

Putnam Valley High School
11th Grade
Advanced Placement Language and Composition
Summer Reading List
2008

All three books listed below are required reading. In addition, there will be a writing assignment due at the end of September.

The Writing Life by Annie Dillard

Amid moving accounts of her own writing (and life) experiences, Dillard also manages to impart wisdom to other writers, wisdom having to do with passion and commitment and taking the work seriously. Dillard comes to a realization: "Many fine people were out there living, people whose consciences permitted them to sleep at night despite their not having written a decent sentence that day, or ever."

On Writing by Stephen King

Short and snappy as it is, Stephen King's *On Writing* really contains two books: a fondly sardonic autobiography and a tough-love lesson for aspiring novelists. The memoir is terrific stuff, a vivid description of how a writer grew out of a misbehaving kid. You're right there with the young author as he's tormented by poison ivy, gas-passing babysitters, uptight schoolmarms, and a laundry job nastier than Jack London's. It's a ripping yarn that casts a sharp light on his fiction.

Eats Shoots and Leaves by Lynne Truss

Who would have thought a book about punctuation could cause such a sensation? Certainly not its modest if indignant author, who began her surprise hit motivated by "horror" and "despair" at the current state of British usage: ungrammatical signs ("BOB,S PETS"), headlines ("DEAD SONS PHOTOS MAY BE RELEASED") and band names ("Hear'Say") drove journalist and novelist Truss absolutely batty. But this spirited and wittily instructional little volume, which was a U.K. #1 bestseller, is not a grammar book, Truss insists; like a self-help volume, it "gives you permission to love punctuation." Her approach falls between the descriptive and prescriptive schools of grammar study, but is closer, perhaps, to the latter.