

## **AP Capstone: Research**

### **Becoming a Big R Researcher, 2023-2024**

First and foremost, I would like to congratulate you on a successful year of AP Seminar and your interest in challenging yourself with AP Research. The skills that you have gained and will continue to acquire in the Capstone program are paramount to your post-high school success!

The number one way you can begin to prepare for AP Research is to *read*. Read often. Read anything, but particularly nonfiction. News, editorials, database resources on topics that interest you, and nonfiction books. I am not interested in assigning you busy work over the summer, but by enrolling in the AP Capstone program you have indicated that you are a scholar. *Scholars read as a general way of life*. If you feel like you do not have enough time to read as much as you would like, then supplement by *listening*. Listen to podcasts. Watch Ted Talks. Get an Audible account. Download the Cloud Library app through the Sussex County Library and listen to audiobooks for free. Most importantly, *think*. While taking long walks on the beach, playing video games, sitting in the back of the car on a long road trip, or doing whatever summer activity enhances your life, toss around complex issues on topics of interest. Engage your family and friends in discussions on difficult concepts. Consider cause-and-effect relationships and “think like a freak” whenever possible. The best part of AP Research is that you will spend an entire year investigating a topic that you choose and enjoy. Start reading and thinking about topics that interest you now!

**Assignment:** Choose a nonfiction, preferably research-based work that interests you. (It does not *need* to be research-based, but it should be something that leaves you thinking about issues you care about.) Read it. Jot down your thoughts on the following: Most enlightening part(s) of the work? Who should read the work? What can we gain from the work? Author’s credibility/authority on the topic? Timeliness and relevance of the work? If it contained research, what methods did the author/research use? Questions you still have after reading the work? **Be prepared to share your thoughts on the work with your classmates during the first week of school in September.** You will not need to turn in your notes.

## **Some Nonfiction Suggestions**

Some reading suggestions include but are by no means limited to (Seriously, look around for something that interests you. Ask professionals who work in your areas of interest. Search Amazon and Good Reads. These are only some suggestions of books that I have somewhat recently read and therefore reflect *my* interests.):

- anything by Malcolm Gladwell, but in order of my personal preference: *Blink*, *Outliers*, *Talking to Strangers*, *David and Goliath*, *The Tipping Point*, *Bomber Mafia*
- *Freakonomics* or *Superfreakonomics*, by Steven Levitt and Stephen Dubner (I also recommend their podcast series.)
- Anything by Mary Roach: *Stiff*, *Packing for Mars*, *Grunt*, *Gulp*, *Spook*
- *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*, by Rebecca Skloot
- *Fast Food Nation*, by Eric Schlosser
- *The Omnivore's Dilemma* or *The Botany of Desire*, by Michael Pollan
- *The Overachievers*, by Alexandra Robbins
- *The Gatekeepers: Inside the Admissions Process of a Premier College*, by Jacques Steinberg
- *Where You Go is Not Who You'll Be*, by Frank Bruni
- *How the Word is Passed*, by Clint Smith
- *Columbine*, or *Parkland*, by Dave Cullen
- *The Short and Tragic Life of Robert Peace*, by Jeff Hobbs
- *Radium Girls*, by Kate Moore
- *Hidden Figures*, by Margot Shetterly
- *The Girls of Atomic City*, by Denise Kiernan
- *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind*, by Yuval Noah Harari
- *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City*, by Matthew Desmond
- *How Your Unconscious Mind Rules Your Behavior*, by Leonard Mlodinow
- *The Deepest Well: Healing the Long-term Effects of Childhood Adversity* by Nadine Burke Harris
- *Nickel and Dimed*, by Barbara Ehrenreich
- *The Library Book*, by Susan Orlean
- *A Short History of Nearly Everything*, by Bill Bryson
- *The Devil's Highway: A True Story*, by Luis Alberto Urrea
- *How Not to Die*, by Michael Gregor MD
- *Look Me in the Eye: My Life with Aspergers*, by John Elder Robison
- *Last Child in the Woods*, by Richard Louv
- *Factfulness*, by Hans Rosling

I have personal copies of almost all of these titles that you are welcome to borrow. Most can be found at the Sussex County Library, as well.

Some additional nonfiction recommendations from Mrs. Fenlon include:

- *Salt: A World History*, by Mark Kurlansky
- *The History of the World in 6 Glasses*, by Tom Standage
- *Guns, Germs, and Steel*, by Jared Diamond
- *Collapse*, by Jared Diamond
- *The Sixth Extinction*, by Elizabeth Kolbert
- *There's No Such Thing as Business Ethics*, by John Maxwell
- *Animal Wise: The Thoughts and Emotions of our Fellow Creatures*, by Virginia Morell
- *The Future of the Mind: The Scientific Quest to Understand, Enhance and Empower the Mind*, by Michio Kaku

Also, reach out to other teachers of disciplines of interest and ask for their non-fiction reading recommendations.

Please email me at [hgonzalez@hpregonal.org](mailto:hgonzalez@hpregonal.org) if you have any questions. AP Research will most likely be the most challenging course you complete in high school, but also the most rewarding. You will work hard, but you will also have *a lot* of time to do so (and a lot of fun along the way with what will become a close group of peers who understand your journey).

I am looking forward to a great year!  
Mrs. Gonzalez