

For Students ENTERING the Tenth Grade

All students entering the 10th grade Regular English will read ONE of the works listed below and maintain a reading journal.

***Into the Wild* by John Krakauer**

In April 1992 a young man from a well-to-do family hitchhiked to Alaska and walked alone into the wilderness north of Mt. McKinley. His name was Christopher Johnson McCandless. He had given 25,000 in savings to charity, abandoned his car and most of his possessions, burned all of the cash in his wallet, and invented a new life for himself...

***Tonight By Sea* by Francis Temple**

Seek life. Chache Lavi. That's what Paulie's uncle says they must do. But to seek life, Paulie and her family have to leave Haiti- the only home that Paulie has ever known. Since forever, Paulie has run in and out of the little houses nestled under the palms, smelling cocoa-bread and playing on the beach with her best friend Karyl. But now the little houses are gone. Their wood has been made into boats- boats used to escape Haiti...

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

Sent by their mother to live with their deeply religious, self-reliant grandmother in a small Southern town, Maya and her brother, Bailey, endure the aches and pains of abandonment and the prejudice of the local "powhitetrash." At eight years old, and back at her mother's side in St. Louis, Maya is attacked by a man many times her age- and must live with the consequences for a lifetime. Many years later, in San Francisco, a "mature" Maya learns about love for herself and the kindness of others, her own strong spirit, and the ideas and readings of great authors will allow her to find freedom in what was to her, a life of imprisonment. (PARENTS, please note that there are many mature elements presented in this novel)

****No-No Boy* by John Okada**

The tale of a disgruntled young man at odds with both his family and American society. Set just after World War II, the story opens with the protagonist, Ichiro Yamada, a Japanese-American returning home after four years in an internment camp and federal prison, where he was sent after refusing to fight for the U.S. against Japan. Yamada tries to reestablish a place in a society which condemned him based on his race and in his family, many of whom refuse to believe that Japan lost or that atomic bombs were dropped on Japan and keep expecting to hear that Japanese battleships have arrived in Seattle to signal the triumph of the Japanese army. (PARENTS, please note that there are mature elements presented in this novel)

****Americanah* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie**

What's the difference between an African-American and an American-African? From such a distinction springs a deep-seated discussion of race in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's third novel. Ifemelu and Obinze are young and in love when they depart military-ruled Nigeria for the West. Beautiful, self-assured Ifemelu heads for America, where despite her academic success, she is forced to grapple with what it means to be "black" in the United States for the first time. Quiet, thoughtful Obinze had hoped to join her, but with post-9/11 America closed to him, he instead plunges into a dangerous, undocumented life in London. Fifteen years later, they reunite in a newly democratic Nigeria, and reignite their passion - for each other and for their homeland. (PARENTS, please note that there are many mature elements presented in this novel)

ALL sophomores must keep a reading journal for their chosen book. The journals will be graded. Also, in the first week of school, there will be an in-class project related to the summer reading. You will be allowed to use your reading journals when completing the project. You will not be allowed to use the texts on the day of the essay.

Note:

Though not required, students are strongly encouraged to obtain a personal copy of the summer reading books. Websites like amazon.com, barnesandnoble.com, and thriftbooks.com often sell inexpensive, used books.

Reading Journal Guidelines

What is it? A reading journal is a journal that records a dialogue, or conversation, between the ideas in the text (the words that you are reading) and the ideas of the reader. In other words, your task is keep record of a dialogue with yourself as you read. Write down your thoughts, questions, insights and ideas while you read. A reading journal can and should include a mixture of things (for example, making connections to the text, interpreting the text, making predictions, asking questions, challenging the text, extending the meaning). There are no "right" and "wrong" answers. The important factor is that you read something and honestly, thoughtfully and articulately respond to it with your feelings and ideas. Your "writer's voice" should be heard in the journal.

*Note: The following are guidelines, not commandments. You don't have to answer every question in every journal. You do have to follow the format described in (1-2), below. Do not retell the story – a reading journal should not be plot summary - react to it, and develop each reaction as it merits development. **An entire page of one-liners does not make a journal.** Don't rely on or even refer to Spark Notes, Cliffs Notes, or any other stale, safe, canned analysis: they cheat you out of thinking and they cheat your classmates out of their ideas. We are interested in your response, uncontaminated by the committees who produce these "study aids."*

1. **It is preferred that you type your entries. Use loose-leaf paper if you are handwriting your entries. Put the page number outside the margin. Write your quote and your comment inside the margin.**
2. **Your journal entries must begin with the quotation you are commenting on. The quotation can be shortened by use of an ellipsis.**
3. Comment when an idea or character interests you and be sure to tell why.
4. Notice repeated patterns in the text. Why might they be there? What do they contribute to the work? Explain your response.
5. Comment on striking or meaningful images in the text. Explain your response.
6. If you notice any literary devices, comment on their function in the text.
7. If something about the text confuses you—plot, language, or so forth—use the journal to explore why and what it might mean. It is expected that most of these texts will contain passages and ideas that may challenge and confuse you.
8. How are individual characters developed in the text? Explain your response.
9. Explain the choice of narrator (e.g., first person limited, third person omniscient, etc.).
10. Comment on the tone of the text. How does it support the content? What specific words contribute to the tone? Explain your response.
11. Note strange or unusual diction. Keep track of **any** unfamiliar words.
12. Explore the relationship between setting and plot. Explain your response.
13. Comment on connections between the text and other texts (or movies, shows, and so forth) that you have experienced in the past. This connection could refer to theme, plot, setting, or character. Explain your response.
14. Challenge the text. For example, if a six-year-old narrator is using an advanced vocabulary, make a note of that and speculate why the author made that choice.

CRITERIA FOR A SUCCESSFUL READING JOURNAL (i.e. "How to earn an A!")

- Quotations utilized are detailed, meaningful and attributed to a page number
- Interpretations of the text are thoughtful, in-depth, and avoid clichés
- Personal and cultural connections are insightful and thought-provoking
- The text is thoroughly covered (entries are not front or end-loaded)
- The journal discusses the **theme** of the text (themes must be expressed as a message about a topic)
- The journal discusses how literary elements such as imagery, diction, symbolism, setting, characterization and figurative language contribute to the theme
- The journal is neat, organized, looks professional and follows all of the directions above