

Dear Dual Enrollment Students,

July 3rd, 2019

You've expressed interest and been selected to enroll in the Honors 12 English/B1A Dual Enrollment course at Independence High School. This will be a unique and interesting opportunity to both have a college level experience and receive college credit while in high school. I'm excited to take on this challenge and work with you during this inaugural year. We have the responsibility and task to make this a successful and effective course for each other and all those who come afterwards. Nothing but our best efforts will suffice!

To help prepare for such an occasion, I'd like for you to do some reading and writing over the summer. First, write in a journal for at least 15 minutes each day. When I was preparing to begin my Masters of Teaching English at Columbia University, the director at Teachers College asked us each to write 45 minutes a day. This changed my life! Writing teaches us a lot about ourselves in every way possible. For me, it enlightens my mind about my responsibilities as a husband, father, son, teacher, mentor, friend, human etc. One of my college students wrote me this past week about writing in her journal while in my B1A class last semester:

*Writing those journals daily was challenging because I have never done anything like that...it helped me in many ways... . It was a good experience...mak[ing] you think about yourself and just life in general and other people.*

I promise you'll have similar experiences as you do this.

Next, read. Read anything you can get your hands on. I don't have a list of books to read, but there are many suggested books college students should be familiar with. One of my favorite books on writing is *Light the Dark*, which contains several vignettes from successful writers about what inspired them in their work. It's very insightful and can be found online for free on <https://www.theatlantic.com/author/joe-fassler/>.

College professors I've spoken to say to expect reading between 100-200 pages a week, and I think this is an appropriate amount of reading for you to do over the summer and school year. They recommend a variety of reading: history books, autobiographies, spiritual works, poetry, fiction, summer best sellers, practically anything will be better than nothing and get you on a mental, emotional, and psychological level needed to succeed in life beyond high school. You should expect to do some kind of presentation and/or writing on your summer work in the fall when we get back.

Your senior year is an exciting time and can become even more meaningful as you make an intentional effort to get ready for the commencement of the rest of your life. I wish you well with the remainder of this summer break and look forward to seeing you in August!

Mr. Olsen

