

AP Capstone: Research

Becoming a “Big R” Researcher, 2019-2020

Approximate time to complete: 1 hour, plus reading time

First and foremost, I would like to congratulate you on a successful year of AP Seminar and your interest in challenging yourself with the AP Capstone program. The skills that you have and will continue to acquire in the Capstone program are paramount in 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 a 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. 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. Engage your 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 enjoy. Start reading and thinking about interesting topics now! Take ownership of your education now!

Just in case that is not enough motivation, I have an assignment for you, too.

1. Join our Google Classroom page using the code **5ih3tb**.
2. 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. Indicate on the Google Classroom page, **Assignment #1**, the title and author of the book you chose and a brief review (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? Questions you still have after reading the work? Etc.) If you read more than one book, share the titles and your thoughts on each. **Please read at least one**

nonfiction work and post to Google Classroom before the start of school.

3. Once you finish your book, select *any* topic from the reading which sparks debate in the field. Generate a list of at least eight questions about your topic. Your questions should not be “yes or no” questions. Sort your questions into two lists: those that have fact-based answers and those that have opinion-based answers. **Submit your topic and lists of questions to the Assignment #2 thread in Google Classroom before the start of school.**

Nonfiction Suggestions

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

- anything by Malcolm Gladwell, but in order of my personal preference: *Blink*, *Outliers*, *David and Goliath*, *The Tipping Point*
- *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
- *When Breath Becomes Air*, by Paul Kalanithi
- *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*, by Michelle Alexander
- *Hillbilly Elegy*, by J.D. Vance
- *Columbine*, by Dave Cullen
- *The Short and Tragic Life of Robert Peace*, by Jeff Hobbs
- *Black Like Me* by John Howard Griffin
- *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
- *Just Mercy*, by Brian Stevenson
- *The Other Wes Moore: One Name, Two Fates*, by Wes Moore
- *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
- *Educated*, by Tara Westover
- *How Not to Die*, by Michael Gregor MD
- *Look Me in the Eye: My Life with Aspergers*, by John Elder Robison

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

Mrs. Fenlon has all of these in the school library. You are welcome to “claim” any books to take home for the summer if you speak with her.

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

Please email me at hgonzalez@hpregonal.org if you have any questions. I look forward to a great year!

Mrs. Gonzalez

