Rantoul Township High School

Incoming Honors Freshman English

Summer Reading Assignment 2014

Welcome to Honors English I. This class is meant to be your introduction to reading, writing and analytical skills that will help prepare you for success throughout high school and into college. To ensure that your brains will remain fresh and engaged during the summer break, I am asking you to make a selection from the book list on this assignment sheet. While reading your book, you are asked to complete a dialectical journal to record your responses to the novel.

The Assignment: Part I

1. Select and read **one** book from the book list.
2. Complete an interactive reader’s log including **ten** entries

What should the reader’s log contain?

You will select ten quotations/passages from the text that reflect the entire work. Divide the number of pages in your book by ten and use that as a guide for selection quotations evenly from the entire text. Your quotation selections should be passages that **enrage you, intrigue you, engage you, or cause you to wonder**.

For each of the ten quotations, you will write a response. Responses should be 100-150 words for each quotation and should address issues and purpose, not simply plot summary.

Some questions to consider when crafting your responses:

* What is the writer’s purpose? Is it effectively achieved? Why or why not?
* What use of language is especially effective? What purpose does it serve?
* How does this quotation connect to the plot/purpose of the book as a whole?
* Why are the characters doing/saying what they are? What does it reveal about those characters?
* What use of conflict is especially effective?

Grading Criteria

This assignment will be a major grade within the first week of the fall semester. Additionally, students who do not complete the summer reading assignment will not be allowed to remain in Honors English. You will be assessed on the following criteria:

* The assignment is complete (10 entries) including both quotation and response.
* The quotation selections represent the work as a whole and clearly indicate understanding of the work as a whole.
* The responses demonstrate thorough and insightful comments.
* The writing demonstrates stylistic maturity with effective command of as well as wide range of the elements of writing and organization.
* Journals may be typed or handwritten. If your journal is handwritten, it must be neat and free of errors.
* Page numbers of the quotes/excerpts must be identified (as in the model below).

Sample Entry (From *The Devil’s Highway* by Luis Alberto Urrea)

Chapter 1 “The Rules of the Game”

“Five men stumbled out of the mountain pass so sun struck they didn’t know their own names, couldn’t remember where they’d come from, had forgotten how long they’d been lost. One of them wandered back up a peak. One of them was barefoot. They were burned nearly black, their lips huge and cracking, what paltry drool still available to them spuming from their mouths in a salty foam as they walked. Their eyes were cloudy with dust, almost too dry to blink up a tear.” (3)

Response:

Urrea’s use of imagery to begin his book startles me into wondering what horrible thing could have happened to these people. The first sentence with the series of descriptions of these lost souls is gripping in its simplicity. Men who are unable to “blink up a tear” who are “burned nearly black” with “lips huge and cracking” pulled me immediately into their mystery. What could have happened to cause such harm to these people? The title of the book foreshadows terrible things with “devil” in the title, so I’m immediately curious to find out how all of the opening events tie together. I didn’t expect a nonfiction book to be written with such an intense, almost poetic style. I have no doubt from the beginning traveling “The Devil’s Highway” could not be a happy journey. (135 words)

What if I need help on the assignment?

If you have any questions over the summer, feel free to email me: [ryan.kerr@rths.k12.il.us](mailto:ryan.kerr@rths.k12.il.us) or [ryankerr@students.rths.k12.il.us](mailto:ryankerr@students.rths.k12.il.us).

Due Date

This assignment will be due **on the first day of class**! You must arrive with your projects completed. No ifs, ands or buts!

Book List

Here are some suggestions of books that would be suitable for your summer reading project. Use this list as a guide. You may select a book not on this list as long as it is of equivalent difficulty and merit. Please confirm any alternate choices with me via email ([ryan.kerr@rths.k12.il.us](mailto:ryan.kerr@rths.k12.il.us) or [ryankerr@students.rths.k12.il.us](mailto:ryankerr@students.rths.k12.il.us)).

*The Namesake* by Jhumpa Lahiri

*Band of Brothers* by Stephen Ambrose

*Girl in Translation* by Jean Kwok

*The Catcher in the Rye* by J.D. Salinger

*The Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy* by Douglas Adams

*I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* by Maya Angelou

*The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini

*Strength in What Remains* by Tracy Kidder

*Shoeless Joe Jackson* by W.P. Kinsella

*Speak* by Laurie Halse Anderson\*

*Zeitoun* by Dave Eggers

*Sula* by Toni Morrison\*

*Before We Were Free* by Julia Alvarez

*The Divine Secrets of the Ya-Ya Sisterhood* by Rebecca Wells

*The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime* by Mark Haddon

*Reservation Blues* by Sherman Alexie

*The Woman Warrior* by Maxine Hong Kingston

*Warriors Don’t Cry* by Patillo Beals

*The Brief, Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* by Junot Diaz\*

*Cat’s Cradle* by Kurt Vonnegut

*Brave New World* by Aldous Huxley

*Little Bee* by Chris Clave

*The Life of Pi* by Yann Martel

*Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* by Jonathan Safran Foer

*The Bell Jar* by Sylvia Plath

*How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents* by Julia Alvarez

*The Things They Carried* by Tim O’Brien\*

*The Help* by Kathryn Stockett

*The House at Sugar Beach* by Helene Cooper

*A Prayer for Owen Meany* by John Irving

*The Parable of the Sower* by Octavia Butler

*The Color Purple* by Alice Walker

It is highly recommended that you do some research on any book you are interested in prior to purchasing it. This project will be much less work if you actually enjoy what you are reading!

The Assignment: Part II

1. Find and read the following poems (all of these poems are available at the Academy of American Poets [www.poets.org](http://www.poets.org)).
   1. “Forgetfulness” by Billy Collins
   2. “Buddhist Barbie” by Denise Duhamel
   3. “Quilts by Nikki Giovanni
   4. “I Hear America Singing” by Walt Whitman
   5. “somewhere i have never traveled,gladly beyond” by E. E. Cummings
   6. “Morning Song” by Sylvia Plath
   7. “Eulogy” by Kevin Young
2. Come to class prepared to have a **discussion** about these poems some time during the first week of school.
3. You will be graded on your ability to participate in discussion over these poems. In preparation it would be a good idea to
   1. Print the poems out and **take notes on them** while you read
   2. Come prepared with questions you have about the poems (What don’t you understand? What needs to be clarified?)
   3. Come prepared with your interpretations of the poems. Some good examples to help guide you might be:
      1. What do you think the main idea of the poem is/what is the poem about?
      2. What is the author’s purpose or perspective?
      3. What does the form of the poem (the way it looks on the page) add to the meaning?
      4. What is the most important word/line/stanza of the poem and why?
      5. How do the poems relate to your life?
      6. Why is this material important? Is it important?
      7. What did you like about the poem? What didn’t you like?

\* Please note that some of these books contain adult language and situations. Please choose a book you are comfortable reading.