1. Join the AP Language and Composition Remind account before you leave school for the summer (see the separate handout). I will contact you in July, before your junior year officially begins, and you might need to contact me. You may also reach me via email at tayloju@boe.richmond.k12.ga.us.

2. **Carefully** read the "non-fiction novel" *In Cold Blood* by Truman Capote. When I say "carefully read," I mean that this process should not be quick. You should read closely and think deeply about the story. Annotating what you read is a good way to get in the habit of reflective questioning, something we will work on all year. If the copy of the book is not yours to keep, you can either write notes in a separate notebook or make annotations on sticky notes that can be removed from the book later. Below is the picture of the copy I would prefer you to purchase. It is published by Vintage International, and the ISBN is 978-0-679-74558-7. You can buy a different edition, but this is the one we will be using in class, and I will have activities that require you to refer to specific page numbers.

3. After you have completed reading the book, prepare a critical literary analysis of *In Cold Blood*. Literary Critics often look at a text through the lens of a specific philosophical or social perspective. Some of the most common "literary lenses" are Archetypal, Authorial, Feminist, Marxist, and Psychoanalytic. I have provided brief descriptions of these types of literary criticism for you, and you are welcome to do more research online if you like. But you are ONLY allowed to research the literary criticism, information about Capote, or historic facts related to the time the book was written; you are NOT to research HOW the critical lens could be applied to *In Cold Blood*.

   Instead of conducting a general online search for different interpretations of Capote's "non-fiction novel," let's put Artificial Intelligence to the test. After determining which critical lens you want to consider in relation to *In Cold Blood*, go to ChatGPT (https://chat.openai.com/). Ask ChatGPT to provide an analysis of the book using the critical slant you have decided on. For instance, you might type in "Feminist analysis of Truman Capote's *In Cold Blood*." ChapGPT will generate some content *that may or may not be accurate;* that's the thing about AI: it pulls from the entire internet, and there is a lot of information out there, correct and incorrect! Copy and paste what ChatGPT generates into a Microsoft Word document, save it, and print it. Handwrite annotations on this document. When do you think ChatGPT provides an accurate analysis? What information do they offer that seems incorrect and why? These are the things I want you to note in your handwritten analysis of ChatGPT's output.

   By this point, you should have a fairly good understanding of what it means to analyze a text using a specific perspective. Once you have dissected ChatGPT's analysis, make bullet points adding your own observations about how the different people, events, and style of writing can be best understood in terms of that single critical perspective. You should have a minimum of five (5) unique critical observations (Resist the urge to research this – I want to know what YOU see, not what Capote scholars see!). During the first week of school, I will take up this work and grade it; later during that first week, we will discuss your findings in a class discussion.

4. Take an objective reading-check assessment during one of the first few days of school. On this assessment, you will be expected to know the names of the key people Capote describes in his story; the events that he chronicles from their lives; and, in some cases, the specific details that he either repeats or highlights. I will not ask obvious or "easy" questions. If it is clear to me that you didn't read the book, I will not recommend you for the AP Exam in May of 2026.

5. If you have any questions or just want to discuss an aspect of *In Cold Blood* with me before school starts, feel free to send me a Remind message.

   Important note: I want to make it clear that for the study of this book or anything else we read in AP Language and Composition, there is to be NO collaboration with other students or sole reliance on the internet, movies, or secondary sources such as Sparknotes, Shmoop, Wikipedia, etc. Unless I recommend it, working with other students - or using any sources other than the primary text(s) and your own thoughts - will be considered cheating. I create my own reading-check assessments by looking at the online reading guides that students often use in place of reading the story, so don't rely on them. Reading guides are intended to do just that: guide your reading. They are not intended to *replace* your reading of the text, and if you rely exclusively on them to learn the book, your understanding of it will be cursory and limited. Be smarter than that! Reading the text yourself is the only way to develop critical and analytical skills. If you read early in the summer, make sure you review notes before school starts so you can recall details from the story.

   I hope you have a wonderful summer!

Critical Literary Lenses

Literary lenses (which are more formally called *Schools of Criticism*) focus on one basic principle: different readers read the same text differently. Knowing how different groups of readers read a text can illuminate deeper meaning and new interpretations. Literary lenses also work for literally ANY TEXT, even one as simple as "Cinderella." Though there are many literary theories, what follows are the most common ones.

MARXISM – This first lens is a great example of separating real-world political agendas from literary tools. While Marxism in the political world is a social and economic philosophy pursuing the elimination of private possession as a way to eliminate class struggle, literary Marxism merely explores what conflicts in a story stem from money and social classes. Marxism is based on the writings of Karl Marx (duh), a historian who believed that all conflicts throughout history were caused by a struggle over finite resources like land, food, and other possessions (which they call dialectical materialism). Some get ahold of the resources (the privileged class called the bourgeoise) and prevent others from having the resources (The Other, called the proletariat). The privileged class limits sharing their resources (as their wealth ensures their continued survival), resulting in feelings of alienation for those in the proletariat who must fight for, beg for, work for, or forge for alternate resources to survive.

FEMINISM – Feminism explores the power relations and power struggles between men and women. As men have held power historically in Western society as part of a patriarchy, men define what it is to be human, thus casting women as the "other." Feminism explores not only the stereotypes and biases men and women use to define each other but women's own search for their own definition and perspective. While feminists reject essentialism, or the idea that one neat and tidy definition can apply to all women, all feminists agree that a woman is more than her body. Feminists instead examine gender, or how society defines what it mean to be a woman. Feminists focus on a woman's agency (her ability to make her own choices), the challenges she faces because of her sex, how she is treated and viewed by men, and how she views herself.

ARCHETYPAL (JUNGIAN) – Archetypal analysis explores the collective unconscious--how all the stories ever written use interconnected images. This is also known as Jungian analysis after psychologist Carl Jung. In his study of dreams, Jung found the same types of images reoccurring in his patients. Inspired by the work of Northrop Frye, Jung named these images archetypes and pronounced that they were universally acknowledged symbols that are innate in all people--one is literally born knowing archetypes. Joseph Campbell built upon Jung's work, claiming all narratives use archetypes and that literature can be seen as a conversation of how to reuse these basic elements in new ways.

AUTHORIAL (BIOGRAPHICAL/HISTORICAL) – Authorial criticism focuses on how the text is a reflection of its author: who the author was, what the author believed, the author's personal history, and the socioeconomic culture around the author at the time of the writing. By pairing textual events and content (internal evidence) with research on the author's life by other scholars (intermediate evidence) and authorial commentary by the author on his or her own work (external evidence), the authorial scholar connects plot events in the story to events in the author's own life, pairs characters and their motivations in a text to actual people in the author's life, and reflects on the author's purpose for writing a text. The authorial critique also crosses with some psychoanalysis, as it often assumes an author's subconscious is also revealed in the text and that a close reading can reveal the id desires and repression of the author at the time of the writing. *You must research details of Capote's life if you choose this critical lens.*

PSYCHOANALYSIS (FREUDIAN) – Psychoanalytical literary criticism explores the role of consciousnesses and the unconscious in literature. Based on the work of Sigmund Freud, psychoanalysis examines the psychology of the characters in the text, specifically their wants and repression. Freudian analysis focuses on three layers of personality: the id (wants and impulses), the superego (the moral central concerned about societal rules and judgment), and the ego (which balances the id and superego). Freudian analysis also stresses that there are only two main motivators for all human behavior: eros (desire for love) and thanatos (fear of death).
While psychological analysis in the real world is about diagnosing and curing mental or emotional disorders, personal lenses are NOT about putting a character or author on an analyst's couch and examining their kleptomania or schizophrenia. Rather, these mirrors want to depict motivations and subconscious influences on a person's character to better understand their decisions.

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By Nicole Nguyen (nicole.nguyen@wsj.com)   May 4, 2025 5:30 am ET

Generative AI is transforming many aspects of life, and using the tools can help you understand how it's changing the world.

Chatbots are massive troves of information that you can access by typing or speaking plainly, and each bot has its own strengths and weaknesses.

To get the best results from AI, be specific with prompts, add context, ask for citations and format the response.

If you have a friend, child or co-worker who won't shut up about ChatGPT or some other generative-AI chatbot, but you've been too embarrassed to ask where to start, this is for you. The buzzy, mysterious tech is transforming every aspect of our lives, from high-school English to pharmaceutical discovery.

At the very least, by using these tools, you'll understand how generative AI is changing our world. And you might discover some productivity hacks for your own life in the process. Recent breakthroughs in image generation create impressive pictures within minutes. And voice chats and other advanced tools are now available in free accounts.

First, a primer. If you're wondering which bot to use and how all this is different from searching the web, welcome, you're in the right place.

Choose your bot

Don't think of a "chatbot" as a conversational buddy. It's a massive trove of information and "learning" that you can access by typing or speaking plainly.

Each bot has a different personality and a different way of surfacing information. While they were all trained on books, websites and other media—gazillions of words, images and sounds—each one has its own strengths and weaknesses.

• OpenAI's ChatGPT was first on the scene and is the most well-known. It has the most features—including a (subscribers-only) video generator.

• Microsoft Copilot, powered by a mix of OpenAI and Microsoft MSFT 2.32%increase; green up pointing triangle tech, has an approachable interface for beginners.

• Google's Gemini brings search into the mix and can export data to Docs.

• Anthropic's Claude markets itself as "safety-first" AI. It currently doesn't have image or voice tools.

And there are many others, including Meta AI and xAI's Grok.

You can try most free through a web browser or mobile app, often with an account sign-up. Free accounts tend to limit how far you can go, and premium accounts typically cost $20 a month.

How—and why—to prompt

Generative AI can save you time. A chatbot can synthesize a relevant answer in seconds, instead of sending you down a 15-minute search rabbit hole. Once you get the hang of it, you can consult it as a thought partner for more-creative pursuits.

The technology can still make mistakes, known as hallucinations, but it is maturing. And its responses often provide the starting point you're looking for.

It all starts with a prompt—a specific instruction or question for the AI. Think of it as shaping your request to coax a better response. For best results, follow these guidelines:

• Undo your search brain. Instead of searching "bikes under $500," provide more detail.

I'm looking for a bike under $500. What kind of materials and components should I consider to balance quality and performance with affordability?

• Be specific. AI will fill in details you leave out, so add as much context as you can. The wordier your prompt, the more personalized the response.

• Add a reference. Adjust its tone by asking something like "Write in the style of The Wall Street Journal's Nicole Nguyen." (But please don't.) You can also specify the role it should play by starting with "You are a foreign language tutor" or "You are an interior decorator."

• Make it up. Want to dream up something that doesn't exist? AI can generate all-new stories, poems or images. (You can also upload your own image for AI to play with.)

• Keep it focused. Bots sometimes spew words, so impose a limit: "List three pros and cons" or "summarize a concept in two paragraphs." To prevent confusion, avoid unrelated questions in the same prompt.

• Ask for citations. If you're worried about credibility, ask the AI to cite its sources. The bot will link to source material from, for example, government websites or peer-reviewed studies. To be extra careful, check those sources.

• Follow up. Unsure about the response? Say "walk me through how you arrived at this conclusion, step by step." You can also prompt the bot to elaborate or rewrite the reply.

• Format the response. Say "give me a bullet list" or "put this into an easy-to-read table." You can also ask for a downloadable, printable PDF response.

Ready to level up?

Tinker with these newer features. I specify which chatbot to try here, because availability varies.

• Web search: It's handy for shopping, recipes and how-to's. Use ChatGPT, Copilot, Claude or Perplexity. You can press a button or flip the "web search" switch for more real-time info.

• Voice mode: You can talk to your bot, even practice a foreign language. Use ChatGPT, Copilot or Gemini. Hit the mic and ask away.

• Deep research: To have the bot sift through huge amounts of public information and generate a tidy report, select "deep research." Use ChatGPT or Claude. The bot can take anywhere from a few minutes to a half-hour to compile.

AI is powerful but imperfect. Always fact-check critical information and keep private and personal information confidential. And remember: In an emergency, you should still call 911—don't just ask AI!