Little Bit of Knowledge Goes a Long Way

Major Players

John Gottman- University of Washington psychologist

Samuel Gosling- psychologist looking at personality traits

Wendy Levinson- medical researcher

5. What is John Gottman's claim to fame? How does he do this?
6. What is "thin slicing"?
7. Gottman decodes a couple's relationship and predicts divorce by identifying their patterns of behavior. Can we change our natural and unconscious patterns of behavior? Would awareness of these patterns with our partner be enough to avert an inevitable break-up- why or why not?
8. What emotion does Gottman consider the most important of all when looking at marriages and their stability?
9. If scrolling through someone's iPod or scanning their bookshelf can tell us more about that individual, what other kinds of 'thin-slicing' exercises could reveal aspects of their personality?
10. Wendy Levinson's research has some powerful outcomes for doctors and patient confidence- what did she find?

Chapter Two-The Locked Door: The Secret Life of Snap Decisions

Major Players

Vic Braden- world class tennis player and coach

John Bargh, Marc Chen, Lara Burrows--psychologists known for the "priming experiment"

Sheena Iyengar (psychologist) and Raymond Fisman(economist)- two professors from Columbia University who studied speed dating

11. Priming refers to when subtle triggers influence our behavior without our awareness of such changes. An example of this occurs in Spain where authorities introduced classical music on the subway and after doing so, watched vandalism and littering drastically decrease. Think of another situation when priming occurs?
12. Should we introduce priming in schools to encourage better behavior or more diligent work patterns? Why or why not?
13. What is a "mental valet"?
14. The Iyengar/Fisman study revealed that what the speed-daters say they want and what they were actually attracted to in the moment didn't match when compared. What does this say for online dating services? Can we really predict what kind of person we will 'hit it off' with? Is it better to let friends decide who is more suited for you as opposed to scanning profiles that correspond with your notion of what you think you are looking for? Explain.

Chapter Three-The Warren Harding Error: Why We Fall for the Tall, Dark and Handsome Men?

Major Players

Harry Daugherty- lawyer and lobbyist 1899 Ohio

Warren Harding- future president of the United States

IAT- Implicit Association Test Bob Golomb- car salesman - Ian Ayres- Chicago Law Professor

15. What was so likeable about Warren Harding? Did he end up living up to the public's expectations as a president?
16. What does Gladwell mean when he states (p 76) - "Part of what it means to take thin-slicing and first impressions seriously is accepting the fact that we know more about someone or something in the blink of an eye than we can after months of study. But we also have to acknowledge and understand those circumstances when rapid cognition leads us astray"?
17. With the IAT, what does the research say about how we make connections (p77)?
18. What two things does the IAT measure regarding our attitude (p84)?
19. What does Gladwell discover about CEO's and height?
20. What is Bob's undlingy principle when it comes to selling cars (p 90-91)?
21. Describe Ayres experiment? What did he find?
22. Gladwell says on page 97 "Our first impressions are generated by our experiences and our environment, which means we can change our first impression- we can alter the way we think-slice-by changing the experiences that comprise those impressions"- do you agree with that statement, why or why not?

Chapter Four- Paul Van Riper's Big Victory: Creating Structure for Spontaneity

Major Players

Paul Van Riper- Vietnam vet, retired instructor

Gary Klein- author of Sources of power, a classic work on decision making

Jonathan W. Schooler- psychologist who pioneered research "verbal overshadowing"

Brendan Reilly- chairman of Chicago's Cook County Hospital Department of Medicine

Lee Goldman-cardiologist in the 1970's who came up with an equation for diagnosing heart attacks

23. What was the Millennium Challenge? What was Paul Van Riper part in this? What was the ultimate outcome?
24. "Improv is an art form governed by a series of rules, and they want to make sure when they are up on stage, everyone abides by those rules" What is the most important rule of improve (p114)?
25. What is "verbal overshadowing"? Give an example.
26. Gary Klein's story of the firefighter and his split second decision Gladwell calls a "beautiful example of thin slicing in action" Why (p122-124)?
27. What are the two important lessons Gladwell would like the reader to take from this chapter (p141)? What do they mean?

28. Gladwell states (142)-“When we thin slice, we recognize patterns and make snap judgments, we do this process of editing consciously.” When does he believe we “get into trouble”?

Chapter Five- Kenna’s Dilemma: The Right-and Wrong- Way to Ask People What They Want

Major Players

Kenna- Musician from Virginia

Dick Morris- political pollster, advisor to Bill Clinton

Louis Cheskin- 1940’s marketing/consulting business (Dave Masten and Darrel Rhea now run his consulting business)

Herman Miller- furniture maker- creator of the Aeron chair

Gail Vance Civile and Judy Heylmun- professional food tasters

29. How did the music industry react to Kenna’s music? How did the radio community?

30. What was the Pepsi Challenge? What does the outcome mean for consumers- what are our two reactions when drinking colas?

31. How did Masten and Rhea research come out about product taste and packaging (p 165)?

32. Herman Miller spent millions of dollars and countless hours creating the perfect chair, when it turned out the focus groups were not impressed- what were Millers three choices? What did he decide? What was the result (p171-172)?

33. What “is true of everything we call ugly”(p 173)?

34. Do you believe our unconscious reactions come out of a locked room that we can’t ever truly see inside? Can we ever know ourselves wholly and understand the motivation and reason behind our every move (p183)? Explain.

35. How do “experts” deal with the locked room?

36. What does the gift of their expertise do for people like Heylmun and Civile (p 179)?

Chapter Six- Seven Seconds in the Bronx: The Delicate Art of Mind Reading

Major Players

Amadou Diallo- immigrant from Guiana killed by the NY police

Ken Boss, Sean Carroll, Edward McMellon and Richard Murphy- NY cops involved in shooting Silvan Tomkins (teacher) and Paul Ekman (pupil)-scientist who look at facial expressions

Ami Klin- Yale University, leading expert on Autism

David Klinger- University of Missouri criminologist author of *Into the Kill*

37. The Diallo shooting is an example of a mind-reading failure. It reveals a grey area of human cognition; the middle ground between deliberate and accidental. Do you think the shooting was more deliberate or accidental?

38. What is the most common and most important forms of rapid cognition we can make (p 194)? 39. What did Tomkins believe about faces (p198)?

40. What did Ekman and Friesen develop based on their research?

41. What is “ central to understanding how our mind reading works” (p206)
42. Autistic patients read their environment literally. They do not, like us, seem to watch people's eyes when they are talking to pick up on all those expressive nuances that Ekman has so carefully catalogued. What do you make of individuals who avoid eye contact during conversation? How do you think this affects their ability to understand or interpret the speaker? Could this explain how lying is often signaled by averted eye-contact?
43. Have you ever experienced a 'mind-blind' moment? A moment where conditions were so stressful or confusing, that your conclusions about a situation were completely and catastrophically wrong?
44. How does the human body react to stress (p224)?
45. Respond or record your thoughts on the following statement “Three of the major race riots in this country over the past quarter of a century have been caused by what cops did at the end of a chase.” (p227) do you agree with this dangerous things happen at the height of arousal?
46. Respond or record your thoughts on the following quote-“Every moment--every blink-- is composed of a series of discrete moving parts, and every one of those parts offers an opportunity for interventions, for reform, and for correction.” (p241)

Conclusion- Listening With Your Eyes: The Lessons of Blink

Major Players

Abbie Conant- aspiring trombone player

47. What happened after Abby was chosen for the orchestra? How did the conductor react? What was the outcome?
48. What did the orchestra do when they were confronted with their prejudice (p252)?
49. What does Gladwell say about controlling our unconscious (p253)?

Afterword

50. All in all, what does Gladwell believe is the best answer to using your instincts and when to rely on conscious analysis (p 268-269)?
51. What is Gladwell's “goal” for Blink (p 274)?

*Credit goes to Hinsdale Central High School for the creation of the questions and the brief descriptions of the “major players.”