

English Department 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

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 (Sept 9)**. All the texts that are available online and in print.

*The All-School read is not included in this assignment. Please see the separate assignment for the All-School read.

Your Assigned Summer Reading Book(s)

	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

Part I - Assignment: Note Taking (ALL students)

While reading your assigned book(s) based on grade level, create a minimum of [three pages of notes](#) for each book. Your notes should not only be a simple summary of events (direct quotes with page numbers are mandatory), but also include your thoughts on the book: Consider these questions: What do you think the author's intention was with the book? What does the author want you to think about and reflect on? How are the characters voices heard (first, second, or third person), and how does that affect the main protagonist? How does this book work in the context of the culture and time it was published? How did it (or not) personally connect to you?

The way you organize these (minimum) three pages is up to you. We know that this may seem *vague and undefined* but look at it another way: we are empowering you to choose your own format. You have the freedom to develop your own style of note-taking. All we're asking you to do is create at least three interesting pages of notes about your reading experience. *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.* So, read the book(s) carefully and thoughtfully and let's start the term and the year off strong! Happy Reading!

Part II - Assignment: Written Reflection (ALL students)

Write a minimum of a double-spaced, one-page printed document 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 because it is more important than what you choose is the truth of your reflection. We want to get to know you as a reader. Feel free to discuss any books that have made an impact on your life, regardless of when you read them.

Part III - Analyzing a Work of Art (AP English Comp & AP Lit students ONLY)

This final written assignment is to be completed by AP English Comp and AP Lit students ONLY. This assignment is unrelated to your summer reading, but is geared towards improving your critical thinking skills and practicing your analytical writing skills.

Assignment -- Choose a work of art that has meaning to you, and write a minimum of a double-spaced, one-page printed document about the piece. 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. Find an organized way to explain its [artistic merit](#) and value. Don't just provide a summary of what it is, but analyze how it operates and why it is important to the world and to you.

We want you to use this assignment to enrich your personal language, background knowledge, and vocabulary. For that to happen, your writing should be much more sophisticated than a summary. It 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. Good writing always involves research.

Helpful Video:

You may find this video helpful as it models a deep, higher level analysis approach:

[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.