

English III AP Language and Composition: Summer Reading Project

Due Date: Beginning of class on the fourth school day

Introduction:

The course AP Language and Composition exists to prepare students for the Advanced Placement Exam administered each May. A passing score on the exam offers the student possible exemption from the standard “Freshman Composition,” depending upon the requirements of the university chosen by the student. Because of what class this AP exam will replace in the university experience, the focus of the class is nonfiction writing, in a variety of genres, with both formal and informal purposes. However, the junior year in high school is the traditional year for a survey course in American literature, and certain pivotal works from the American canon often appear on the AP Literature and Composition course offered during the senior year of high school. Thus, while the focus of AP Language is nonfiction writing, the course must also cover key works of fiction considered hallmarks of American literature. Therefore, this summer reading project reflects the focus on nonfiction works, with a salute to one of the most influential of American novels.

Required Readings:

The Innocent Man by John Grisham.

The Sunflower: On the Possibilities and Limits of Forgiveness by Simon Wiesenthal.

The Scarlet Letter by Nathaniel Hawthorne.

Assignment:

Read carefully each of the books, annotating in the margins your reactions to the arguments and perspectives presented in each of the three genres (Grisham: nonfiction narrative; Wiesenthal: autobiography followed by personal essays; Hawthorne: serious fiction). Annotating a text encourages intellectual involvement in the reading, along with retention of tone, purpose, and point of views expressed by the authors. After reading and annotating, complete each of the following assignments associated with each text. The assignments are different, and they reflect the kind of essay writing and intellectual exercises you will during the upcoming year in AP Language.

In short, the three-part summer reading project includes:

The Innocent Man by John Grisham: Synthesis Essay (argument-persuasion essay in which you develop a position on the subject, using a required amount of sources to support your point of view).

The Sunflower by Simon Wiesenthal: Exploratory Essay (personal essay in which you explore the obvious and subtle aspects of an abstract concept, using “what you have read” as building blocks for constructing your discussion).

The Scarlet Letter by Nathaniel Hawthorne: Reader Response Journal (a series of two-part entries, in which you focus upon the symbols, imagery, and other rhetorical tools utilized by the author as he explores forgiveness, vengeance, judgment, honesty, courage, cowardice, and appearance versus reality).

Synthesis Question Essay

Directions:

The following prompt is based on the accompanying seven sources plus John Grisham's *The Innocent Man*.

This question requires you to synthesize a variety of sources into a coherent, well-written essay. When you synthesize sources, you refer to them to develop your position and cite them accurately. *Your argument should be central; the sources should support the argument. Avoid merely summarizing sources.*

Remember to attribute both direct and indirect references.

Introduction

As part of your summer reading assignment, you have read *The Innocent Man* by John Grisham. After writing more than a dozen best-selling novels built upon legal intrigue and courtroom dramas, Grisham made this work his initial entry into the nonfiction genre. The story of Ron Williamson intrigued the former attorney and state legislator, for in this case, the truth was indeed *stranger than fiction*. As Grisham revealed in a recent interview, he couldn't leave Williamson's story alone, even though he knew that nonfiction writing is "too much work." Grisham soon found himself wrapped up in a complicated tale that raises many issues regarding the American legal system, from investigation techniques to conviction trends, from legal ethics to criminal behavior, from prison environments to social prejudices, from the perceptions of the system and the cries of an individual abandoned.

Assignment

Read the following sources (including the citation information) carefully. Review Grisham's revelations in *The Innocent Man*. Then, in an essay that synthesizes Grisham's work and at least three of the following sources, develop a position about what issues should be considered most important in making decisions about the validity of capital punishment within our legal system.

You may refer to the following sources by their titles (Source A, Source B, etc.) or by the descriptions in the parentheses. You may refer to Grisham's work by title or author.

Source A (Duerr)

Source B (Foldvary)

Source C (*Washington Times*)

Source D (*Boston Globe*)

Source E (*New York Times*)

Source F (Roh)

Source G (Dept. of Justice)

Duerr, Joseph. "March 26: Editorial: Rethinking the Death Penalty." *Archdiocese of Louisville: The Record*. 26 Mar. 2009. www.archlou.org

[New Mexico Governor Bill] Richardson acknowledged in a message on the day he signed the new law that he has been a "firm believer" in the death penalty as "a just judgment" for the most heinous crimes and said "I still believe that." But he said several things challenged his thinking since he became governor six years ago: that he might have to take action on legislation to repeal capital punishment or—"more daunting"—that he might have to sign someone's death warrant.

Like the capital punishment supporters he met with during his deliberation, Richardson said he has believed that the death penalty can serve as a deterrent to some who might consider killing another person. But he added, "What we cannot disagree on is the finality of this ultimate punishment. Once a conclusive decision has been made and executed, it cannot be reversed. And it is in consideration of this that I have made my decision."

He continued: "If the state is going to undertake this awesome responsibility, the system to impose this ultimate penalty must be perfect and can never be wrong. But the reality is the system is not perfect—far from it. The system is inherently defective. DNA testing has proven that. Innocent people have been put on death row all across the country.

"Even with advances in DNA and other forensic evidence technologies, we can't be 100 percent sure that only the truly guilty are convicted of capital crimes. . . . In cases where that conviction carries with it the ultimate sanction, we must have ultimate confidence—I would say certitude—that the system is without flaw or prejudice. Unfortunately, this is demonstrably not the case."

Richardson added: "Faced with the reality that our system for imposing the death penalty can never be perfect, my conscience compels me to replace the death penalty with a solution that keeps society safe." This "solution" is the punishment of life in prison without the possibility of parole.

The New Mexico governor concluded: "In a society that values individual life and liberty above all else, where justice and not vengeance is the singular guiding principle of our system of criminal law, the potential for wrongful conviction and, God forbid, execution of an innocent person stands as anathema to our very sensibilities as human beings. This is why I'm signing this bill into law."

Richardson's "personal journey" that led to changing of his position on capital punishment speaks to public policy-makers and citizens alike. This is exactly what Kentucky's Roman Catholic bishops underscored in their pastoral letter calling for an end to capital punishment. They appealed to Kentuckians "to rethink traditional attitudes and values" about the death penalty and to "choose life."

Foldvary, Fred E. "Abolish the Death Penalty." Editorial. *The Progress Report*. 2000.
www.progress.org

The only moral justification for killing a person is direct self-defense. When a criminal is confined in prison, he does not threaten society, so killing him is not justified by self-defense. And even if capital punishment deters others from committing similar crimes, this would be an indirect defense against murder rather than directly from the criminal being killed. Direct self-defense implies killing someone who himself, at that time, is a threat to other persons, and this precludes taking human life just for punishment.

There are four morally justified purposes for punishment. First is the protection of society. A dangerous criminal may be confined to protect society from violence and theft. The need for protection does not give society or the government the right to go beyond the minimum of what is needed for protection. For example, torturing or killing the criminal is excessive, since these do not add to the direct protection of society from this criminal.

The second morally proper reason for punishment is to reform and rehabilitate the criminal. Rehabilitation is related to protecting society, since if we can really change the criminal's mentality so that he no longer wishes to harm others, then society is protected when the criminal is released. Good parents realize that a proper punishment of their children when they do something bad includes teaching them that such acts will be penalized and not benefit them, and even better, that they should not even want to do the bad thing because they should not want to hurt others. Some criminals will refuse to be rehabilitated, but at least we can try. Obviously, if the state kills the prisoner, it is no longer possible to make him a better person, so rehabilitation excludes capital punishment.

The third legitimate reason for punishment is deterrence. Having predictable punishment and swift enforcement prevents other potential criminals from committing a similar crime. Some studies have concluded that capital punishment is not a greater deterrent than imprisonment. Some prisoners even prefer death to a lifetime in prison. Even if the death penalty deters crime, deterrence alone does not justify the penalty. The death penalty might deter shoplifting, but most folks would agree this would be a rather excessive penalty for minor theft. Deterrence has to be balanced with the human rights that even criminals have.

The fourth reason for proper punishment is the restitution of the damage. If a thief steals property, he is morally obliged to return the property to the victim, or property of similar type or value. If society kills the criminal, this cuts off any possible restitution. If the criminal has committed murder, restitution to the victim is not possible in any way. Killing the murderer will not restore the life of the victim.

Editorial Staff. "Demagoguery vs. Capital Punishment." *The Washington Times*. 6 Feb. 2009.
www.washingtontimes.com

As General Assembly Democrats go, Mr. Miller is a relative moderate who favors the death penalty. But he's under pressure from the orthodox liberals who dominate the Maryland Democratic Party, and so last week he vowed to oppose a filibuster by death-penalty supporters and said he would not thwart an effort to sidestep the committee if its members reject the governor's repeal efforts. More recently, and strangely, freshman Sen. Bryan Simonaire, Anne Arundel Republican (and a conservative endorsed by this editorial page in his very tight 2006 race) indicated that he too would support moving the measure out of committee in exchange for an agreement by committee Democrats to move forward with legislation that he favors.

But that's logrolling at its worst—a terrible idea.

The flaws of the anti-death penalty arguments are well illustrated by the report issued by Mr. Civiletti's panel, the Maryland Commission on Capital Punishment. In calling for an end to the death penalty, the committee (packed by the governor with a reliably anti-capital punishment majority) argued that there is an unacceptable risk of executing an innocent person. But they didn't even try to make the argument that any of the five men on Maryland's death ro—Anthony Grandison, Heath Burch, John Booth-el, Vernon Evans, or Jody Miles—was innocent of the murder he was convicted of.

The study went to preposterous lengths to minimize the dangers inmates sentenced to life imprisonment pose to correctional officers and inmates, with the majority making a remarkable assertion: Offenders sentenced to life without parole, it said, "pose minimal risk to correctional officers and other inmates." It is difficult to believe that members of the panel were unaware of the recent murder of correctional officer David McGuinn, who was murdered by inmates serving life sentences at the Maryland House of Correction, or that Mr. Civiletti and his colleagues were not told about the case of Kevin Johns. Johns, already facing life behind bars for murdering his uncle and strangling a cellmate to death, was convicted last year of strangling a second inmate aboard a prison bus. In Allegany County, prosecutors are seeking the death penalty against Alonzo Johnson III, an inmate already serving a life sentence who is accused of strangling his cellmate to death at Western Correctional Institution.

The reality is that another life sentence for another violent crime means nothing to an inmate already serving life behind bars. The threat of execution is one of the few potential deterrents available to deal with such incorrigible, violent inmates. But Mr. O'Malley and his political allies are fighting to take this potential sanction away.

While politicians in Annapolis talk about abolishing the death penalty, their constituents don't regard it as such a good idea. A recent poll by Gonzales Research and Marketing Strategies showed that 53 percent of Marylanders support the death penalty, while 41 percent oppose it. On this issue, the public gets it; the politicians don't. Mr. O'Malley should end his dubious crusade.

Editorial Staff. "The Cost of Capital Punishment." *The Boston Globe*. 15 Apr. 2009.
www.boston.com

It may be too soon to call it a trend, but two states have abolished the death penalty in the past three years, and 10 others have legislation pending. States and voters are reconsidering capital punishment, and many have a new reason: money.

Cost was one of the factors New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson cited when he signed repeal legislation last month. Richardson, a former supporter of capital punishment, said he had traveled "a long personal journey on the issue." But polls show New Mexico voters broadly supported the repeal, which replaces the death penalty with life in prison without parole. New Jersey abolished its death penalty in 2007.

Even more striking was the recent vote in the New Hampshire House to end capital punishment there, since it came shortly after the state handed down its first death sentence in 50 years. But Governor John Lynch has said he will veto any repeal.

A recent study by the Urban Institute found that an average death penalty trial costs a state about \$2 million more than a murder trial where no death penalty is sought. The Death Penalty Information Center estimates that keeping an inmate on death row costs \$90,000 a year in extra security. Almost every state is facing a deficit, and getting smart about corrections budgets is an unexpected side benefit.

Abolitionists will take whatever argument they can, but money isn't the only, or the best, reason to stop executions. The death penalty is not a deterrent to most deadly crimes. It is applied unevenly. It places the United States among the world's most brutal regimes. And there are 130 other reasons: the 130 death-row inmates who were exonerated by new evidence. Their deaths would have carried an awful price tag.

Editorial Staff. "Mr. Lesniak Changes His Mind." *The New York Times*. 10 June 2008.
www.nytimes.com

Raymond Lesniak tells anyone who asks that he made a big mistake. The admission would not be noteworthy except that Mr. Lesniak is a state senator in New Jersey, and it is unusual for an elected official not only to admit an error but to convert it into something positive.

In 1982, when he was a young member of the New Jersey Assembly, Mr. Lesniak voted with the majority to reinstate the state's death penalty. He did so, he says, not because he thought it was right, but because he was afraid that if he did not support capital punishment, the voters would punish him.

Over time, Mr. Lesniak, a Union County Democrat who rose to the State Senate in 1983, became haunted by his decision, by the immorality of putting people to death, and by the possibility that an innocent person would be executed under the law that he supported.

He was not the only legislator to change his mind on the issue, but he has certainly been the most outspoken. Last year, he spearheaded the campaign that made New Jersey the first state in decades to abolish the death penalty. This year, he assembled a book of speeches, letters and testimony documenting that effort.

But here's the bigger surprise: Mr. Lesniak's constituents were not nearly as angry with him as he had feared. He concluded that elected officials are much freer than they believe to vote their conscience.

Mr. Lesniak, 62, has been one of the toughest power-brokers in the state. He says his experience with the death penalty has made him more willing to do what he thinks is right, even if it angers a major interest group. This year, he is pushing a bill to create a system of state grants that closely resemble school vouchers. In doing so, he is defying both his party and the state teachers' union. In our view, unlike with the death penalty, he is also taking the wrong position on an important and sensitive issue.

Would Mr. Lesniak be willing to take these stands if he did not represent a district where his seat is safe? He says he does not know. What he does know is that taking risks makes his job a lot more satisfying.

Roh, Jane. "Death Penalty Concerns Don't Translate on Political Stage." *Fox News*. 15 Dec. 2005.

Capital punishment's most vocal critics have long been liberals and civil rights groups who say blacks and Latinos are more likely to end up on death row than whites. Religious conservatives, including most recently Sen. Rick Santorum, R-Pa., have also joined in the chorus of doubts. But the American public still overwhelmingly supports the death penalty, and politicians remain hesitant to voice any opposition. The debate over the death penalty is often over whether certain killers deserve to die. The more horrific the crime, the more persuaded fence-sitters may be that capital punishment is an effective tool. Every story about a Jessica Lunsford, Dyllan Groene, and Carlie Brucia—children who were kidnapped, sexually assaulted and brutally murdered—seems to validate those who want government to mete out the ultimate punishment. . . .

The majority of Americans remain in favor of the death penalty, though that figure is down from where it was just a few years ago. A Gallup poll conducted Oct. 11-13 shows that 64 percent favor capital punishment for murderers, as compared to 70 percent two years ago. Support for the death penalty peaked in 1994 at 80 percent, according to the poll.

As long as that's the case, Blalock said, lawmakers will be too timid to criticize the death penalty openly, miscarriages of justice notwithstanding.

"I don't know that that's going to change nationally or in Alabama until the polls make it seem OK for politicians to step out in front of the crowd," Blalock said. "As long as you have polls showing seven out of 10 people favoring the death penalty, it's going to be the rare politician who's going to say, 'The death penalty troubles me.'"

Most polls show that support for the death penalty goes down when life imprisonment is also an option. Perhaps surprisingly, while 61 percent of respondents to the Gallup poll said they believe the death penalty is applied fairly, 59 percent also said that they believed an innocent person has been wrongly executed in the past five years.

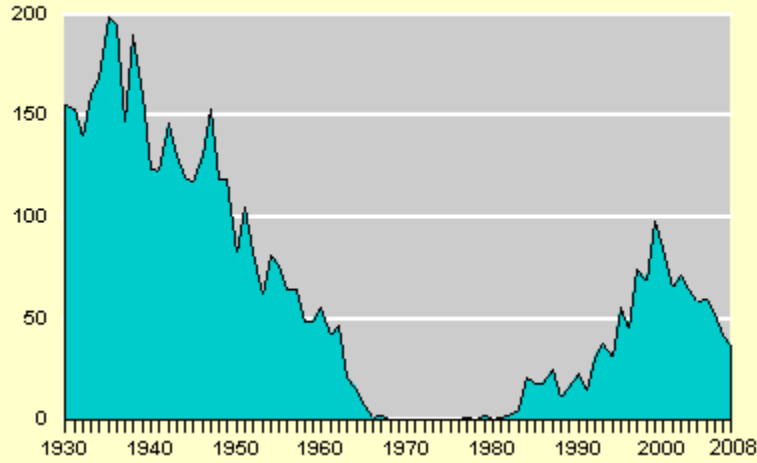
The mantra for many death penalty reform advocates is "mend it, don't end it." They believe strongly that people who commit heinous and calculated murders do not deserve to live, but want fixes in the criminal justice system to reduce the chance that the government will execute the innocent. . . .

Another, perhaps more disturbing, observation may explain the lack of national outrage over the possible execution of innocent people. When most voters look at death row, they may simply just not see a reflection of themselves. "Let's face it — middle-class Americans are less likely to be in the desperate circumstances that studies show criminals disproportionately come from," said Jody Armour, a professor at the University of Southern California Law School.

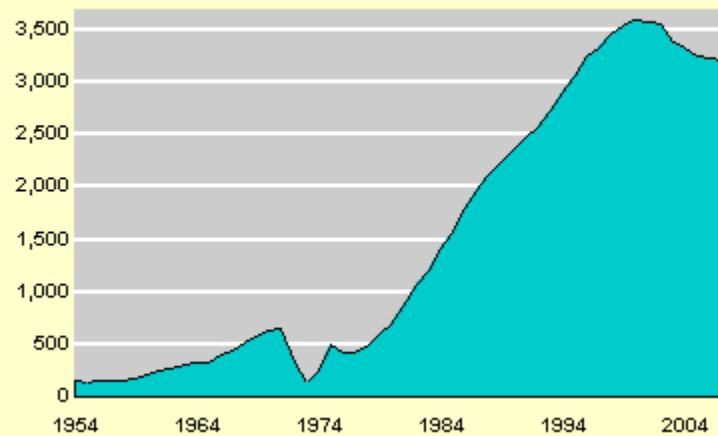
"People may be willing to accept some error. If the criminal justice process is disproportionately falling on the poor and minorities, many Americans may feel like neither of those groups are ones that characterize them or the ones they care most about."

“Capital Punishment Statistics.” U.S. Department of Justice. Office of Justice Programs. Bureau of Justice Statistics. <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov>

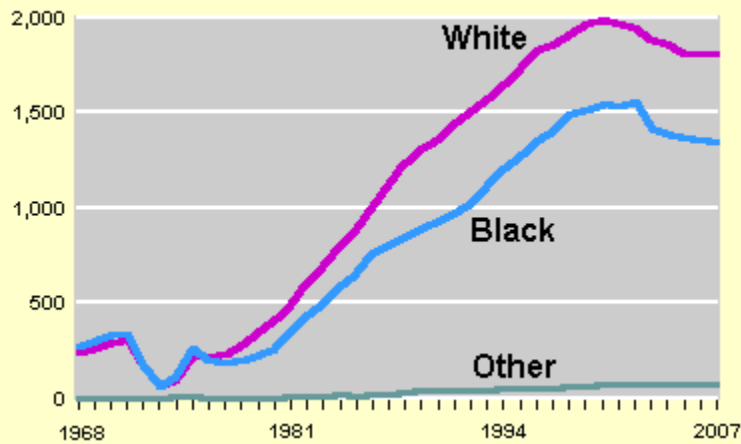
Executions, 1930-2008



Prisoners on death row, 1954-2007



Prisoners on death row by race, 1968-2007



Exploratory Essay

Directions:

The following prompt is based on Simon Wiesenthal's *The Sunflower: On the Possibilities and Limits of Forgiveness*.

This question requires you to explore the concept of forgiveness; and, as you explore the obvious and subtle points of that value, you must develop a coherent and well-written personal essay that reflects upon and reacts to Wiesenthal's narrative, plus at least three of the perspectives expressed in the personal essays that follow Wiesenthal's story.

Remember to attribute both direct and indirect references to Wiesenthal, to the other essayists, and to any other works (both fiction and nonfiction) that you incorporate into your exploration of forgiveness.

Introduction

The class, AP Language and Composition, is a class centered upon ideas—the philosophy, conflicts, values, and identities of being human. This question requires you to consider one such idea—the abstract concept of *forgiveness*. By *abstract*, we mean that it is a value we hold cognitively, inside our minds, which is reflected in our actions and reactions to what we experienced and observed. *Forgiveness* is an abstract idea that dictates how we behave in the concrete world. Thus, the conflict, the difficulties, and the challenges of forming a personal concept of forgiveness are only revealed when we apply the benevolent act to ourselves and to those who do us harm. Wiesenthal's narrative encourages the reader to address the pivotal question: What would you have done in such a situation as Wiesenthal found himself in as a young boy? It is a decision that Wiesenthal made in a very difficult situation, and his reaction to his abuser haunted him throughout his adult years. As a writer and thinker, Wiesenthal could not escape the ramifications of his reaction. As part of his personal exploration of *forgiveness*, fifty-three other writers, from a variety of backgrounds and perspectives, from a variety of professions and cultural perspectives, from a variety of religions and philosophies, responded to this pivotal question. Their provocative and challenging essays follow Wiesenthal's narrative.

Assignment

In a well-organized essay explore your own definition of forgiveness. As you explore the obvious points and subtle implications of your own definition, reflect upon Wiesenthal's journey toward understanding and managing the complications of facing those who have done harm. Also, react to at least three other essays that follow Wiesenthal's narrative, discussing the strengths and weaknesses of their positions as you manage a definition of your own.

Response Log

Directions:

The following prompt is based on your reading and reactions to *The Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne. This is not an essay, but a record of your intellectual journey through this provocative novel that challenges the reader on many levels of perception. You will write an essay on *The Scarlet Letter* and Hawthorne's literary tools soon after the school year begins.

Out of our summer reading project, this is the one fiction text. Hawthorne's allegorical novel is considered one of the most influential and pivotal works in the American canon. It is also one of the most engrained novels within American cultural perceptions and allusions. To understand *The Scarlet Letter* is to understand a key archetypal element of the American perspective.

Assignment:

A response log is an effective way to keep a record of your reading responses—positive or negative, sure or unsure. It offers a chance to respond personally, to ask questions, wonder, predict, or reflect on the characters, people, events, literary elements, writing techniques, or language of a text. DO NOT summarize! Instead, record your textual observations.

In constructing your journal, you must:

1. Use notebook paper (one-side only) or you may type each entry.
2. Divide the page in half, making two columns vertically.
3. Title the column on the left "Quotations from the Text."
4. Title the column on the right "Commentary/Responses to the Text"

Responses (right column) may start with:

1. "The imagery reveals. . . ."
2. "The setting gives the effect of. . . ."
3. "The author seems to feel. . . ."
4. "The tone of this part is. . . ."
5. "The character(s) feel(s). . . ."
6. "This is ironic because. . . ."
7. "An interesting metaphor or symbol is. . . ."
8. "The detail seems effective/out of place/important because. . . ."
9. "An interesting word/phrase sentence/thought is. . . ."
10. "This reminds me of. . . ."
11. "Something I notice/ appreciate/don't appreciate/wonder about is. . . ."
12. "The author emphasizes _____ in order to. . . ."
13. Or, you may start an entry with something else you feel is appropriate

Generally, each response to a quotation should be 3-5 sentences and should include your analysis of the literary and rhetorical techniques present in the quotations, the author’s attitude, purpose or tone, and relation to personal experience. Focus on using the analytical techniques you learned in your previous language art classes—do not panic about what you DO NOT yet know about rhetorical techniques and literary tools.

You must include a total of 20 entries that range from the beginning to the end. Demonstrate that you have read the entire text by responding to the book from the first to the last page.

Make sure that you note the page number for the quotes.

Your response log will be used to determine your comprehension of the text. Be sure that your responses are thorough and that you complete the journal for all chapters of the book. Please remember that these logs are not meant to be personal diaries. They are meant to be read by others and should be related only to the assigned material. Be prepared to share entries in class. When sharing with your peers, you will have the opportunity to confirm, clarify, and modify your responses through discussion. You will also find that your response logs can be helpful in writing literary and rhetorical analysis of the text.

Here is an example of a Response Log for *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee. Use this form as a guide to building your own notations and reflections upon *The Scarlet Letter* by Hawthorne:

Quotations from the Text	Commentary/Responses to the Text
<p>“ ‘He might have hurt me a little,’ Atticus conceded, ‘but son, you’ll understand folks a little better when you’re older. A mob’s always made up of people, no matter what. Mr. Cunningham was part of a mob last night, but he was still a man...So, it took an eight-year-old child to bring ‘em to their senses didn’t it?’ ” (159-160)</p>	<p>The tone here is matter-of-fact. Atticus admits that Mr. Cunningham could have harmed him, but he explains that Mr. Cunningham’s actions were not entirely his own; he was influenced by the crowd as is common for many people. It takes Scout recognizing him and talking to him to make Mr. Cunningham realize that what he is doing is wrong.</p>

Important Notes regarding the Entire AP Language Summer Reading Project:

1. The two essays must be typed, 12 point, Times New Roman font, double-spaced.
2. Reflection Journal can be written on notebook paper or typed on a computer.
3. All work should be original to you.
4. Do not wait until the last minute to begin your work. Allow time to incubate thoughts.
5. Do not plagiarize because you have not allowed enough time to complete your work honestly.
6. The project will be submitted to your instructor on the fourth day of class.