

2018-2019 AP English Language and Composition Nonfiction Reading List

The focus of Advanced Placement Language and Composition is Rhetoric, or how we use language. The two articles below are intended to get you to begin thinking about how we use language, and the motivation and purpose for selecting the words that we choose. Please read both articles thoroughly, and be prepared to discuss them upon the beginning of the school year. After you have completed both articles, please select at least **ONE (1) Book** from **EACH NON-FICTION category**, **five (5) books in total** on the list (pages 4 through 8).

Remember that you don't have to choose something from this list, but rather a book that meets that category. This list is to inspire you and give you an idea of the college-level material I'm looking for. Explore on your own. Check out best-seller lists, new release displays at bookstores, and the stacks at our city libraries.

Article #1

The Power of Language: 5 Wicked Words That Are Sabotaging Your Success

Ivana Taylor Marketing Strategist, DIY Marketers

Would you believe that the words you use actually determine whether you succeed or not? Language shapes how we experience the world. Take a few minutes and just listen to the conversations around you. Count how often you hear the following words: but, want, should, hope, try.

I did this experiment and got startling results. It wasn't just the frequency at which these words came up, it was the context of the words created and the mindset that they put me in that literally determined whether I took any action—and what action I took. Here are some of the actual phrases I said during the day, and the outcomes of those phrases.

“I'd love to hire a writer, but I just can't afford it.”

“I want to increase my sales.”

“I should call John today.”

“I hope they sign the contract.”

“I'll try to schedule that meeting.”

Notice that every one of these phrases is passive. These statements are self-defeating. They take the responsibility out of your hands and fling it into the stratosphere. Also, notice that these are all *potential* actions that go undone and hence, have no positive impact on the success of your business. Here's how to transform passive words into powerful actions.

Replace “but” with “and”

You won't believe how often “but” comes up in your conversations. All you need to do is notice how you are using it. Are you using “but” to limit your options or are you using “but” to clarify something. In my example, I was using “but” as an excuse to not go forward. When you change the sentence to, “I'd love to hire a writer AND I can't afford it,” it doesn't dismiss the action, instead, it begs the question: “How can I afford to hire a writer?” This sentence gives you control and it doesn't make the need for a writer go away.

Replace “want” with “am”

“Want” tends to be a passive word. Wanting doesn't make anything happen. Consider using a verb. Instead of saying, “I want to increase sales,” you can say, “I am increasing sales.” Simply changing “want” to “am” puts you more in control of the outcome.

Replace “try” with “will”

The word “try” is another weak and slippery word. To say that you will “try to schedule a meeting” gets you off the hook. Saying “I will schedule a meeting” leaves no wiggle room about what is going to happen or who is going to make it happen.

Replace “should” with “will”

Just like “try,” “should” is a weasel word and is best countered with a strong action word like “will.”

Replace “hope” with “intend”

Hope can go either way. It's one thing to be hopeful or have hope, but hope without action will leave you empty handed. When you find yourself hoping without an action plan in place, it triggers you to substitute the word "hope" with a word like "intend." Instead of hoping to sign a contract, intend to sign in.

Semantics or serious stuff?

The words you use can change your outlook and perspective on a situation. For example, if you ask the question, "How do you increase sales?", your mind will go searching for a single solution or answer to the question. When you ask, "In what ways can you increase sales?", your brain starts looking for more than one solution to increasing sales. Even though you may not be paying too much attention to what you are saying, your brain is paying very close attention; to the point that it will influence how you feel about a specific situation. When you use words that are passive and weak, you will perceive your situation more negatively. When you use active, powerful and dynamic words, you will perceive yourself as more powerful over your situation. Here's how to become a more powerful speaker. Becoming a more powerful speaker isn't just about giving great presentations, it's about using powerful words that keep you and your mind focused on being actively engaged in growing your business.

Pay attention to what you are saying

The first step is to notice when these words come up and catch yourself saying them. Make a list of these five words and tell your friends, family and team members that you are on a mission to catch yourself using these five words and enroll them into telling you when you've used them.

Ask yourself what you are committed to

Once you've caught yourself using any of these five words, take a moment to ask yourself what you are committed to. The sentence "I should call John today," doesn't say that I'm committed to John or what he needs from me. If John is a customer and my commitment is to service my customer then I would say "I will call John today."

Say it again using active, powerful language

This might seem cumbersome at first, but it makes a big difference. Simply stop yourself if you've made a weak statement and restate your thoughts using more powerful language. When you do, you'll find that your whole perspective and demeanor will change.

How powerful is your language? Start counting how often these words come up in your conversations and transform them into active words that generate opportunity. You'll soon see the positive difference it makes in your business, your life and your relationships.

Article #2

Why Do We Swear?

By JOHN M. GROHOL, PSYD
Founder & Editor-in-Chief

Why do people swear? Why does using a swear word make us feel better? How do we choose which word we use?

Luckily for you, the Association of Psychological Science's *Perspectives on Psychological Science* just published an article that answers these important scientific questions in an article by Timothy Jay (2009). If swear words hurt your eyes, you may want to stop reading now.

Jay notes that swear words (or taboo words, as he calls them) can include sexual references (*f**k*), those that are profane or blasphemous (*god**mn*), scatological or disgusting objects (*sh*t*), animal names (*pig, ass*), ethnic/racial/gender slurs (*f*g*), ancestral allusions (*bastard*), substandard vulgar terms and offensive slang. Taboo words can be mildly offensive to extremely offensive, and people will often use a more mild euphemism to replace a swear word when in mixed (or unknown) company.

How do we choose what word to use and when? We make choices about which word to use depending upon the company we're in, and what our relationship is to that company, as well as the social setting. We're more apt to use less offensive terms in mixed company or in settings where more offensive swear words might result in recrimination (such as work). For instance, people are more comfortable and are more likely to use

technical terms for sexual references in mixed crowds, and to reserve the taboo words for same sex crowds or with their sexual partner. Most people feel uncomfortable saying, “F**k” in a business or public crowd, instead falling back on less offensive words like, “D*mnit.”

As Jay notes, “Swearing is like using the horn on your car, which can be used to signify a number of emotions (e.g., anger, frustration, joy, surprise).”

Taboo words can be used for a variety of reasons, including to achieve a specific reaction from others. Swearing injects a direct, succinct emotional component into the discussion, usually in order to express frustration, anger or surprise (up to two-thirds of our swearing is for just such expressions). These insulting swears can be name calling or wishing someone harm, so it’s no wonder they are often a defining feature of hate speech, verbal abuse, sexual harassment and obscene phone calls.

Swearing is beneficial in ways that people may underestimate or take for granted. Swearing is often cathartic — it often frees us of the feelings of anger or frustration we hold and allows expression for them. It can also be a useful substitute to physical violence (who would rather be punched out than to withstand being sworn at?).

Swear words can also be used in a more positive manner, in the form of jokes and humor, sex talk, storytelling, self-deprecation or even social commentary. Imagine when you want to emphasize how great you feel something is, a swear word emphasizes the positive feelings you have for that object, situation, person or event (“This concert is f**king awesome!”). Sure, we could just say “This concert is awesome,” but the addition of the swear word emphasizes the emotional reaction we have toward it — and easily conveys that emotional reaction to others.

Virtually all people swear, and people swear pretty consistently throughout their lifetime — from the moment they can speak to the day they die. Swearing is almost a universal constant in most people’s lives. Research, according to Jay, has shown we swear on average from 0.3% to 0.7% of the time — a tiny but significant percentage of our overall speech (frequently-used personal pronouns occur at approximately 1.0% rate in speech). Swearing is more common than you might think. But personality research suggests that people who swear more, not surprisingly, score higher on traits such as extraversion, dominance, hostility and Type A personalities.

Swearing is not just for the uneducated or people of a lower socioeconomic class — it knows no social boundaries in its expression. Swearing is a natural part of human speech development. We learn which words are taboo and which words are not through our normal childhood development. We also learn that not all swear words are equal, as Jay notes — “*F**k you!* represents a greater level of anger than *crap!*” We then learn that we may be able to say a swear word in one social context, but not another.

Jay’s article was a bit of an eye-opener for me as well, as I didn’t know that swearing was really as commonplace as he notes, and I never much considered the beneficial effects of swearing. Jay calls on more psychological research to be done on this topic, and after reading his article, I’d have to agree.

Reference:

Jay, T. (2009). The utility and ubiquity of taboo words. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 4(2), 153-161.

ENVIRONMENTAL/HEALTH ISSUES

| Title | Author | Description |
|---|--------------------|---|
| Hot, Flat, and Crowded: Why We Need a Green Revolution—and How It Can Renew America | Thomas L. Friedman | Explores the decline of our planet because of global warming and overcrowding and offers solutions to the downward trend. Pulitzer Prize winning author. |
| Animal, Vegetable, Miracle | Barbara Kingsolver | One family's quest to "live off the land" in modern America |
| The Sixth Extinction: An Unnatural History | Elizabeth Kolbert | This author posits that our planet has begun our sixth mass die-off, and it's all our fault. |
| Salt Sugar Fat: How the Food Giants Hooked Us | Michael Moss | An investigative report links the rise in obesity with the rise of the processed foods industry |
| Any nonfiction book | Michael Pollan | Author asks interesting questions about food, where it comes from, how its history affects our lives, and how it becomes sustenance for our lives Titles: The Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals, In Defense of Food: An Eater's Manifesto, Cooked: A Natural History of Transformation |
| Fast Food Nation: The Dark Side of the All-American Meal | Eric Schlosser | An exploration of the history of fast food, the impact it has had on our lives, and the myths we should forget about it |
| The World Without Us | Alan Weisman | A simple concept of imagining the Earth without human beings offers an intriguing way to explore our impact on the planet |

SCIENCE / MEDICINE (Especially appealing for students who are science oriented or interested in the medical field)

| Title | Author | Description |
|--|-----------------------|---|
| Weed the People: The Future of Legal Marijuana in America | Bruce Barcott | What will the next several years bring in our country with this divisive issue? |
| Brain on Fire: My Month of Madness | Susannah Cahalan | A twenty-two-year-old reporter's memoir of suffering from a rare brain disease that opened research in the medical community |
| Surgeon!: A Year in the Life of an Inner-City Doctor | Dr. Richard Caleel | A must read for anyone interested in the medical profession |
| Stoned: A Doctor's Case for Medical Marijuana | Dr. David Casarett | An objective medical view of one of the most divisive topics in the country today |
| Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind | Dr. Yuval Noah Harari | How did our one species of people become the only one? |
| Do No Harm: Stories of Life, Death, and Brain Surgery | Dr. Henry Marsh | A neurosurgeon shares this memoir full of both doubts and fears as well as stories of particularly memorable cases |
| The Emperor of All Maladies | Siddhartha Mukherjee | The "biography" of cancer and its treatment for over a thousand years |
| What If? Serious Scientific Answers to Absurd Hypothetical Questions | Randall Munroe | Interesting questions—such as "What if everyone on earth jumped at the same time?"—answered by a former NASA roboticist |
| The Only Woman in the Room: Why Science Is Still a Boys' Club | Eileen Pollack | A creative writing professor who holds a bachelor of science in physics from Harvard reflects on her own academic experience in the quest to understand gender bias in the sciences |
| Any nonfiction book | Mary Roach | #1 best-selling author who asks questions we would rarely ask in a scientific way about our digestive system, ghosts, and dead bodies Titles: Gulp: Adventures on the Alimentary Canal; Spook: Science Tackles the Afterlife; Stiff: The Curious Lives of Human Cadavers |
| The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat and Other Clinical Tales | Oliver Sacks | Recounts the case histories of patients lost in the bizarre, apparently inescapable world of neurological disorders |
| The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks | Rebecca Skloot | The story of a poor Southern tobacco farmer's wife whose cells—taken without her knowledge—became the first "immortal cells" in history, still alive today and used in numerous experiments since her death over 60 years ago. |

TRUE CRIME

| Title | Author | Description |
|---|--------------------|--|
| Helter Skelter: The True Story of the Manson Murders | Vincent Bugliosi | Written by the lead prosecuting attorney, this book recounts the horrific crimes committed by Charles Manson and four of his followers |
| In Cold Blood | Truman Capote | The first nonfiction novel. Reconstructs the 1959 murder of a Kansas farm family and the investigation that led to the capture, trial, and execution of the killers, the story of the lives and deaths of these six people, the victims and the murderers. |
| Our Guys: The Glen Ridge Rape and the Secret Life of the Perfect Suburb | Bernard Lefkowitz | Account of 1989 rape of a mentally retarded girl by members of a NJ high school football team. Several parallels to like crimes in recent years. |
| Ghettocide: A True Story of Murder in America | Jill Leovy | A reporter who has spent decades in the Los Angeles area explores black-on-black violence and the reasons why it keeps happening |
| Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption | Bryan Stevenson | Set in Harper Lee's hometown of Monroeville, AL, this is the story of a black man convicted of murdering a white woman by his lawyer, an NYU law professor. This is an examination of capital punishment in America. |
| A Death in Texas: A Story of Race, Murder, and a Small Town's Struggle for Redemption | Dina Temple-Raston | Explores the aftermath of the 1998 killing of James Byrd, Jr., a black man who was chained and dragged along a country road by three white males. |

GENERAL NONFICTION

| Title | Author | Description |
|---|--------------------|---|
| He Wanted the Moon: The Madness and Medical Genius of Dr. Perry Baird, and His Daughter's Quest to Know Him | Mimi Baird | When a father goes missing, his daughter doesn't understand why until she receives a manuscript in which he claims to have been locked in a mental institution. This is both of their stories. |
| Power Plays: Politics, Football, and Other Blood Sports | John M. Barry | An examination of the causes and effects of the pursuit of power in the arenas of the media, politics, and even college football. Award winning and NYT Bestselling author. |
| The Dark Net: Inside the Digital Underworld | Jamie Bartlett | Director of the Center for the Analysis of Social Media at the British think tank Demos introduces you to the trolls, anarchists, perverts and drug dealers who seek freedom in the "darknet," a cyberspace sometimes said to be 500 times larger than Google |
| Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can't Stop Talking | Susan Cain | Real-life examples that could change the way we see quiet members of our society |
| Between the World and Me | Ta-Nehisi Coates | An exploration of racial inequality that Nobel laureate Toni Morrison calls "required reading" |
| Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America | Barbara Ehrenreich | One woman's story of attempting to survive on minimum wage |
| How Soccer Explains the World: An Unlikely Theory of Globalization | Franklin Foer | A surprising tour through the world of soccer, shining a spotlight on the clash of civilizations, the international economy, and just about everything in between. |
| The Battle of Versailles: The Night American Fashion Stumbled into the Spotlight and Made History | Robin Givhan | The story of one night in 1973 that changed the fashion world forever |
| Any nonfiction book | Malcolm Gladwell | #1 best-selling author explores dynamics of our world in new ways Titles: Blink: The Power of Thinking without Thinking; David and Goliath: Underdogs, Misfits, and the Art of Battling Giants; Outliers: The Story of Success; The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference |
| Future Crimes: Everything Is Connected, Everyone Is Vulnerable and What We Can Do About It | Marc Goodman | Because of technology, everyone knows everything about you and will use that information against you (and for themselves). |
| Beneath the Surface: Killer Whales, Sea World, and the Truth Beyond Blackfish | John Hargrove | A former senior orca trainer at Sea World relates his experience with these highly intelligent animals in captivity and ponders whether they should ever be held there |

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| Sisters in Law: How Sandra Day O'Connor and Ruth Bader Ginsburg Went to the Supreme Court and Changed the World | Linda Hirschman | A joint biography of the first two women on the United States Supreme Court |
| The Short and Tragic Life of Robert Peace | Jeff Hobbs | Written like a novel, this is the story of a young man from New Jersey, born into poverty, who, after graduating from Yale, returned home to become a drug dealer. |
| unSpun: Finding Facts in a World of Disinformation | Brooks Jackson and Kathleen Hall Jamieson | Guide to seeing through 21 st century media spin by the founders of FactCheck.org |
| The Pentagon's Brain: An Uncensored History of DARPA, America's Top-Secret Military Research Agency | Annie Jacobsen | History of the group responsible for most military technology that our country uses today |
| Any nonfiction book | Steven D. Levitt and Stephen J. Dubner | Intriguing, easily readable explorations of data that answer questions like "Why do drug dealers live with their moms?" and "Do parents really matter?" Titles: Freakonomics: A Rogue Economist Explores the Hidden Side of Everything, Superfreakonomics: Global Cooling, Patriotic Prostitutes, and Why Suicide Bombers Should Buy Life Insurance, Think Like a Freak |
| Lies My Teacher Told Me: Everything Your American History Textbook Got Wrong | James W. Loewen | One history professor's attempt to correct mistakes and misconceptions he found in several high school American history textbooks. Winner of American Book Award. |
| H is for Hawk | Helen Macdonald | Memoir of a woman who takes up falconry while dealing with grief |
| Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business | Neil Postman | An investigation of the television's effect on American culture |
| If the Oceans Were Ink: An Unlikely Friendship and a Journey to the Heart of the Quran | Carla Power | The author, a secular American, and her long-time friend, an imam, journey to discover the misunderstandings and hatreds in their two cultures |
| Dreamland: The True Tale of America's Opiate Epidemic | Sam Quinones | How the pain pill and heroin businesses have become the biggest problems in small-town America |
| The Overachievers: The Secret Lives of Driven Kids | Alexandra Robbins | An exploration of how our current educational climate of high-stakes testing and pressure to achieve affects students |
| Any nonfiction book | Jon Ronson | A writer that follows the story where it takes him finds and reports surprising information about how our modern world works Titles: So You've Been Publicly Shamed; Them: Adventures with Extremists; The Psychopath Test: A Journey Through the Madness Industry |
| The Prize: Who's in Charge of America's Schools? | Dale Russakoff | When Mark Zuckerberg, Chris Christie, and Oprah want to throw piles of money to help failing schools in New Jersey but it doesn't work out the way everyone thinks it will |
| Reefer Madness: Sex, Drugs, and Cheap Labor in the American Black Market | Eric Schlosser | An exploration of underground drug trade and its surprising parallels to big business |
| Terms of Service: Social Media and the Price of Constant Connection | Jacob Silverman | A book that is becoming increasingly more important in our world, especially to your generation |
| The Dogs Are Eating Them Now: Our War in Afghanistan | Graeme Smith | This war correspondent from Canada writes about his experience in Afghanistan and his changing feelings toward the recent war. |
| Ordinary Light: A memoir | Tracy K. Smith | A Pulitzer Prize-winning poet reflects on her life growing up as a young American black woman |
| Arms: The Culture and Credo of the Gun | A.J. Somerset | A history of and exploration of guns in human culture by a former soldier and journalist |
| ISIS: The State of Terror | Jessica Stern and J.M. Berger | Two of our country's leading terrorism experts describe the fundamentalist Islam group that functions more like a corporation than group of insurgents |
| A Hope in the Unseen: An American Odyssey from the Inner City to the Ivy League | Ron Suskind | A young man's journey from the slums of DC to Brown University |

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| One L: The Turbulent True Story of a First Year at Harvard Law School | Scott Turow | The author's experiences of being indoctrinated at America's most prestigious law school |
| How Music Got Free: The End of an Industry, the Turn of the Century, and the Patient Zero of Piracy | Steven Witt | A journalist explores the history of music piracy and its rise to the forefront of America as well as how it changed the way we listen to music |
| The Beauty Myth: How Images of Beauty Are Used Against Women | Naomi Wolf | A bestselling classic about the obsession with physical perfection |
| I Am Malala: The Girl Who Stood Up for Education and Was Shot by the Taliban | Malala Yousafzai and Christina Lamb | Memoir of Miss Upton's hero, a young Pakistani girl who was an activist for girls' education and became an enemy on the Taliban's hit list. |

HISTORICAL ACCOUNTS

| Title | Author | Description |
|---|--|--|
| Zealot: The Life and Times of Jesus of Nazareth | Reza Aslan | Detailed, thoroughly-researched biography that "challenges long-held assumptions" |
| Any historical account | John M. Barry | Best-selling author explores highly-charged incidents in American history Titles: Rising Tide: The Great Mississippi Flood of 1927 and How It Changed America; Roger Williams and the Creation of the American Soul: Church, State and the Birth of Liberty; The Great Influenza: The Story of the Deadliest Pandemic in History |
| A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier | Ishmael Baeh | One young man's experience as a child soldier during wars in Africa's Sierra Leone. |
| Red Notice: A True Story of High Finance, Murder, and One Man's Fight for Justice | Bill Browder | The biography of a Wall Street suit who takes his talents to Russia soon after the break-up of the Soviet Union, eventually becoming Vladimir Putin's number-one enemy |
| One Summer: America, 1927 | Bill Bryson | An eventful season that includes Babe Ruth, Al Capone, Charles Lindbergh, and Calvin Coolidge |
| The Billion-Dollar Spy: A True Story of Cold War Espionage and Betrayal | David E. Hoffman | True account of Cold War-era CIA operations and the penetration of Moscow |
| Is Paris Burning: How Paris Miraculously Escaped Adolf Hitler's Sentence of Death in August 1944 | Larry Collins and Dominique Lapiere | Dramatic story of the liberation of Paris. Exciting, emotionally charged history, impeccably researched and written |
| Columbine | Dave Cullen | 10 years after the tragic events in Littleton, Colorado, asks questions about not only the shooters and victims but also the culture that surrounded such an incident. |
| Empty Mansions: The Mysterious Life of Huguette Clark and the Spending of a Great American Fortune | Bill Dedman and Paul Clark Newell, Jr. | Account of a reclusive heiress that spans from the Gilded Age of the 1800s to the 21 st century and a mysterious history of her family and fortune |
| Man's Search for Meaning | Viktor E. Frankel | Psychiatrist's memoir of life in Nazi death camps and its lessons for spiritual survival. Has sold more than 10 million copies in twenty-four languages. Listed in a Library of Congress survey as among top ten books that made a difference in people's lives. |
| Any nonfiction account | Doris Kearns Goodwin | Pulitzer-prize winning author writes in-depth biographies of some of the most influential figures of 20 th century America Titles: The Bully Pulpit: Theodore Roosevelt, William Howard Taft, and the Golden Age of Journalism; Team of Rivals; The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln; No Ordinary Time: Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt; Lyndon Johnson and the American Dream; The Fitzgeralds and the Kennedys: An American Saga |
| Something Must Be Done About Prince Edward County: A Family, a Virginia Town, a Civil Rights Battle | Kristen Green | Government-regulated desegregation led one town to close down its public school system for five years and funnel its money into an all-white private school. The author, a product of that private school, explores both the history and repercussions of that decision. |
| Underground in Berlin: A Young Woman's Extraordinary Tale of Survival in the Heart of Nazi Germany | Marie Jalowicz Simon | Story of a woman who survives World War II because of the kindness of others |
| Profiles in Courage for Our Time | Caroline Kennedy | Continues the legacy her father began with the original Profiles in Courage. Includes the accounts of thirteen acts of modern political bravery. |

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| Any nonfiction book | Jon Krakauer | Best-selling author writes about harrowing contemporary journeys that test the limits of humanity Titles: <i>Missoula: Rape and the Justice System in a Small Town</i> ; <i>Into Thin Air: A Personal Account of the Mt. Everest Disaster</i> ; <i>Into the Wild</i> ; <i>Under the Banner of Heaven: A Story of Violent Faith</i> ; <i>Where Men Win Glory: The Odyssey of Pat Tillman</i> |
| Any nonfiction account | Erik Larson | Exciting stories and mysteries that border on true crime Titles: <i>The Devil in the White City: Murder, Magic, and Madness at the Fair that Changed America</i> ; <i>In the Garden of Beasts: Love, Terror, and an American Family in Hitler's Berlin</i> ; <i>Isaac's Storm: A Man, a Time, and the Deadliest Hurricane in History</i> ; <i>Thunderstruck</i> ; <i>Dead Wake: The Last Crossing of the Lusitania</i> |
| Any biography or fictional account | David McCullough | Riveting histories that don't feel like you're reading them from one of our country's most prolific historians Titles: <i>The Wright Brothers</i> ; <i>1776</i> ; <i>The Path Between the Seas: The Creation of the Panama Canal, 1870-1914</i> ; <i>The Great Bridge: The Epic Story of the Building of the Brooklyn Bridge</i> ; <i>John Adams</i> ; <i>The Johnstown Flood</i> ; <i>Mornings on Horseback: The Story of an Extraordinary Family, a Vanished Way of Life and the Unique Child Who Became Theodore Roosevelt</i> ; <i>Truman</i> ; <i>The Greater Story: Americans in Paris</i> ; <i>The Course of Human Events</i> |
| Any biography | Jon Meacham | Winner of the Pulitzer Prize and editor of <i>Newsweek</i> magazine writes award-winning, in-depth studies of some of the greatest men our country has ever known Titles: <i>American Lion: Andrew Jackson in the White House</i> ; <i>Thomas Jefferson: The Art of Power</i> ; <i>Franklin and Winston: An Intimate Portrait of an Epic Friendship</i> ; <i>American Gospel: God, the Founding Fathers, and the Making of a Nation</i> |
| <i>81 Days Below Zero: The Incredible Survival Story of a World War II Pilot in Alaska's Frozen Wilderness</i> | Brian Murphy | Yet another incredible story of survival during World War II |
| <i>Reading Lolita in Tehran</i> | Azar Nafisi | One bold teacher who shares forbidden Western literature with seven Iranian women |
| <i>The Jefferson Rule: Why We Think the Founding Fathers Have All the Answers</i> | David Sehat | A historical evaluation of invoking the founders of the U.S. and the Constitution to settle modern arguments |
| Any historical account or biography | Stacy Schiff | Exciting stories from history from a Pulitzer Prize winner Titles: <i>The Witches: Salem, 1692</i> ; <i>Cleopatra</i> ; <i>A Great Improvisation: Franklin, France, and the Birth of America</i> |
| <i>Black Earth: The Holocaust as History and Warning</i> | Timothy Snyder | Understanding Hitler's ideology and its effects on the Germans' beliefs and how they led to the atrocities against other human beings |
| <i>Nagasaki: Life After Nuclear War</i> | Susan Southard | Five survivors' stories that unfold after the bombings that helped end World War II |
| <i>The Professor and the Madman: A Tale of Murder, Insanity, and the Making of the Oxford English Dictionary</i> | Simon Winchester | The interesting account of a giant undertaking and the two men most responsible for it |