A.P. Language Summer Reading Study Guide

Outliers: The Story of Success
By Malcolm Gladwell

Directions – As you read each chapter, highlight information in the book that relates to or helps to answer each question. Make sure you write your responses here on the study guide as well! The study guide notes will be checked during the first week of school & there will be an assessment of your reading within the first two weeks of school. Enjoy!

Chapter One: The Matthew Effect

What is the SYSTEM made of?

How does the system work or not work to your benefit?

What is the author’s viewpoint with The Story of Success?

Are personal qualities the sole reason one becomes an outlier? Explain

Gladwell’s Keys to Success

- Beneficiaries of hidden advantages
- Extraordinary opportunities
- Cultural legacies

What is the phenomenon of “relative age” and why is this significant in being an outlier?

How does “self-fulfilling prophecy” play a role in “relative age”?

Describe “ability grouping” and how it compares or contrasts to “relative age”.

Describe “accumulative advantage”.

What is the consequence of “prematurely writing people off as failures”?

Are passion, talent and hard work the only three ingredients of success?

Chapter Two: The 10,000-Hour Rule

What is the significance of the 10,000-Hour Rule?
Where in your life can you implement the 10,000-Hour Rule?

Gladwell brings up the question of “is there such a thing as innate talent”? What do you believe with this concept? Where if your life have you thought about this and how it may have been a factor in your own success?

\[ \text{Achievement} = \text{Talent} + \text{Preparation} \]

Explain “naturals” vs. “grinds”

Is 10,000 hours really the magic number of greatness?

What is the significance of “Practice isn’t the thing you do once you’re good. It’s the thing you do that makes you good.”

What can come in the way (result) of practice?

What type of person would be able to fulfill these practice requirements?

What does Malcolm Gladwell describe as a big part of Bill Joy’s brilliance?
- Bill Joy
- The Beatles
- Bill Gates

Where does opportunity play into the 10,000-Hour rule?

What is a paradigm?

Can your paradigm change? Explain

In all of Malcolm Gladwell’s research and findings what has he found?

**Chapter Three: The Trouble with Geniuses, Part 1**

Where does the 10,000-hour rule come through in chapter three?

“To have a high IQ, you tend to specialize, think deep thoughts.” Do you agree with this statement? Explain

Do you know your IQ? How significant is this number to you?

Who are the Termites?

How did Lewis Terman act as a coach?

“There is nothing about an individual as important as his IQ, except possibly his morals.” Terman
What are your morals and how are they significant to your own success and livelihood?

Gladwell says that many people and companies in our society “are convinced that those at the very top of the IQ scale have the greatest potential.” Do you agree with this statement? Explain.

Does this statement negate the significance of chapter one and two? Explain.

What is the significance of a threshold and how does this relate to IQ exams?

Describe the importance of Affirmative Action at the University of Michigan.

What do you feel have been the results of this?

What is the significance of test scores vs. quality of student? How does this relate to your own test-taking ability?

What is the difference between divergence & convergence testing? Do you believe one is more significant than the other?

What attributes make an individual gifted?

Chapter Four: The Trouble with Geniuses, Part 2

How can you relate to Chris’ original feelings at Reed College?

What are some of the benefits of being at an institution that has counseling and mentoring?

What events led Chris Langan to believe that he could do without the higher education system?

What was a turning point in Langans’ life?

Does Langan have Harvard backwards as Gladwell believes?

What are the similarities and differences between Langan and Oppenheimer?

What happens with Langan and his Calculus professor at Montana State? Why is this event significant in the course of Langan’s live?

What type of intelligence is different from what IQ measures? What is the significance of it when discussing Langan?
Is IQ solely a measure of innate ability?

Describe Annette Lareau’s study

Explain “concerted cultivation” and how does this differ from “accomplishment of natural growth”?

What did Langan learn from Jack Langan?

What is your family background and how does it fit to your level of what Annette Lareau refers to as “entitlement”? How has this shaped you?

When in your life have you had to make it on your own? How did this shape who you are today?

Chapter Five: The Three Lessons of Joe Flom

What is he a product of?

What was significant in his environment?

What were Joe Flom’s opportunities?

Do you agree that “acceptability is made up of the sum of its parts”?

What does Gladwell mean when he says “buried in that setback was a golden opportunity”?

What is a proxy fight?

What made Joe Flom’s will to win?

Explain how starting out with adversity can sometimes end up as opportunity? Have you had an experience similar to this in your life? How does this either compare or contrast to Flom’s experience?

Maurice Janklow & Mort Janklow - Why did Maurice Janklow struggle as a lawyer?
Did the Depression affect your family? Find out!! ASK! If so, how did this have an effect on your upbringing?

What are the benefits of being born during the 1930s? How did these benefits affect Mort Janklow?

How does the Janklows story relate to Joe Floms?

“It is not how much money we make that ultimately makes us happy between nine and five. It’s whether our work fulfills us” What does this quote mean to you?

When you consider your major or career interests, where does this quote fit in?

“How hard work is a prison sentence only if it does not have meaning.” How does this relate to the jobs you have had in your life? How does this quote affect your idea of what your profession will be like after college?

What are some of the life lessons that can be learned from the early immigrants to America? How can you relate these to your current goals and aspirations? What can we learn?

What is the significance of a “demographic trough”?

What do the Katzes, the Rosens, the Liptons, the Watchtells and the Floms all have in common?

**Chapter Six: Harlan, Kentucky**

What is the “culture of honor” that takes place in throughout the Appalachian Mountains?

Herdsman vs. Growing Crops - Why is violence required throughout Harlan Kentucky?

This chapter speaks of cultural legacies. What similarities do you see between your parents and you, your grandparents and you, etc? What is the significance of these?
Chapter Seven: The Ethnic Theory of Plane Crashes

Through reading the story of the Guam plane crash and Suren Ratwatte’s experience with his own risky flights (Helsinki) what was the most significant event in his success? Explain.

When have you found yourself in a complicated situation where communication was the key to your own success?

How significant are problem solving skills throughout this chapter? Explain

“Each of us has his or her own distinct personality. But overlaid on top of that are tendencies and assumptions and reflexes handed down to us by the history of the community we grew up in, and those differences are extraordinarily specific.” This is a theme that travels throughout Outliers. Describe how this quote interacts with your own individuality.

What makes you distinct? How does this differ from other aspects of you?

The willingness to change is crucial in the restructuring of Korean Air. How does Gladwell describe this and how does this compare to a time when you made a change in your own life? What effect has this change had on your current situation and was this change internal or external?

Chapter Eight: Rice Paddies and Math Tests

How are you with math courses? While reading this section of the book, how did you feel about your own math success(s) and/or failure(s)? Did your original perception or your own abilities change? Explain.

How do the work hours of a wet-rice farmer in Asia compare to other farmers across the world?
How does the occupation of a wet-rice farmer relate to chapter two: 10,000-hour rule?

Chapter Nine: Marita’s Bargain

What is special about the KIPP program?

What are the major differences between Asian and US notions in regards to work ethic as it relates to education in the early 19th century?

What is the significance of summer vacation for students in elementary school?

When Corcoran is describing how he works with his mathematics class at KIPP and is “making math meaningful”, how does this change your perception of math in terms of your own ability and experiences in the classroom?

In this chapter Gladwell explains how he has found “success follows a predictable course”, what has this course been as it relates to Marita?

Opportunity + Strength + Presence of Mind = Success

What do you think of this formula?