

AP Language and Composition
Summer 2016

H IS FOR HAWK
by Helen Macdonald



One of the *New York Times Book Review's* 10 Best Books of the Year

ON MORE THAN 25 BEST BOOKS OF THE YEAR LISTS: including *TIME* (#1 Nonfiction Book), NPR, *O, The Oprah Magazine* (10 Favorite Books), *Vogue* (Top 10), *Vanity Fair*, *Washington Post*, *Boston Globe*, *Chicago Tribune*, *Seattle Times*, *San Francisco Chronicle* (Top 10), *Miami Herald*, *St. Louis Post Dispatch*, *Minneapolis Star Tribune* (Top 10), *Library Journal* (Top 10), *Publishers Weekly*, *Kirkus Reviews*, *Slate*, *Shelf Awareness*, *Book Riot*, *Amazon* (Top 20)

When naturalist and falconer Helen Macdonald lost her beloved father, she “thought [her] world was ending.” Seems apropos, then, that her journey from crippling grief to something resembling grace is on the wings of another deadly bird of prey--the notoriously prickly, and murderous, goshawk. In *H Is for Hawk*, you will meet Mabel, not your typical bloodthirsty specimen, as she is trained to hunt like the goshawks of yore. It is this brash, slightly mad undertaking that wrenches Macdonald free from despair, and brings her to a place where she can begin again. Doesn’t sound like your kind of thing? You’d be surprised. Macdonald’s gorgeously wrought prose holds you in thrall from the first page, and provides something akin to the escape, and salvation, that nature provides her. In ‘Hawk’ you will also learn about the famed Arthurian novelist T.H. White, a kindred soul to Macdonald in certain ways. One of the things that endeared him to her was his “childish delight” with all things wild, something you’ll be hard-pressed not to experience as soon as you tap into this tome. – *Amazon*

Welcome to AP Lang!

In order to get you ready for the challenges of AP Language and Composition, please read *H is for Hawk* over the summer. Carefully notate the text in preparation for an in class essay which will be administered in the fall.

Not sure how to annotate a text? Here are some types of things you may address: any literary devices that you notice, connections that you see, questions that arise, vocabulary words that you need to define, and or your thoughts along the way, i.e. "this is crazy", "love this", "no way dude!"

If you cannot annotate your book, either because it's on an electronic device or because it may be on loan from the library, then your notations must be handwritten (don't forget to include page numbers).

Have a wonderful summer filled with reading and leisure! See you in September.

SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY PROJECT ADVANCE

2016 Summer Project

As a student in the Syracuse University Project Advance courses in the English Department, you will begin the upcoming year with WRT105, Syracuse University's freshman writing class that focuses on academic writing--specifically, the art and science of analytical and argumentative writing. In the spring semester, you will take ETS 181 Class and Literary Texts, a course that focuses on the social realities of class, race, and gender in literature and life. To get ready for these challenges, you will complete the 2016 Summer Project, described below.

Project Details

1. Read Malcolm Gladwell's *David and Goliath: Underdogs, Misfits, and the Art of Battling Giants* (2015).

The blurb:

Three thousand years ago on a battlefield in ancient Palestine, a shepherd boy felled a mighty warrior with nothing more than a pebble and a sling-and ever since, the names of David and Goliath have stood for battles between underdogs and giants. David's victory was improbable and miraculous. He *shouldn't* have won.

Or should he?

In DAVID AND GOLIATH, Malcolm Gladwell challenges how we think about obstacles and disadvantages, offering a new interpretation of what it means to be discriminated against, suffer from a disability, lose a parent, attend a mediocre school, or endure any number of other apparent setbacks.

In the tradition of Gladwell's previous bestsellers-*The Tipping Point*, *Blink*, *Outliers* and *What the Dog Saw*-DAVID AND GOLIATH draws upon history, psychology and powerful story-telling to reshape the way we think of the world around us.

(The book is widely available online and in bookstores; either the hardcover or paperback or digital version is fine.)

2. Your written response to the book should take this form:
 - a. **Summary**—in one well constructed, erudite paragraph, summarize from an objective standpoint Gladwell's book.
 - b. **Evaluation**—in 2-2.5 pages (typed, double-spaced, MLA style), evaluate the book. Topics you may include: Gladwell's writing style, presentation of his research, good points he makes, interesting/enlightening facts you discovered, the effectiveness of his project, what is missing, what should have had more detail, what more you would like to know on this topic. Of course, you will refer to *specific* passages of the book in your evaluation using MLA citation style.

BRING YOUR RESPONSES WITH YOU TO THE FIRST DAY OF CLASSES!

Have a safe, healthy, happy summer!

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***The Sympathizer*
(2015)
By Viet Thanh Nguyen
Published by Grove Press**

The winner of the 2016 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction, *The Sympathizer* is a blistering exploration of identity, politics, and America, wrought in electric prose. The narrator, a Vietnamese army captain, is a man of divided loyalties, a half-French, half-Vietnamese communist sleeper agent in America after the end of the Vietnam War. A powerful story of love and friendship, and a gripping espionage novel, *The Sympathizer* examines the legacy of the Vietnam War in literature, film, and the wars we fight today (Amazon).

Welcome to AP Lit!

To get you ready for the challenges of AP Literature & Composition, during the summer we want you to read *The Sympathizer*. Nguyen's novel is, of course, first and foremost a story—full of rich characters, surprising turns of event, emotion, and history. However, students of literature take that part of reading for granted; even more interesting is the analysis you'll conduct on your reading of the novel.

- First, read the novel closely, noting your own questions and observations. Then, tackle each of the following questions, citing evidence that supports your observations.

- “The captain’s ‘otherness’ allows him to see Vietnam and America with a clarity that enlightens us as readers” (Amazon). What is “otherness” in the context of this novel? How is the reader enlightened through this unnamed, antihero narrator?

- In an interview with NPR, Viet Nguyen declared, “I did not write this novel for a white audience” (May 2016). After reading the novel, what do you think he means by this? Could “white” stand in for “American”? In what sense? To what end?

- In his review of this novel for *The New York Times*, Philip Caputo writes, “this tragicomic novel reaches beyond its historical context to illuminate more universal themes: the eternal misconceptions and misunderstandings between East and West, and the moral dilemma faced by people forced to choose not between right and wrong, but right and right” (nytimes.com 2015/04/05). According to the novel, what is the disconnect between East and West? What part of the novel helps us understand the moral dilemma of right vs. right?
- How does Nguyen “de-Americanize the portrayal of the war” (Caputo nytimes.com 2015/04/05)?
- Give two examples of Nguyen’s use of satire in the novel? How does this use of humor help the narrator in the telling of his story?
- Give two examples of how this novel could be termed “a thriller”. How does this emphasis on action/violence affect the story Nguyen is constructing?
- What valuable insight does Nguyen add to our understanding of war? What part does personal emotion play in the plans of nations to fight each other?
- What does the title reveal about the truth Nguyen seeks to reveal in this book?

Your responses should be typed in an MLA style document (one-inch margins, double-spaced, cited correctly). If you’re not sure about the format check mla.org or owl.purdue.edu or any other reliable, academic source offering information on the MLA format.

Have a happy, healthy, safe summer! See you in September!