

**AP Language and Composition Summer Assignments 2018**  
**Personal Narrative – Assignment #1 – Due August 13, 2018**  
**It's Your Choice Nonfiction – Assignment #2 – Due August 20, 2018**  
**Questions? Contact Mrs. Purvis at [dopurvis@dodge.k12.ga.us](mailto:dopurvis@dodge.k12.ga.us).**

**Personal Narrative Assignment #1 (due August 13, 2018)**

**This I Believe...**

Adapted from assignments created by Marti Nelson, Houston, TX and Kyle Stevens, Dallas, TX. The "This I Believe" series on NPR is found at <http://thisibelieve.org>

**Personal Narrative**



As part of your summer reading, you will read several essays from the "This I Believe" series. These essays are written by individuals to explore and express their identities through articulating their beliefs about the world and what is important in their own lives.

**Assignment:**

You will write a belief statement of your own. Like the pieces on NPR, yours will relate to a particular experience (or set of related experiences), one that somehow required you to recognize and define a deep-seated belief you hold.

**The belief must be clearly articulated as a single-sentence statement at some point in the essay.**

Reflect upon the experience as you write, using your reflections to shape your text. Use details, memories, perceptions, and ideas that can be gathered up then arranged with *purpose*. Was there a trigger moment in the experience? Did the belief develop gradually or suddenly? How does the belief provide a framework for other aspects of your life?

This is a personal piece, which means first-person expression is expected and it is informal in tone, but special care should be taken to use highly evocative language that is rich in detail.

While your *primary modes* are definition and narrative, keep in mind other expository modes that will provide your reader with a sense of structure, and you with different ways to develop your ideas. You may want to take one of the NPR pieces you read as a model for your structure and development.

**Tips:**

- Keep *purpose* in mind. What do you want the reader to get out of reading your piece?
- Keep *tone* in mind. How do you want the reader to perceive you, your experience, and your beliefs?
- Choose your words that will make a difference as you construct your piece; *diction* matters.
- Make efforts to construct sentences and paragraphs in ways that will catch your reader's attention *and* serve your purpose.
- Be particularly mindful of how your piece *opens* and *closes*. What kinds of choices have you made in connection with those portions of your essay?
- Consider the placement of your belief statement. Where will it have the best effect?

**Length:** Your essay should be **no less** than two, **but no more** than three pages if handwritten. Your essay should be at least one page, but no more than two if typed. If typed, the format is 12 pt. Times New Roman double-spaced.

**Due:** Your essay is due Aug. 13, 2018. Please come with your essay ready to submit.

## Sample essays from “This I Believe” are provided for students who may not have Internet access.

### When Ordinary People Achieve Extraordinary Things

Jody Williams - Fredericksburg, Virginia  
As heard on NPR’s *All Things Considered*, January 9, 2006

I believe it is possible for ordinary people to achieve extraordinary things. For me, the difference between an “ordinary” and an “extraordinary” person is not the title a person might have, but what that person does to make the world a better place for us all.

I don’t know why people choose to do what they do. When I was a kid I didn’t know what I wanted to be when I grew up, but I knew what I didn’t want to do. I didn’t want to grow up, have 2.2 kids, get married. And I certainly didn’t think about being an activist. I didn’t even really know what one was.

My older brother is deaf. Growing up, I ended up defending him and I often think that is what started me on my path to whatever I am today.

When I was approached with the idea of trying to create a landmine campaign, we were just three people in a small office in Washington, DC in late 1991. I had more than a few ideas about how to begin a campaign, but what if nobody cared? What if nobody responded? But I knew the only way to answer those questions was to accept the challenge.

But if I have any power as an individual, it’s because I work with other individuals around the world. We are ordinary people — Jemma from Armenia, Paul from Canada, Kosal from Cambodia, Haboubba from Lebanon, Christian from Norway, Diana from Colombia, Margaret from Uganda and thousands more — who have worked together to bring about extraordinary change. The landmine campaign is not just about landmines — it’s about the power of individuals to work with governments in a different way.

I believe in both my right and my responsibility to work to create a world that doesn’t glorify violence and war, but where we seek different solutions to our common problems. I believe that these days, daring to voice your opinion, daring to find out information from a variety of sources, can be an act of courage.

I know that holding such beliefs and speaking them publicly is not always easy or comfortable or popular — particularly in the post-9/11 world. But I believe that life isn’t a popularity contest. I really don’t care what people say about me — and people have said plenty. For me, it’s about trying to do the right thing — even when nobody else is looking.

I believe worrying about the problems plaguing our planet without taking steps to confront them is irrelevant. The only thing that changes this world is action.

Most people tend to get caught up in going to college, then getting a job, buying a house and paying the mortgage. Somehow, I’ve had the desire — and the drive — to do things a bit differently.

I believe that words are easy — the truth is told in the actions we take. If enough ordinary people back up our desire for a better world with action, I believe we can, in fact, accomplish extraordinary things.

*Jody Williams is the founding coordinator of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines. For her efforts, she shared the 1997 Nobel Peace Prize with the Campaign. Williams previously worked to build awareness about U.S. policy toward Central America, and did humanitarian work for people in El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua.*

### My Parents as Friends

Bhavani G. Murugesan - Sacramento, California  
As heard on *The Bob Edwards Show*, October 28, 2011

I believe in living with my parents. It’s been almost two years since I came to live at home. I never meant to stay this long—not after years of boundless freedom at schools, stumbling out of cabs at four in the morning, leaving kitchen sinks filled with week-old dishes.

Coming home was meant to be a short, inexpensive stint until I passed the bar, fixed my broken bank account, and moved to the Big City. Today, at twenty-seven, long after my bank account is softly purring, I continue to live with my parents. I have come to rediscover them in ways that my teenage mind would not allow—as adults and as friends with flaws and oddities very simply their own. And sometimes, even mine.

Growing up, I remember my father as a silent, stern man—not the sort of person around whom one could laugh. As a teenager arriving in America, knowing nothing, I wanted a father who could explain the human journey. In college, when friends called home for advice, I would slump into a deep melancholy for what I did not have.

Then one night after my move back home, I overheard my father on the telephone. There was some trouble. Later, Appa shared the problem with me. Apparently my legal training had earned me some privileges in his eyes. I talked through the problem with Appa, analyzing the motives of the people involved and offering several negotiation strategies.

He listened patiently before finally admitting, “I can’t think like that. I am a simple man.”

Appa is a brilliant scientist who can deconstruct the building blocks of nature. Yet human nature is a mystery to him. That night I realized that he was simply not skilled at dealing with people, much less the turbulence of a conflicted teenager. It’s not in his nature to understand human desires.

And so, there it was—it was no one’s fault that my father held no interest in human lives while I placed great importance in them. We are at times born more sensitive, wide-eyed, and dreamy than our parents and become more compassionate, curious, and idealistic than them. Appa perhaps never expected me for a child. And I, who knew Appa as an intelligent man, had never understood that his intelligence did not cover all of my passions.

So what do I believe? I believe that coming home has saved me hours of wrestling with my angst on a shrink’s couch. It has saved me years of questioning and confusion. It has saved my friends from carrying my destructive emotional baggage. I now see my parents as people who have other relationships than just Appa and Amma, relationships that shape and define them. I now overlook their many quirks—quirks that once seemed like monumental whims directed at me and me alone. I have forgiven myself for my picked-up habits, my homegrown eccentricities.

Best of all, I now know my parents as friends: people who ask me for advice; people who need my support and understanding. And I’ve come to see my past clearer. After our move from India, my parents have become my only link to a great part of my heritage. Knowing them makes me secure in where I come from and where I’m going.

*Bhavani G. Murugesan is a litigator in Sacramento, California. Every day she pauses to relish one small moment of happiness, whether it be a baby’s head bobbing over his father’s shoulder, the rustling of leaves, or a clean and empty sink at the end of the day—a sight still rare in her life.*

### **Love is Thicker than Blood**

In the South we take family relationships very seriously. When you meet someone new, the first order of business is to find out if you are related, or if you know some of the same people. Family ties are strong. Blood is thicker than water is what the old folks say. No matter what arguments or trials you have with family, you are always there for them. You always choose family over anyone else.

My grannie raised five children and instilled those strong family values into each one. She even passed those beliefs down to her grands and great-grands. Grannie believed that family was most important...blood is thicker than water.

I believe that love is thicker than blood.

I met my husband when I was 25. He was not my grannie’s idea of the man for me. He was 32, divorced, and had a seven-year-old son, Will. In the back of my mind, I wondered if my grannie would accept Will as part of the family. I wanted the same love and acceptance for Will that I had thrived in from Grannie.

Grannie made quilts for each of her grandchildren. Making quilts is a Southern expression of love. When you take the time to hand-make a quilt, you are showing how important a person is to you. With each stitch, Grannie quilted more strength into our family thread. To this day, whenever I need to feel safe and loved, I just wrap up in my “Grannie quilt.”

I will never forget the day that Grannie took Will with her to look at quilts. I remember my heart was in my throat. I quietly walked down the hall to where they were. What was she doing? I had to know.

Grannie had a quilt in her hand and she was talking quietly to Will. As I walked into the room, she told Will, “You are my grandchild now, too. This quilt is for you.” I don’t know if he understood the significance, but as tears rolled down my cheeks, I did. He was family. He was a grandchild now, even though no blood relation existed. I believe that love is thicker than blood...Grannie and Will were living proof. (As we travel through this course together, I will share many of my own writings with you. We are traveling this AP Lang road together.)

## Assignment #2 - ***It's your choice!*** The details - Due August 20,2018

- ✓ Choose and read **one** nonfiction text from the list.
- ✓ Complete a **dialectical journal** (two-column notes) in which you discuss your author's **language** and **style**.
- ✓ Include at least **twelve quotations** in your journal notes. This handout has helpful information with a student-created journal sample to help with your written response.
- ✓ What is it about the writing that stands out and makes the work distinctive? The important part is that you, the reader, are reading something and then responding with analysis. Have a conversation with the text and with yourself.

**Dialectic:** "The art or practice of arriving at the truth by using conversation involving question and answer."

**Dialectical Journal:** A written conversation with yourself about a piece of literature.

### **How your Dialectical Journal Should be Formatted**

- ◆ Label the left side of each journal page "CD – Concrete Details" and label the right side of each journal page "CM – Commentary."
- ◆ The "CD" side is where you record **examples:** paraphrase, quotations, notes, direct quotes, summaries, evidence, support, images, etc. from the book. (Always accompany CD with page numbers.)
- ◆ The "CM" side is where you record corresponding **analysis:** reactions, ideas, opinions, comments, inferences, insights, questions, etc. from your head. Please ALWAYS use complete sentences. ☺

### **How to Choose Quotations for Your Dialectical Journal**

**Select quotations:** Choose at least **twelve quotations** that stand out in the text for their effect; find quotes that are significant to the theme of the work; select quotes that affect you as a reader.

**Understand:** Take some time to consider each quotation's relevance to both the section of the work in which it is found and its relevance to the work as a whole.

**Identify:** Now begin writing: note the context of the quotation (where/when does it appear in the text?) and categorize its status as a rhetorical or literary device.

**Describe its significance:** What makes this quote important? Stand out? What makes you, the reader, take notice? For each quotation, use the **D-I-D-L-S** method to guide your journal response.

**What in the world is D-I-D-L-S???** (so glad you asked!)

### **How to Analyze Language and Style: D-I-D-L-S**

Just as we have a particular, unique way of presenting ourselves, writers have unique ways of presenting themselves. Our personalities shine through the way we talk, the words we choose, the gestures we use, and the clothes we wear. A writer has only language to express his/her personality. The qualities below are the basic elements of a writer's style.

**Diction** – The **author's choice of words and their connotations**.

What words does the author choose? Consider his/her word choice compared to another. Why did the author choose that particular word? What are the connotations of that word choice? What effect do these words have on your mood as a reader? What do they seem to indicate about the author's tone?

E.g. Author 1: Bill was *unintelligent*. (relatively neutral, as far as lack of intelligence goes)

E.g. Author 2: Bill was a *zipperhead*. (less of a low IQ, more like someone who acts like an idiot)

**Images** – The use of descriptions that appeal to sensory experience.

What images does the author use? What does he/she focus on in a sensory way? The kinds of images the author puts in or leaves out reflect his/her style? Are they vibrant? Prominent? Plain? What effect do these images have on your mood as a reader? What do they seem to indicate about the author's tone? NOTE: Images differ from details in the degree to which they appeal to the senses.

**Details** – Facts that are included or those that are omitted.

What details does the author choose to include? What do they imply? What does the author choose to exclude? What are the connotations of their choice of details? What effect do these included and excluded details have on your mood as a reader? What do these included and excluded details seem to indicate about the author's tone? PLEASE NOTE: Details are facts or factlets. They differ from images in that they don't have a strong sensory appeal.

E.g. An author describing a battlefield might include details about the stench of rotting bodies or he might not.

**Language** – Characteristics of the body of words used; terms like slang, formal, clinical, scholarly, and jargon denote language.

What is the overall impression of the language the author uses? Does it reflect education? A particular profession? Intelligence? Is it

plain? Ornate? Simple? Clear? Figurative? Poetic? What effect does language have on your mood as a reader? What does language seem to indicate about the author's tone?

**Sentence Structure** – Sentence structure is the fashion in which the sentences are constructed.

What are the sentences like? Are they simple with one or two clauses? Do they have multiple phrases? Are they choppy? Flowing? Sinuous like a snake? Is there antithesis, chiasmus, and parallel construction? What emotional impression do they leave? If we are talking about poetry, what is the meter? Is there a rhyme scheme? What effect do these structures have on your mood as a reader? What do these structures indicate about the author's tone? PLEASE NOTE: Short = emotional or assertive; longer = reasonable or scholarly.

***How Your Dialectical Journal will be Assessed***

**A** = Detailed, meaningful passages, plot and quote selections; thoughtful interpretation and commentary about the text; includes comments about literary elements (like theme, diction, imagery, syntax, symbolism, etc.) and how these elements contribute to the meaning of the text; raises many thought-provoking, insightful observations; coverage of text is complete and thorough; journal is neat, organized and readable; student has followed ALL directions in the creation/organization of the journal.

**B** = Less detailed, but good selections; some intelligent commentary about the text; includes some comments about literary elements (like theme, diction, imagery, syntax, symbolism, etc.) but less than how these elements contribute to the meaning of the text; raises some thought-provoking, insightful observations; coverage of text is complete and thorough; journal is neat, organized and readable; student has followed ALL directions in the creation/organization of the journal.

**C** = A few good details about the text; most of the commentary is vague, unsupported or plot summary/paraphrase; some listing of literary elements, but perhaps inadequate discussion; raises few or obvious observations; addresses most of the reading assignment, but not very thoroughly; journal is relatively neat; student has perhaps not followed all directions in organizing and/or formatting the journal.

**D** = Hardly any good details from the text; all notes are plot summary or paraphrase; few literary elements, virtually no discussion on meaning; no good observations; limited coverage of text/too short; did not follow directions; difficult to read/follow.

**F** = No dialectical journal completed on day checked or collected.

***Dialectical Journal Student Sample (uncorrected)***

**The Great Gatsby** by F. Scott Fitzgerald (Yes, I realize this is fiction and not a memoir.)

<p><b>Chapter 1 (p. 7) IMAGERY</b>          "...what foul dust floated in the wake of his dreams that temporarily closed out my interest in the abortive sorrows and short-winded elations of men."</p>	<p>I found this sentence thought provoking and an interesting use of <b>imagery</b>. By using strong visual imagery, Fitzgerald allowed multiple interpretations of this sentence. "Foul dust" could possibly relate to laziness since that is the reason why dust exists, a lack of motivation to clean and tidy a room or place. Dust also suggests an idea of aged existence. "In the wake of his dreams" <b>could allude</b> to a funeral, which is possibly a harbinger for a death in the story of a main character. "Abortive sorrows and short-winded elations of men" is a strong sentence to say "I don't care." The use of "abortive" could also relate to the sudden and unexpected death of a character.</p>
<p><b>Chapter 1 (p.10) DETAILS</b>          "My own house was an eye-sore, but it was a small eye-sore and it had been overlooked, so I had a view of the water, a partial view of my neighbor's lawn and the consoling proximity of millionaires—all for eighty dollars a month."</p>	<p>Nick Carraway, a man from a prominent family, will not shame his family by living a "bad" life; he must make friends with the rich and become popular, which is the great American Dream. <b>Under normal circumstances, one would not buy a house that is an eye-sore</b>, but the proximity to the affluent aids the decision. Pride is also present in the American Dream, and Nick can say that he lives with millionaires. In addition, Nick is new to New York, and living by millionaires is a great start to becoming a well-known man. <b>The usage of the dash</b> was very effective and emphasized the "privileges" Nick has compared to others. However, this urge to become popular with an upper class is destructive, for there is no limit to how popular one can be, so the hopes and dreams of people searching for an easy life can only be hopes and dreams.</p>

**Memoirs:**

Colored People, Henry Louis Gates  
West with the Night, Beryl Markham  
The Woman Warrior, Maxine Hong Kingston  
Growing Up, Russell Baker  
This Boy's Life, Tobias Wolff  
Hunger for Memory, Richard Rodriguez  
The Duke of Deception, Geoffrey Wolff  
Angela's Ashes, Frank McCourt  
In Patagonia, Bruce Chatwin  
A Monk Swimming, Malachy McCourt  
Out of Africa, Isak Dinesen  
The Road From Coorain, Jill Ker Conway  
An American Childhood, Annie Dillard  
The Color of Water, James McBride  
Hand To Mouth: A Chronicle of Early Failure, Paul Auster  
The Autobiography of Malcolm X  
The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down, Anne Fadiman  
Speak, Memory, Vladimir Nabokov  
A Hope in the Unseen, Ron Suskind  
Life on the Mississippi, Mark Twain

**Travel Narrative:**

The Pillars of Hercules, Paul Theroux  
The Seasons of Rome, Paul Hofmann  
The Great Railway Bazaar, Paul Theroux  
Balkan Ghosts, Robert Kaplan  
Confederates in the Attic, Tony Horwitz  
A Wolverine Is Eating My Leg, Tim Cahill  
A Year in Provence, Peter Mayle  
Road Fever, Tim Cahill  
Coming into the Country, John McPhee  
Kon-Tiki, Thor Heyerdahl  
Under the Tuscan Sun, Francis Mayes  
Blue Highways, William Least-Heat Moon  
Travels with Charley, John Steinbeck  
Travels with Lisbeth, Lars Eighner

**Essayists and other General Non-Fiction:**

The White Album, Joan Didion (essays)  
After Henry, Joan Didion (essays)  
Slouching Towards Bethlehem, Joan Didion (essays)  
Salvador, Joan Didion (travel/essays)  
The Armies of the Night, Norman Mailer (war)  
Homage to Catalonia, George Orwell (political/war)  
Waist-High in the World, Nancy Mairs (essays)  
Lincoln at Gettysburg, Garry Wills (history)  
Mother Tongue, Bill Bryson (language)  
Made in America, Bill Bryson (language)  
The Miracle of Language, Richard Lederer (language)  
Fast Food Nation, Eric Schlosser (food)  
Socrates Café, Christopher Phillips (philosophy)  
In Cold Blood, Truman Capote (true crime)  
Bad, or The Dumbing of America, Paul Fussell (cultural criticism)  
Red Lobster, White Trash, and the Blue Lagoon, Joe Queenan (cultural criticism)  
The Age of American Unreason, Susan Jacoby (cultural criticism)  
The Working Poor, David K. Shipler (cultural criticism)  
Nickel and Dimed, Barbara Ehrenreich (cultural criticism)  
The Beauty Myth, Naomi Wolf (cultural criticism)  
Into the Buzzsaw, Kristina Borjesson (media studies)  
Killed Cartoons, David Wallis (media studies)