

SUMMER READING ASSIGNMENT
SOPHOMORE HONORS ENGLISH
Ms. Lemos 2009-10

You will be expected to read three (3) works of literature over the summer – *A Raisin in the Sun*, a play by Lorraine Hansberry, *A Separate Peace*, a novel by John Knowles, and your choice of one piece of literature from the Text #3 choices. All of these works of literature will share a thematic focus: characters that confront at some level the realities of their own existence. Your sophomore year will in part be devoted to similar explorations, dealing with protagonists who gain some sort of self-awareness, or perhaps, only think they do. For now, consider the following questions and ideas during and after the reading of each selection.

Everyone must read Text #1 and Text #2:

Text #1: *A Raisin in the Sun*, by Lorraine Hansberry

1. The ethical culpability for racism and discrimination: in other words, who or what must bear the responsibility for widespread and systematic discrimination?
2. The cultural and political history of the United States in the 1950s and 1960s
3. The appropriateness of the title
4. Literature as an agent of change, enlightenment, and hope; or conversely, literature as a narcissistic and myopic exercise in which the writer shares a tainted view of the world with a small and generally apathetic audience
5. The idea that an individual can overcome any obstacle in order to preserve and endure familial relationships gone awry.

Text #2: *A Separate Peace*, by John Knowles

1. Symbols and their meaning: a fraud perpetuated by English teachers (and online study guides) or an authentic method in understanding the mind of a given character?
2. The nature of friendship
3. The idea of competition
4. The shifting perspective of reality (what's real and what's an illusion?)
5. The struggle of self-awareness

Text #3: Everyone must choose ONE additional piece of literature from the attached “Sophomore Honors Summer Reading List”

Fiction:

For Whom the Bell Tolls by Ernest Hemingway

Surfacing by Margaret Atwood

Catch-22 by Joseph Heller

Wonderland by Joyce Carol Oates

The Secret by Eva Hoffman (be sure you have the correct author here)

The Joy Luck Club by Amy Tan

The Beet Queen by Louise Erdrich

Out of Africa by Isak Dinesen

A Lesson Before Dying by Ernest Gaines

Non-Fiction:

I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings by Maya Angelou

Prozac Nation by Elizabeth Wurtzel

1. When reading this piece of literature, keep in mind the central ideas and themes of Text #1 and Text 2.
2. Try to make connections regarding the topic of self-awareness and how this work is similar/different from the previous texts read.

ON THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL, you will be responsible for presenting a visual aid (i.e., poster, pamphlet, etc.) that thoroughly reflects the following:

1. How do the character(s) in Text #3 support the theme of self-awareness?
2. What prompts said character(s) to search for identity internally and externally in society?
3. How does *A Separate Peace* by John Knowles assimilate with Text #3?
4. How does *A Raisin in the Sun* by Lorraine Hansberry further support Text #3's themes, universal issues, and the search for self-awareness umbrella?

Furthermore, upon return to school in August, an essay exam will be given on the summer reading. This exam will rely upon your knowledge of both texts chosen. The exam will be graded according to the MCAS rubric. This same rubric is used for grading English midterm and final exams.

You are an honors student – expectations are high. Think deeply. Have fun.