

## OAKBROOK 2020 SUMMER READING ASSIGNMENTS: AP ENGLISH LANGUAGE (11<sup>th</sup>)

AP English Language and Composition students must read the texts below and complete the accompanying assignments. Read and follow the assigned directions carefully. (In the advent of online only instruction to begin the school year, directions for submitting work will be communicated to students).

### I. *Amusing Ourselves to Death*, 20th Anniversary Edition by Neil Postman

Purchase a new or gently used copy of this edition of the book with little to no writing in it. Do not re-use a copy that has been already annotated by a student. Annotations will be graded.

In a panel discussion at the Frankfurt, Germany Book Fair in 1985, educator Neil Postman made the following assertion: The state of public discourse on display in the contemporary world of the time was better reflected by the events of Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, whose public was addicted to amusement, than by the state control displayed in George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.

Assignment: Though you have not likely read either of those books, consider this assertion by Postman while reading and annotating your copy of the text. Throughout the book (including the introduction by Andrew Postman), annotate for claims that the writer makes, along with key supporting evidence. In the margins of your book, respond to those claims, ask questions about them, and consider how applicable they are in today's world.

**Then in a well-developed essay, analyze to what extent Postman's assertions about television, information, and/or discourse are valid today and explain how, using appropriate evidence.**

Guidelines: 2-3 pages, Times New Roman font, double-spaced, with proper documentation and works cited page. Bring your book and essay to class on the first instructional day.

### II. *The Death of Expertise: The Campaign Against Established Knowledge and Why it Matters* by Tom Nichols

Annotation is NOT required for this text. It is highly recommended that you take notes while you read (either in a journal or with sticky notes). Be prepared to take a test in response to the book the first week of class.

### III. FRONTLINE Documentary

Visit <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/watch/> or download the PBS app (high-speed internet access required). Choose and watch any one of the Frontline documentaries available in the archive (approx. 55 minutes each, high-speed internet access required.) Then in a 1.5-2 page typed response, explain what you learned about the subject of the documentary, what makes it a pressing issue, and what questions you still

have about the topic. Include original program air date in your response and a link to access the video. Be prepared to discuss your chosen topic on the first instructional day of class.