

AP Language Summer Reading Assignment

For the AP Language Summer Reading Assignment, you need to listen to season one of the podcast *Serial*. It is free to download, and you can access it a few different ways.

1. Go to www.serialpodcast.org
2. Download from iTunes podcasts
3. Download from Googleplay

Here is a description of the story from the website:

SEASON ONE

On January 13, 1999, a girl named Hae Min Lee, a senior at Woodlawn High School in Baltimore County, Maryland, disappeared. A month later, her body turned up in a city park. She'd been strangled. Her 17-year-old ex-boyfriend, Adnan Syed, was arrested for the crime, and within a year, he was convicted and sentenced to spend the rest of his life in prison. The case against him was largely based on the story of one witness, Adnan's friend Jay, who testified that he helped Adnan bury Hae's body. But Adnan has always maintained he had nothing to do with Hae's death. Some people believe he's telling the truth. Many others don't.

Sarah Koenig, who hosts *Serial*, first learned about this case more than a year ago. In the months since, she's been sorting through box after box (after box) of legal documents and investigators' notes, listening to trial testimony and police interrogations, and talking to everyone she can find who remembers what happened between Adnan Syed and Hae Min Lee fifteen years ago. What she realized is that the trial covered up a far more complicated story, which neither the jury nor the public got to hear. The high school scene, the shifting statements to police, the prejudices, the sketchy alibis, the scant forensic evidence - all of it leads back to the most basic questions: How can you know a person's character? How can you tell what they're capable of? In Season One of *Serial*, she looks for answers.

You will also need to fill out the following listening logs as you listen to all 12 episodes. For many of the questions, you will need to cite specific evidence. Your citation should include the date you listened to the podcast, as well as the timestamp where it can be found in the particular episode. Example (5-31-15/25:56).

Note that there is some strong language, and reference to drug use by some of the people in the story. If you or a parent find this objectionable, then you may read *1984* by George Orwell.

Now that you've logged your evidence, comment on Koenig's objectivity in this episode. Is she more biased or less? How does the evidence you've logged in the previous question support your belief of her objectivity? Be sure to use this evidence to support your viewpoint.

What implications does the evidence presented in the podcast do to help or hurt Adnan's case?

Describe your feelings at the end of the episode. Have your viewpoints on Adnan's innocence or guilt changed since the beginning of the episode? What evidence from the episode will you use to support your viewpoint?

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Serial Reflection Log

Name: _____

Episode: _____

Describe your feelings about the case at the beginning of the episode. Do you believe that Adnan is innocent or guilty? What biases (both personal and societal) might play into your belief of his guilt or innocence? Explain.

Good journalists feel compelled to be as objective as possible when presenting the facts of the story. Comment on the overall objectivity of the information presented in the episode. Where does it seem objective, and where does it not?

As the episode continues, Sarah Koenig makes personal observations about evidence and her investigative process. Find evidence where does she seem objective in her viewpoint of Adnan's case, and where does she seem biased? Log specific evidence with timestamps of where they can be found in the podcast.

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