

AP English Language & Composition Summer Reading 2023-2024

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AP English Language & Composition students are required to read *This I Believe* and compose their own personal belief statement. The summer reading assignment and presentation will be the first graded assignments for students. The written copy will be due the first month of school, at the end of August. Presentations will begin after the paper assignment is due. **DATES WILL BE ASSIGNED IN CLASS.** *All assignments must be typed and printed (hard copy) and available in digital copy (google/word doc).

1. Purchase, read, and annotate your copy of *This I Believe*. Annotation guide attached.
2. In the table of contents, highlight the title of your 5 favorite texts.
3. Write your own original statement of belief. Follow the guidelines below.
4. Bring two printed copies of your personal belief statement to school on August 21/22, 2023. Prepare to present your statement that week.

***This I Believe* ISBN: 9780805086584 Amazon paperback \$12.79**

In 1950, journalist Edward R. Murrow began a radio program titled *This I Believe*—a program that encouraged notable public figures such as Helen Keller, Eleanor Roosevelt, Jacki Robinson, Albert Einstein, and many others to share stories about a core belief that guided their daily lives.

In 2006, journalists Jay Allison and Dan Gediman revived the program and made it open to all Americans who wished to share and engage in meaningful discourse. Read more about the program [here](#) and [here](#).

You will be writing your own original statement of belief. We will explore some of our favorite examples to get a sense of the assignment (Pizza Dude, [Dog](#), BBQ.), but your belief must be entirely your own. Read and follow the guidelines listed and highlighted below provided by the *This I Believe* Program.

In addition to the writing guidelines of the *This I Believe* Program listed below, you must:

1. Convey a clear, concise, effective message about a core, personal belief that guides your daily life. (350-500 words/3 minutes when read aloud)
2. Write your essay using MLA formatting. See sample MLA formatted paper [here](#).
3. Title Your Essay
4. **Bring two printed copies of your personal belief statement to school on August 21/22, 2023.**
5. **Present your statement that week.**

*Any plagiarized essays will automatically earn a zero. This includes using AI technology.

****You will earn two grades for this task: one for writing (We will use the College Board’s writing rubric for Argument to score=100) and one for presentation/delivery of your essay on the day of the Presentation).**

from This I Believe

Writing Guidelines (Appendix B)

We invite you to contribute to this project by writing and submitting your own statement of personal belief. We understand how challenging this is—it requires such intimacy that no one else can do it for you. To guide you through this process, we offer these suggestions:

Tell a story: Be specific. Take your belief out of the ether and ground it in the events of your life. Consider moments when belief was formed or tested or changed. Think of your own experience, work, and family, and tell of the things you know that no one else does. Your story need not be heart-warming or gut-wrenching—it can even be funny—but it should be real. **Make sure your story ties to the essence of your daily life philosophy and the shaping of your beliefs.**

Be brief: Your statement should be between **350 and 500 words.** That’s about three minutes when read aloud at your natural pace.

Name your belief: If you can’t name it in a sentence or two, your essay might not be about belief. Also, rather than writing a list, consider focusing on one core belief, because three minutes is a very short time.

Be positive: Please avoid preaching or editorializing. Tell us what you do believe, not what you don’t believe. Avoid speaking in the editorial “we.” Make your essay about you; speak in the first person.

Be personal: Write in words and phrases that are comfortable for you to speak. We recommend you read your essay aloud to yourself several times, and each time edit it and simplify it until you find the words, tone, and story that truly echo your belief and the way you speak.

For this project, we are also guided by the original This I Believe series and the [producers’ invitation](#) to those who wrote essays in the 1950s. Their advice holds up well and we are abiding by it. Please consider it carefully in writing your piece.

In introducing the original series, host Edward R. Murrow said, “Never has the need for personal philosophies of this kind been so urgent.” We would argue that the need is as great now as it was 50 years ago. We are eager for your contribution.

The Original Invitation *from* This I Believe

This invites you to make a very great contribution: nothing less than a statement of your personal beliefs, of the values which rule your thought and action. Your essay should be about three minutes in length when read aloud, written in a style as you yourself speak, and total no more than 500 words.

We know this is a tough job. What we want is so intimate that no one can write it for you. You must write it yourself, in the language most natural to you. We ask you to write in your own words and then record in your own voice. You may even find that it takes a request like this for you to reveal some of your own beliefs to yourself. If you set them down they may become of untold meaning to others.

We would like you to tell not only what you believe, but how you reached your beliefs, and if they have grown, what made them grow. This necessarily must be highly personal. That is what we anticipate and want.

It may help you in formulating your credo if we tell you also what we do not want. We do not want a sermon, religious or lay; we do not want editorializing or sectarianism or 'finger-pointing.' We do not even want your views on the American way of life, or democracy or free enterprise. These are important but for another occasion. We want to know what you live by. And we want it in terms of 'I,' not the editorial 'We.'

Although this program is designed to express beliefs, it is not a religious program and is not concerned with any religious form whatsoever. Most of our guests express belief in a Supreme Being, and set forth the importance to them of that belief. However, that is your decision, since it is your belief which we solicit.

But we do ask you to confine yourself to affirmatives: This means refraining from saying what you do not believe. Your beliefs may well have grown in clarity to you by a process of elimination and rejection, but for our part, we must avoid negative statements lest we become a medium for the criticism of beliefs, which is the very opposite of our purpose.

We are sure the statement we ask from you can have a wide and lasting influence. Never has the need for personal philosophies of this kind been so urgent. Your belief, simply and sincerely spoken, is sure to stimulate and help those who hear it. We are confident it will enrich them. May we have your contribution?

*Adapted from the invitation sent to essayists featured in the original 'This I Believe' series.
Excerpted from 'This I Believe 2,' copyright © 1954 by Help, Inc*

Annotation Reference

Knowing how to annotate can be tricky and overwhelming. Let's start with four areas of focus. Annotation helps you interact with the text in a way that produces meaningful writing.

Basic Reasons for Annotation

- Organizes thoughts and ideas for later use in writing
 - A form of prewriting
 - Keeps you from forgetting what's most important
- Identifies evidence to be used for essay citation
 - Mark words/phrases you will later quote
- Allows for direct interaction between reader and text
 - Begins the process of creating commentary/analysis

Reminder: It is hard to know what to annotate. Start by **looking for patterns**. Then you can annotate and pose questions.

Repetition

Any time you see repetition in a text, it is important. It is also one of the easiest ways to start the annotation process.

- Mark repetition of words, phrases, punctuation, etc.
 - Identify why the repetition exists.
 - Why does the author make this choice?
 - How does it build tone, context, and argument?
 - What does the repetition say about the speaker or the event?
- Mark repetition of ideas or arguments.
 - Examine the first and last sentences of paragraphs for repeated ideas/arguments.
 - Why would an author repeat himself or herself in this way?

Reminder: It is easy to say that repetition creates emphasis. That kind of response is not specific. Consider how repetition builds tone or argument, speaks to the audience, etc.

Shifts

Any time there is a significant change in the text it's important. Look for changes in tone, argument, or writing style. Mark the text when you see these shifts.

- Does the author's tone or attitude change? How?
 - What is the purpose of this change?
 - How does it shape the message?
- Does the author's organization or sentence structure change?
 - What is the purpose of the change?
 - In what ways does it change the outcome of the piece?
- Does the content or focus of the text change?
 - Explain how. What might be the purpose of such a change?

Tone

As you read, find language that supports the emotional connection the author/speaker has towards his/her subject. Remember that an author's/speaker's tone is employed to help achieve purpose.

- Which words/phrases show the author's emotions?
 - Explain the author's emotional attachment to his/her subject. Be specific.
 - How do these emotions impact the writing/message?
- How does this tone aid the author's /speaker's argument?
 - What does this emotion allow the author/speaker to accomplish?

Questions

Finally, write down any questions or thoughts you have as you read. Be careful. It's easy to write only summary. Your questions can be the basis of thoughtful analysis, too. You might have different questions than those below. That's okay. Use the questions below to begin.

- What questions are you left with as you read?
- Is there anything that you find confusing? Identify and pose a thoughtful question.
- What "unsolvable" questions are at stake in the text? What issues are raised?

Reminder: Often these "patterns" can tell you a significant amount about the author/speaker, purpose, tone, etc. You should be able to link them to elements in SOAPSTone.

AP® Language and Composition - Scoring Rubric: ARGUMENT

0 POINTS

1 POINT

4.B For any of the following:

- There is no defensible thesis.
- The intended thesis only restates the prompt.
- The intended thesis provides a summary of the issue with no apparent or coherent claim.
- There is a thesis, but it does not respond to the prompt.

DECISION RULES AND SCORING NOTES

- Responses that do not earn this point:
- The intended thesis only restates the prompt.
 - The intended thesis is vague, must be inferred, does not take a position, (e.g. it depends on your point of view).
 - The intended thesis simply states an obvious fact rather than making a claim that requires a defense.

Additional Notes:

- The thesis may appear anywhere within the essay.
- A thesis that meets the criteria can be awarded the point whether or not the rest of the response successfully supports that line of reasoning.

0 POINTS

1 POINT

2 POINTS

3 POINTS

4 POINTS

- 2.A** ○ Simply restates thesis (if present).
- 4.A** OR
- 6.A** ○ Repeats provided information.
- 6.B** OR
- 6.C** ○ Provides examples that are generally irrelevant and/or incoherent.

- Provides evidence or example(s) relevant to the subject of the prompt.
- AND
- Provides little or no commentary.

- Provides evidence or example(s) relevant to the subject of the prompt.
- AND
- Provides commentary, however, it repeats, oversimplifies, or misinterprets the cited information or evidence.

- Provides evidence relevant to the thesis.
- AND
- Provides commentary that explains the relationship between evidence and the thesis; however, commentary is uneven, limited, or incomplete.

- Provides evidence relevant to the thesis.
- AND
- Provides well-developed commentary that consistently and explicitly explains the relationship between the evidence and the thesis.

DECISION RULES AND SCORING NOTES

- Typical responses that earn 0 points:
- Are incoherent and do not address the prompt.
 - May offer just opinion with little or no evidence provided.

- Typical responses that earn 1 point:
- Provide evidence but little or no explanation.

- Typical responses that earn 2 points:
- Provide explanations of evidence that are repetitive (there is little or no development).

- Typical responses that earn 3 points:
- Provide commentary that is clear but there are times when the link between the textual evidence and the thesis may be strained.

- Typical responses that earn 4 points:
- Provide commentary that engages specific evidence to draw conclusions.
 - Integrate evidence from sources throughout to support the student's reasoning.

Additional Notes:

- Writing that suffers from grammatical and/or mechanical errors that interfere with communication cannot earn the fourth point in this row.

0 POINTS

1 POINT

Does not meet the criteria for 1 point.

DECISION RULES AND SCORING NOTES

Demonstrates sophistication of thought and/or a complex understanding of the rhetorical situation.

- Responses that do not earn this point:
- Attempt to contextualize their argument, but such attempts consist of predominantly sweeping generalizations.
 - Only hint or suggest other arguments.
 - Use complicated or complex sentences or language that are ineffective in that they do not enhance the argument.

- Responses that earn this point may demonstrate sophistication of thought and/or a complex understanding of the rhetorical situation by doing any of the following:
1. Crafting a thesis that demands nuanced consideration of textual evidence to prove – and then successfully proves it.
 2. Situating the argument within a broader context, recognizing the implications of the argument.
 3. Engaging concession, rebuttal, and/or refutation of other arguments relating to the thesis.
 4. Making effective rhetorical choices that strengthen the force and impact of the student's argument.
 5. Utilizing a prose style that is especially vivid, persuasive, convincing, or appropriate to the student's argument.

Additional Notes:

- This point should be awarded only if the demonstration of sophistication or complex understanding is part of the argument, not merely a phrase or reference.

SOPHISTICATION

2.A
4.C
6.B
8.A
8.B
8.C