

AP English Language and Composition
David and Goliath by Malcolm Gladwell - Summer Reading Assignment

Introduction:

Malcolm Gladwell writes a nonfiction book that challenges our assumptions about power and weakness as well as disadvantages and advantages in life. As you read this book, you will also be introduced to the central AP English Language and Composition ideas of **rhetorical analysis** and **argumentation** through Gladwell's careful and consideration of the text of the Bible and subsequent walk through concepts from American and international history. Pay particular attention to how each claim Gladwell makes is backed by logical reasoning, anecdotal evidence, and/or science and how he maintains a solid line of reasoning by using good transitions and callbacks to previous points. All of these are AP skills you'll be practicing.

Assignment 1 (70 points):

★ **While you read, think critically about the following questions and provide well reasoned answers that are supported by specific examples from the text. Answers must be handwritten. Use of AI or plagiarism of other students', printed, or online work will result in a ZERO on this assignment.**

1. In the introduction, what are 3 specific pieces of evidence Gladwell uses to support the claim that David was NOT at a disadvantage against Goliath?

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

2. What is one counter argument you could offer to the evidence he presented in question 1? In other words, identify a weakness in his argument.

3. **A.** In part 1, Ch1 subpart 2: What indicates that an underdog will win victory in an armed conflict, according to Ivan Arreguin-Toft? **B.** Draw conclusions: How have we seen this concept play out in American history?

a. _____

b. _____

4. Fill in the Boxes: **A.** Identify the “Davids” in the anecdotes that Gladwell uses as examples in Part 1, chapter 1 relating to basketball **B.** and in ch1 subpart 2 relating to a historic desert battle. What made each of them successful over the “Goliaths?” Use specific examples from the text to explain how exactly these “Davids” achieved success.

	“David” leader name	Strategy/reason for success over “Goliaths”
A.		
B.		

5. According to Gladwell, why don’t all “Davids” take up the same types of strategies as shown by the “Davids” of this chapter?

6. In Ch 2, subpart 3-4, Gladwell discusses the concept of “more is not necessarily better” – explain this concept by paraphrasing Gladwell’s example of the man from Hollywood’s experience and opinion.

7. Compare Gladwell’s ideas about class sizes in Chapter 2 to your school experiences in school so far.
 a. Which class sizes have you felt that you learned more in? Why?

- b. Reflect on your learning style - what environment makes you feel (or would make you feel) most comfortable in the classroom?

8. Pick one story from chapter 3 (Impressionists or Sacks) and determine how Gladwell's purpose is achieved through that anecdote and explanation. Use details from the text to support your analysis of Gladwell's explanation.

9. Gladwell says in Ch 7, subpart 3, "When people in authority want the rest of us to behave, it matters – first and foremost – how *they* behave." Reflect: how do people in authority you respect or obey behave?

10. Gladwell goes on to describe the principle of legitimacy" as being based on what **three** things in chapter 7 subpart 3?

11. Fill in the Boxes: Each part of the book begins with a scripture reference. Name the scriptures referenced the the beginning of Part 2 and Part 3 as introductions (part 1 has been done as an example, some details have been removed so as not to reveal the answers to earlier questions.) Then explain how you think that scripture relates to different key concepts in each part of the book, making reference to the key examples of those chapters.

Part:	Scripture reference:	How this/these verse(s) apply to the key concept of each part (each part has a different key concept.)
1.	Proverbs 13:7	This verse considers the concept of advantages and disadvantages as the title suggests. This verse, while potentially initially confusing, gradually comes clear as a reference to the idea that people traditionally thought of as advantaged may actually be disadvantaged in some way (ie the Hollywood

		man and parenting his children) and those who seem disadvantaged (like Redwood City) actually end up with an advantage. It also works well with the concept presented in Caroline Sacks' story, who thought that the supposedly advantaged choice was better than the other and found out she'd have potentially been better off choosing the other option. So, in a sense, the rich are really poor in some nonmaterial way while the poor have some richness comparatively, again not in finances but in hard work, experience, determination, innovation, etc.
2.		
3.		

(teacher use) ____/70

Assignment 2:

Thoughtfully respond to the following questions (22 points)

Usually authors will finish a book with an overarching, concluding big-picture commentary. Gladwell does NOT do this. Keeping in mind the current final several paragraphs of the Afterword (before the footnotes and acknowledgements), write an alternate ending to this book that offers a summary of his main points and a final "big picture" ending – use your own ideas and words. Write 2-3 paragraphs.

Attach extra pages if your ending requires more space

(teacher use) ____/30

The following rubric will be used to assess each of your answers:

	5 - Exemplary	4 - Proficient	3- Emerging	2 - Needs improvement	0 - 1 Unsatisfactory
Writing style & Key Concepts	The writing style is mature, logical, and clear. All parts of the question are answered thoughtfully and fully. The response clearly indicates that the student has read and reflected on each of the key ideas of the passage(s) in question. The concepts are understood fully.	The writing style is mature though it may once or twice slip in clarity or logic. All parts of the question are answered somewhat thoughtfully and fully. The response shows the student mostly understands the key ideas of the passage(s) in question.	The writing style is somewhat mature and 3-4 slips in clarity or logic. All parts of the question are attempted to be answered. The response shows the student has a passable understanding of the key ideas of the passage(s) in question.	The writing style lacks maturity with 5+ slips in clarity or logic. Part of the question may have been missed or incomplete. The response shows that the student has little understanding of the key ideas of the passage(s) in question.	The response does not adequately address all parts of the question and is overly simplistic. The response may indicate that the student did not read or misunderstood the text.
Spelling and grammar	The work contains no spelling or grammatical errors that interfere with the clarity of the work. The work is written at an age appropriate level or higher.	The work contains 1-2 spelling or grammatical errors, or the writing is at times basic in sentence structure. The lack of proofreading or writing mastery detracts somewhat from the clarity of the work, but the writer's overall meaning is still clear.	The work contains 3-4 spelling or grammatical errors, or the work is written with mostly simple sentence structure. The lack of proofreading or writing mastery moderately interferes with the clarity of the work.	The work contains 5 or more spelling or grammatical errors or the work is written below the appropriate level. The lack of proofreading or writing mastery significantly interferes with the clarity of the work.	The work contains 5 or more grammar or spelling errors AND The lack of proofreading or writing mastery completely interferes with the clarity of the work.
(Assignment 2 answer only; total added to above criteria)	20 points - The alternate ending offers a complete summary of the specific points and a big picture ending that is effective and thoughtful.	15 The alternate ending offers a partial summary of the specific points of the book but is slightly vague. The big picture ending is nevertheless effective and thoughtful.	10 the alternate ending misses several key points in the summary, is moderately vague, and/or the ending lacks impact.	5 The alternate ending indicates a lack of understanding of the key points of the book and/or is overly vague.	0 points - The response does not offer a summary of the key ideas or does not have a big picture idea as the ending