

Lasley
Language Comp. AP

NONFICTION PROJECT

Your assignment is to read selected works of nonfiction and write a paper comparing and contrasting them. It doesn't matter whether you read one, two, or three books, as long as your page count numbers more than seven hundred. You may choose books from the following list or propose an alternate selection (to be approved by the teacher). It is best to choose books that have similar themes or messages. I have grouped my selections, thematically. It is your responsibility to find the books from libraries or bookstores.

Group #1-reflections

Pilgrim at Tinker Creek by Annie Dillard - a meteorological journal of the mind. "I am no scientist," says Annie Dillard, "I am a wanderer with a background in theology and a penchant for quirky facts."

An American Childhood by Annie Dillard - Published in 1987, Dillard's autobiography chronicles her childhood and adolescence in Pittsburgh during the 1950's and 1960's.

Walden by Henry David Thoreau - a journal of his daily life and thoughts beside Walden Pond.

Voyage of the Beagle by Charles Darwin - an account of his travels and observations which led to his theory of evolution.

Autobiography by Benjamin Franklin - the author describes his love of books and his efforts as an adolescent to educate himself in his free time.

Gift From the Sea by Anne Morrow Lindbergh - Seeking to define the American woman, the author describes her own questions, philosophies and thoughts about life as she spends several solitary weeks on an isolated beach.

Wind, Sand and Stars by Antoine De Saint-Exupery - With concise, elegant imagery, Saint-Exupery expresses faith in the potential courage, nobility, and love of men, ranging from the tiller of the earth to the explorer of unknown skies.

Group #2-racism

Biko by Donald Woods - The life, imprisonment, and unsatisfactory inquest into the death of Biko, the charismatic Black South African leader. Woods, a newspaper editor, risks his life and career to expose the truth about Kiko's death.

Part of my Soul Went With Him by Winnie Mandela - Battered but unyielding, Winnie Mandela reveals brutal facts about apartheid through her personal account of life in South Africa.

All God's Children Need Traveling Shoes by Maya Angelou - The experience of finding a home where she has never lived before becomes the catalyst for insights about African and American blackness.

Never To Forget: The Jews of the Holocaust by Milton Meltzer - History of the extermination of six million Jews with many eyewitness accounts, maps, etc.

Smoke and Ashes by Bartara Rogasky - Begins with the roots of anti-semitism and then tells the entire story of the Holocaust; illustrated with eight photographs.

Why We Can't Wait by Martin Luther King, Jr. - a description of the fight of blacks for civil rights through the eyes of their greatest leader.

Eyes on the Prize by Juan Williams - The story of the American Civil Rights Movement from 1954-1965 with all the people and events featured.

Racism 101 by Nikki Giovanni - A collection of up-to-date essays on topics such as Malcolm X, campus racism, Black Literature, Toni Morrison, and her own personal experiences.

#3-Science, biology, and ecology

"Surely You're Joking, Mr. Feynman!" Adventures of a Curious Character by Richard P. Feynman - The outrageous exploits of the world's most outspoken nobel-prize winning scientist.

A Brief History of Time: From the Big Bang to Black Holes by Stephen W. Hawking - Written by the supernova of world physics, this provides current ideas about the cosmos. (Heavy stuff this!!)

The Riddle of the Dinosaur by John Wilford - A humorous and readable history of paleontology, including surprising new discoveries that have revolutionized dinosaur theory.

The Secret House: 24 Hours in the Strange and Unexpected World in Which We Spend Our Nights and Days by David Bodanis - The microbiological drama found within a house is explored from morning to late-evening activity.

Silent Spring by Rachel Carson - The first outcry against destruction of the environment continues to be an important and vital message.

The Double Helix by James Watson - This national bestseller, written by a scientist about scientists, is the inside story of one of the key discoveries of the century: the structure of DNA, the heredity molecule. Even more fascinating, perhaps, it is the superbly human tale of how a very unusual 23-year-old American saw his chance for scientific immortality and promptly set out to seize it.

Rosalind Franklin & DNA by Anne Sayre - The first full account of Rosalind Franklin's role in the discovery of the double-helix structure of DNA. This true story of a female scientist's efforts in the field of biochemistry should be required reading for all aspiring scientists--especially women. An excellent book to read after The Double Helix.

The Dragons of Eden/Speculations on the Evolution of Human Intelligence by Carl Sagan (yes, the dude on TV!)- In this Pulitzer Prize winning novel, Dr. Sagan offers his vivid and startling insight into the brain of man and beast, the origin of human intelligence, the function of man's most haunting legends--and their amazing links to recent discoveries. This one comes highly recommended by everyone I talked too!!

The Year of the Gorilla by George B. Schaller - The story of two years of travel and exploration in East and Central Africa, and of a unique study of the mountain gorilla, a species in danger of becoming extinct. As a behaviorist, anthropologist, and naturalist, Schaller gives a vivid picture of an aspect of Africa that may well be doomed, and carries the feel of remote adventure clearly.

The Naked Ape by Desmond Morris - In this controversial classic of man's origins, Zoologist Morris examines sex, child-rearing, exploratory habits, fighting, feeding, and much more to establish man's surprising bonds to the animal kingdom.

The Lives of the Cell by Lewis Thomas—world famous book on biology. Ask a science teacher about this one

Group #4-WWII, the bomb, and the Japanese

Hiroshima by John Hersey - using the experiences of six victims of the first atomic bombs, Hersey created a classic work.

Enola Gay by Gordon Thomas - the story of the crew who dropped the first atomic bomb

Day One: Before Hiroshima and After by Peter Wyden - The race to develop the atomic bomb and the aftermath of its first use are covered in this account of the birth of the atomic age

Profiles in Courage by John F. Kennedy - Tales of bravery and daring in WWII.

Farewell to Manzanar by Jeanne Wakatuski and James Houston - Evacuees begin to arrive at Manzanar, the first comp in Owens Valley on March 25, 1942, thus separating these Japanese-Americans from their homes and communities for the duration of WWII.

The Making of the Atomic Bomb by Richard Rhodes - an excellent Pulitzer Prize winning account of the history of the atomic bomb.

Group #5-The diversity of America

In Cold Blood by Truman Capote - the story of a cold-blooded unrepentant murderer and his victims.

Blue Highways: A Journey into America by William Least Heat Moon - Traveling miles along the small backroads of the United States allows the author to introduce a series of diverse and unique Americans.

Common Ground: A Turbulent Decade in the Lives of Three American Families by Anthony Lukas - A remarkable, intensive analysis of the lives of three families - one black, one Irish, and one Yankee - who clash in the violent climate of prejudice and racism that erupted in the 1968 Boston school integration crisis.

Adventures in the Screen Trade by William Goldman - A witty, incisive, and personal view of moviemaking.

Surgeon! A Year in the Life of an Inner City Doctor by Dr. Richard T. Caleel - The true story of Dr. Caleel's first twelve months in the surgical department of a hospital in the heart of Chicago's slums. This is a harrowing look at the life of a ghetto surgeon--a glimpse into a world riddled by disease, ravaged by ignorance, yet dominated by some of the bravest characters you will ever meet. Above all, this is a human story of a doctor and his patients that offers a rare picture of the costs and rewards of a medical career. A must read if you plan to pursue a career in medicine.

Travels with Charley by John Steinbeck - Published in 1962, this is an account of Steinbeck's trip across the United States in the company of an elderly poodle.

Barrio Boy by Ernesto Galarza - The story of a Mexican boy who make the journey from his mountain village to the barrio of Sacramento.

Woody Guthrie: A Life by Joe Klein - A celebration of an American folk hero who was haunted by family tragedy, misery, and illness.

The Autobiography of Malcolm X by Malcolm X - An important document of black history, this is Malcolm X's revealing personal account of life in the ghetto, in prison, and as a black Muslim.

Hunger for Memory by Richard Rodriguez - The author describes his experience as a Mexican-American growing up in the Sacramento of the 1950's.

Murphy's Boy by Torey Hayden - A special education teacher who writes of her career experiences and recounts the story of a teenage boy who has been silent for years.

Nobody Nowhere by Donna Williams - The story of the life of an autistic person.

Girl, Interrupted by Susanna Kayson - Kayson's account of being institutionalized in a psychiatric hospital encourages readers to question the narrow definitions of "normal behavior".

The American Language by H.L. Mencken

Group #6-a woman's struggle

The Dream of Water by Kyoko Mori - A personal journey of discovery that is also an exploration of national difference, this autobiography explores intimate emotions that reveal profound cultural truths.

I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings by Maya Angelou - A dazzling and graceful portrait of the childhood and adolescence of a black woman. OR The Heart of the Woman

Emma Goldman: An Intimate Life by Alice Wexler - A personal and public account of an immigrant anarchist and labor agitator.

The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood among Ghosts by Maxine Hong Kingston - The Chinese-American experience is passionately portrayed by a young woman who grew up torn between American life in modern San Francisco and the ancient legends, traditions, and folk beliefs of her Chinese heritage

In the Beginning by Irina Ratushinskaya - A poignant account of a young Russian poet's life in a society retarded by repression and confinement; her life as a young woman before and after her imprisonment in a Soviet labor camp.

Life and Death in Shanghai by Nien Cheng - A haunting, beautifully written account of one very patriotic, civilized, and stoic woman's endurance through the Chinese Revolution.

Two Under the Sun by Jon and Rumer Godden - Published in 1966, this memoir is the work of sisters who share their experience of growing up in colonial India.

Out of Africa by Isak Dinesen - In lyrical prose, Dinesen gives and autobiographical account of her life from 1914 to 1931 when she managed a coffee plantation in Kenya. She recounts her profound love for the land, her affection for the fading African culture, and her own personal highs and lows.

Group #7-Modern war

Chickenhawk by Robert Mason - a vivid and devastating account of what the author, a helicopter pilot, and thousands of other men and women went through during the Vietnam War.

Nam by Mark Baker - The author interviewed 150 Vietnam veterans and compiled their stories into this moving text.

On Aggression by Konrad Lorenz - A thought-provoking survey of "the fighting instinct in beast and man which is directed against members of the same species."

Shrapnel in the Heart by Laura Palmer - Uses letters and narrative to build an effective and affecting account of the Vietnam conflict.

Dear America: Letters Home from Vietnam - A vivid account of the Vietnam conflict as experienced by the men and women who were there.

Vietnam by Mary McCarthy - a Pulitzer Prize winning narrative on Vietnam.

Group #8-Native Americans

Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee: An Indian History of the American West by Dee Brown - a narrative of the white man's conquest of the American land as the Indian victims experienced it.

Black Elk Speaks by John G. Neihardt - This fascinating account of a Native American Holy Man's interpretations of life, history, and religion has not only become a modern religious/cultural classic, but has also served as a valuable source of information for young Native Americans searching for their roots.

A Century of Dishonor by Helen Hunt Jackson - the devastating account of the conquering of California during the 19th century

The Way to Rainy Mountain by Scott Momaday - Recalls the journey of the Kiowa Indians over 300 years ago. The beautiful book is a reflection in Native art and literature of that historical migration.

Group #9- politics

Blind Ambition by John Dean - The dramatic account of John Dean's, counselor to President Nixon, years in the White House and the truth behind Watergate.

The United States of Ambition by Alan Ehrenhalt - An overview of modern politics and how the pursuit of power has soured democracy.

Who Will Tell the People by William Greider - Exposes corruption and betrayal in a thorough overview of modern democracy.

Free Speech for Me - But Not for Thee by Nat Heatoff - The authority on free speech in a lively discussion of the vulnerability and importance of it.

The Years of Lyndon Johnson; Means of Ascent by Robert A. Caro - The gripping biography of an American president as he rose to power and prepared himself to stay there.

The Making of a President by Theodore White

Abraham Lincoln; The Prairie Years by Carl Sandburg - This first part of Sandburg's work was published in two volumes in 1926. For Sandburg, Lincoln was the archetypal figure of American democracy.

The Prince by Niccolo Machiavelli - Published 1513 as a tribute to Cosimo de Medici, the treatise tells how to acquire power, create a state, and then keep it. Although it was genuinely intended as a guide, Machiavelli's concept that politics has its own rules proved to be so shocking that Machiavellian came to a synonym for political maneuvers of cunning and duplicity.

Group #10-world history

A Distant Mirror-The Clamitous 14th Century by Barbara W. Tuchman - From one of America's most distinguished and widely read historians, a book that recaptures in "a distant mirror"--distant in time but with all the detail and perspective of a true reflection--the Europe of the 14th century, when the whole world seemed to be spinning to its doom, and yet when our modern world was being born.

A History of the English Speaking Peoples by Winston Churchill--There are four volumes in this famous historical account of the

origins of Britain and the history of her people up to World War II. (You need only to read *ONE* volume of your choice)

Mary, Queen of Scots by Antonia Frasier - A detailed, compelling biography of the daughter of James V of Scotland and mother of James I of England and VI of Scotland. Mary's life (1542-1587) was filled with intrigue and heartbreak.

Echoes of Greece by Edith Hamilton - The author seeks to show how the Periclean age (5th century B.C. Athens) produced some of the greatest thinkers of all time. Her style is readable and compelling.

Shakespeare Alive! by Joseph Papp - A long-time stage director of New York's "Shakespeare in the Park" presents a cogent and entertaining account of the social history of the Elizabethan period.

Conquest of Mexico by William Prescott - Prescott, after losing most of his sight, devoted himself to being an historian. Published in 1847, this still stands as a definitive history.

Speak, Memory by Vladimir Vladimirovich - The story of famous this Russian author, is an elegant and rich evocation of an exciting life during the 1920s and 1930s in Russia and Europe.

Group #11 - new frontiers

The Ox-Bow Incident by Walter Van Tilburg Clark - Clark, a Nevada author, writes an intense study of mob justice in the Old West.

All But the Waltz by Mary Clearman Blew - Blew chronicles her family's struggle for survival on the plains of Montana. She reaches for connections between her personal life and the history of the Big Sky Country.

The Road from Coorain by Jill Conway - This beautifully written narrative tells of Conway's girlhood on an isolated sheep farm in Australia as well as of her efforts to gain an education. Conway, an ambitious young woman facing a constrained female destiny, eventually becomes president of Smith College.

This House of Sky by Ivan Doig - Doig's autobiography brings to life his upbringing by his father and maternal grandmother in the sheep country near White Sulphur Springs, Montana. His life was formed among the shepherders and characteristic of small-town saloons and valley ranches as he wandered beside his restless father.

AMERICAN HISTORY

Shiloh by Shelby Foote- The first of a trilogy of books on the American Civil War. This book is considered by critics to not only be a piece of first-rate history, but also a marvelous work of literature.

See attached list for additional choices on this topic.

WRITING THE PAPER

Part 1: A definition of nonfiction. Include a summary of your own views on the place and worth of nonfiction.

Part 2: Brief summaries of the books you read.

Part 3: Differences

Part 4: Similarities

Part 5: Conclusion; make a statement of relevancy; explain how the knowledge gained from reading these books relates to you or to your world; try to leave the reader with a profound thought or idea to play with...DO NOT WRITE, "I liked them a lot."

Sample points to compare/contrast (focus on two or three):

- setting
- theme
- message
- moral
- voice
- style
- intended audience
- organization
- point of view

Dear Parents:

This nonfiction book list has been taken from the AP nonfiction reading list; Pulitzer Prize nonfiction list; and recommendations from other teachers and librarians. Please approve your son's or daughter's reading choices and sign below.

I approve of the books selected _____