

11th Grade English Summer Reading 2020

Why do we read? Some of you might say that you read because it is a requirement for school. However, most of us read at the intersection of a variety of reasons--entertainment, learning, communication, reflection, growth, connection. We are going to spend some time in class next year considering this question, so as you complete your assignment this summer, please begin thinking about what it is that you are actually doing: what is happening in your mind, your body, and your spirit as your eyes scan the words on the pages of your books, and in what ways might your life change as a result? We will also carefully consider the strategies authors use to try to create specific experiences for their readers.

You will read two books for English this summer -- *In Cold Blood* and a book of your choice from the list below. Please purchase **paper copies** of the books. Do not use e-books. You will use both books during the first few weeks of school for assignments, activities, and/or discussions.

In order to prepare for the work we will do with these texts, you should annotate as you read. In simple terms, you should process each text by writing strategically in your book. See the attached instructions if you need hints about the annotation process. The annotations will not be graded--they will, however, help you locate specific elements of the text during future work.

In addition to annotating both texts, you will complete the following assignment for the required book (*In Cold Blood*):

- Select three passages (one from the first third of the book, one from the second third, and one from the final third) that seem especially meaningful to you.
- Write out each passage and include the page number.
- Write a thoughtful, well-developed paragraph reflecting on each passage, explaining why it is meaningful.
- Bring a typed hard copy of this assignment (three passages / three paragraphs) to class on the first day of school.

Truman Capote, *In Cold Blood*

On November 15, 1959, in the small town of Holcomb, Kansas, four members of the Clutter family were savagely murdered by blasts from a shotgun held a few inches from their faces. There was no apparent motive for the crime, and there were almost no clues. As Truman Capote reconstructs the murder and the investigation that led to the capture, trial, and execution of the killers, he generates both mesmerizing suspense and astonishing empathy. (From Amazon.com)

****You are required to read both books this summer -- carefully, thoughtfully, and completely -- and you should have paper copies of your responses to *In Cold Blood* when you come to class on the first day of school. The work assigned for this class should be your honest and diligent response to the text(s). Plagiarism, whether from commercially prepared notes, the Internet, or another student's work, is cheating, and will result in a zero on the assignment.****

Choose ONE:

Malcolm X, Alex Haley, & Attallah Shabazz, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*

In the searing pages of this classic autobiography, originally published in 1964, Malcolm X, the Muslim leader, firebrand, and anti-integrationist, tells the extraordinary story of his life and the growth of the Black Muslim movement. His fascinating perspective on the lies and limitations of the American Dream, and the inherent racism in a society that denies its nonwhite citizens the opportunity to dream, gives extraordinary insight into the most urgent issues of our own time. (From Amazon.com)

Mary Karr, *The Liars' Club: A Memoir*

The Liars' Club took the world by storm and raised the art of the memoir to an entirely new level, bringing about a dramatic revival of the form. Karr's comic childhood in an east Texas oil town brings us characters as darkly hilarious as any of J. D. Salinger's—a hard-drinking daddy, a sister who can talk down the sheriff at age twelve, and an oft-married mother whose accumulated secrets threaten to destroy them all. This unsentimental and profoundly moving account of an apocalyptic childhood is as relevant today as it ever was. (From Amazon.com)

Cheryl Strayed, *Wild: From Lost to Found on the Pacific Crest Trail*

At twenty-two, Cheryl Strayed thought she had lost everything. In the wake of her mother's death, her family scattered and her own marriage was soon destroyed. Four years later, with nothing more to lose, she made the most impulsive decision of her life. With no experience or training, driven only by blind will, she would hike more than a thousand miles of the Pacific Crest Trail from the Mojave Desert through California and Oregon to Washington State—and she would do it alone. Told with suspense and style, sparkling with warmth and humor, *Wild* powerfully captures the terrors and pleasures of one young woman forging ahead against all odds on a journey that maddened, strengthened, and ultimately healed her. (From Amazon.com)

Tim O'Brien, *The Things They Carried*

A classic work of American literature that has not stopped changing minds and lives since it burst onto the literary scene, *The Things They Carried* is a ground-breaking meditation on war, memory, imagination, and the redemptive power of storytelling. The book depicts the men of Alpha Company: Jimmy Cross, Henry Dobbins, Rat Kiley, Mitchell Sanders, Norman Bowker, Kiowa, and the character Tim O'Brien. (From Amazon.com)

Tara Westover, *Educated: A Memoir*

Born to survivalists in the mountains of Idaho, Tara Westover was seventeen the first time she set foot in a classroom. Her family was so isolated from mainstream society that there was no one to ensure the children received an education, and no one to intervene when one of Tara's older brothers became violent. When another brother got himself into college, Tara decided to try a new kind of life. Her quest for knowledge transformed her, taking her over oceans and across continents, to Harvard and to Cambridge University. Only then would she wonder if she'd traveled too far, if there was still a way home. (From Amazon.com)

Hints for Annotating a Text

Annotating is a way of processing as you read. It helps you actively engage with the text, and it will allow you to find important passages quickly in the future. You need to find an annotation method that works for you, but here are some suggestions.

Annotating a text involves two steps:

1. Marking (underlining, circling, bracketing, starring, etc.)
2. Writing marginal notes – commenting on what you have marked and why
 - o Some people prefer to keep notes (by page number) in a separate notebook, which is fine.

Potential Topics for Annotation [these are just examples--you do not have to include all of these items, but you should strive for some variety, based on what you notice as you read]:

- **Literary Elements:** Plot structure, Characters, Conflict, Setting, Point of View, Foreshadowing, Symbols, Themes, Irony
- **Signposts:** Motifs (recurring elements), Epiphanies (“AHA” moments for characters), Incongruity (inconsistencies / contradictions), Tough Questions (as characters struggle with issues), Memory Moments (the author reveals important memories), Words of the Wiser (mentor characters offer advice)
- **Writer’s Craft:** Diction, Sentence Structure, Details, Imagery
- **Your Response as a Reader:** What am I enjoying about the text? What is confusing me and why? What information do I still need in order to fully understand the text? What does a specific word mean? What do I think is going to happen next? What ideas are resonating with me or making me think? What connections am I making with experiences / events / stories outside the text?