

AP English Language and Composition Summer Writing Assignment

Select two of the three essay prompts below, and write a well-constructed essay for each question. Your essays need to follow the criteria below:

- At Least Two Pages in Length
- Typed, Times New Roman Font
- Clearly and Thoughtfully Organized

Both essays are to be turned in to your AP English Language and Composition teacher on the first day of class; no exceptions!

Question I

In his 1998 book *Life the Movie: How Entertainment Conquered Reality*, Neal Gabler wrote the following.

One does not necessarily have to cluck in disapproval to admit that entertainment is all the things its detractors say it is: fun, effortless, sensational, mindless, formulaic, predictable and subversive. In fact, one might argue that those are the very reasons so many people love it.

At the same time, it is not hard to see why cultural aristocrats in the nineteenth century and intellectuals in the twentieth hated entertainment and why they predicted, as one typical nineteenth century critic railed, that its eventual effect would be “to overrun all morality, to poison the springs of domestic happiness, to dissolve the ties of our social order, and to involve our country in ruin.”

Write a thoughtful and carefully constructed essay in which you use specific evidence to defend (agree with) or challenge (disagree with) the assertion that entertainment has the capacity to “ruin” society.

Question II

“Adversity has the effect of eliciting talents which prosperous circumstances would have lain dormant.” - Horace

Consider this quotation about adversity from the Roman poet Horace. Then write an essay that defends (agrees with) or challenges (disagrees with) Horace’s assertion about the role that adversity (financial or political hardship, danger, misfortune, etc.) plays in developing a person’s character. Support your argument with appropriate evidence from your reading, observation, or experience.

Question III

A weekly feature of *The New York Times Magazine* is a column by Randy Cohen called "The Ethicist," in which people raise ethical questions to which Cohen provides answers. The question below is from the column that appeared on April 4, 2003.

At my high school, various clubs and organizations sponsor charity drives, asking students to bring in money, food, and clothing. Some teachers offer bonus points on tests and final averages as incentives to participate. Some parents believe that this sends a morally wrong message, undermining the value of charity as a selfless act. Is the exchange of donations for grades O.K.?

The practice of offering incentives for charitable acts is widespread, from school projects to fund drives by organizations such as public television stations, to federal income tax deductions for contributions to charities. In a well-written essay, develop a position on the ethics of offering incentives for charitable acts. Support your position with evidence from your reading, observation and/or experience.