



Summer Assignment

AP English Language and Composition
Mr. Spiegel–2026-27

You have one task for the summer: Read and study *Blink* by Malcolm Gladwell (ISBN 9780316010665 if you want to buy your own copy).

Task

Read and study *Blink*. There will be an assessment on it after the first two weeks of the school year. Feel free to annotate and mark up your book as much as you wish. There will be references to content and ideas found in *Blink* throughout the year.

Blink is an investigation into the ways by which humans interpret their environments and make decisions. Approximately half of the book deals with the concept of “thin-slicing”; when we *thin-slice*, we make extremely quick judgments based on very small samples of information and perception. Gladwell shows that we often make some of our best decisions when making “thin-slice” decisions.

The rest of the book shows how “thin-slicing” can be a bad thing. By overriding reason and ability to perceive, we sometimes make visceral judgments that, as Gladwell reveals very well, can lead to terrible consequences.

Student: Wait, Gladwell shows that “thin-slicing” is both good and bad? Is it possible? What is the answer? Teacher: Yes, both. There is no answer.

Specific to the purposes of the course, *Blink* represents an extended, sophisticated *argument*. Argumentation is central to this course: We investigate the ways writers use *rhetoric* to *persuade* readers.

What we are supposed to believe is less important than the ability to recognize devices that shape understanding. Learn to recognize and explain how an argument is developed and you win the big prize!

Questions?

Contact Mr. Spiegel
daniel.spiegel@hallco.org