

Summer Reading Assignment 2019

“The role of a writer is not to say what we can all say, but what we are unable to say.”
-- Anais Nin

	All-School Read*	College Prep	Honors	Advanced Placement
9th Grade	<i>The Alchemist</i> by Paolo Coelho	<i>Kindred</i> by Octavia Butler	<i>The Book Thief</i> by Markus Zusak	
10th Grade	<i>The Alchemist</i> by Paolo Coelho	<i>Legend</i> by Marie Lu	<i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i> by Harper Lee	
11th Grade	<i>The Alchemist</i> by Paolo Coelho	<i>The Revenant</i> by Michael Punke	<i>The Revenant</i> by Michael Punke	<i>The Revenant</i> by Michael Punke <i>On Writing</i> by Stephen King
12th Grade	<i>The Alchemist</i> by Paolo Coelho	<i>Stardust</i> by Neil Gaiman	<i>Stardust</i> by Neil Gaiman	<i>The Road</i> by Cormac McCarthy <i>Invisible Man</i> by Ralph Ellison

Introduction

Your summer assignment (for all grades and levels) is a chance for you to read a variety of texts, explore ideas, and write in response to what you are reading and thinking. The assignment has two parts and **all work is due on the first full day of school**. All the texts that are available online and in print.

*The All-School read is not included in this assignment.

Part I

Text -- [The Nerdwriter Analyzes Edward Hopper's "Nighthawks"](#)

Evan Puschak has his own [YouTube channel \(NerdWriter\)](#) in which he offers video essays. These essays range from art, to film, to politics, to literature. He is thoughtful, well-researched, and has a keen sense of timing and audience awareness. In this video essay, he analyzes one of the iconic 20th century American paintings, “Nighthawks.” Pay attention to not only what he

sees, but also notice the biographical and historical context he weaves into his analysis. He uses both images and words to teach you about the painting.

Assignment -- For your first set of notes, we want you to write two pages. Choose a work of art that has had meaning to you. It can be a work of literature. It can be a painting. It can be a song. It can be any creative endeavor that has some fascinating artistry. We want you to analyze that work of art on a similar level to Evan Puschak (the Nerdwriter). If you look at his show notes on the YouTube page for the “Nighthawks” video essay, he has done a fair amount of research. We want you to do the same. In your notes, find an organized way to explain its [artistic merit](#) and value. Don’t just provide a summary of what it is, analyze how it operates and why it is important. The teacher reserves the right to turn this part of the assignment into a presentation when school begins.

Why it is important -- We want you to use your notes to enrich your personal language, background knowledge, and vocabulary. For that to happen, these notes should be so much more sophisticated than a summary. They should reveal the complexity of the work of art. You have to articulate not only what it means to you, but you should also have a broader appreciation for the artist, the cultural and historical context in which it was created, and how the work has transcended time and remain relevant.

Part II -- Reading

Text 1 -- [Leo Babauta's Why I Read \(+ a Dozen Book Recommendations\)](#)

Assignment -- Write three to four paragraphs (double-spaced) about your relationship with reading. Share an honest assessment of the role that it plays in your life. Think about how you would conceptualize and categorize reading’s impact on you. We value honesty over flattery. If reading is not your thing, say it. If you love it, then let us know. We don’t care so much which side you take. More important than what you choose is the truth of your reflection. We want to read about why you feel the way that you do. We want to get to know you as a reader. Feel free to discuss any books that have made an impact in your life, regardless of the age you were when you read them. Be honest.

Why it is important -- This is the first step in us getting to know you as a reader. What’s more important than that?

Text 2 -- Your Assigned Summer Reading Book(s)

Assignment -- While reading your assigned book(s) based on grade level, create [three pages of notes](#) for each book. How you organize those three pages is up to you. We know that this is *vague and undefined* but look at it another way: we are empowering you to do what you feel is right. You have the freedom to do what you want. You can create whatever you want. All we're asking you to do is create three interesting pages of notes about your reading experience. When there are little to no rules, the possibilities are endless. It is up to you to make it awesome! *The assigned summer reading book will be the first book taught in class, so it is not only a requirement for the summer but for the first term of the academic year.* Start the term and the year off right!

Why it is important -- A mature thinker chooses and develops his or her own criteria in order to evaluate the quality of texts. We respect your ability to make connections to other texts, ideas, cultural perspectives, eras, and personal experiences and when you have control over how you do that, you often exceed expectations. So do it.