

May 8, 2018

Michelle Hix, Teacher

Mesquite High School

300 E. Davis Street

Mesquite, TX 75149

Dear Parent(s):

Your son/daughter has signed up for Pre-AP English II for next year. It is a challenging course with a fast paced curriculum. I have attached the Expectations and the Summer Reading Assignments to this letter to give you an idea of the course load and what we will be undertaking next year. Please do take note that most of the reading is done outside of class, and there are two summer reading assignments that are due the first day of class that will count as daily grades. Failure to complete and turn in these assignments ON TIME will negatively affect your child’s first six weeks’ average.

I do want to make you aware that some of the readings in this year’s curriculum bring up issues and situations that may make the reader a bit uncomfortable; however, I encourage you to talk to your student about these situations and begin a dialog with him/her. Any book that asks the reader to think about issues differently helps that person grow. I hope you will look at these books in that way, as they are pertinent to today as well as when they were written.

Many of the books on this list can be found at Amazon.com, Barnes and Noble, and Half-Price books. The easiest way to round up these books for a competitive price would be to order a used copy, which I do encourage. There are no set versions students must have. As long as they have the book, we can work with the rest.

**Just for your information, it is my understanding that if your child chooses not to take this class, he/she must drop it by June 1st, 2018, for he/ she will not be allowed to do so after the school year gets started**. You may do this by calling the counseling center (972-882-7800) and speaking with our registrar, Mrs. Mayad.

Thank you for everything you do. I look forward to meeting and working with your student next year.

Sincerely,

Michelle Hix

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Pre-AP English II

Course Expectations and

Mesquite High School

2018-2019

In Pre-AP English II, we will examine several genres (short story, novel, drama, and poetry). All of the works chosen have appeared on lists of titles recommended by the College Board as appropriate for preparing students to be successful on the Advanced Placement Exam.

Because we engage in close reading analysis that involves annotating, students are encouraged to purchase their own copies of the works. Having a personal copy enables the students to read ahead, to mark passages, and to write their own notes and class notes in the text. Please remember that students will do most, if not all, of his/her reading outside of class.

**The following selections must be read and the attached assignments completed and turned in on the FIRST DAY OF CLASS for full credit. These assignments will count as daily grades.**

**Summer Reading:**

*A Separate Peace* by John Knowles

Self-selected book

**The following works will be read during the year:**

*The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain

*To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee

*Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley

*Metamorphosis* by Franz Kafka

*Their Eyes Were Watching God* by Zora Neale Hurston

*Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck

*Julius Caesar* by William Shakespeare

**Assignment One: *A Separate Peace* by John Knowles**

**Part One: Read and Annotate the book, A Separate Peace**

* As you read *A Separate Peac*e, use a highlighter to highlight passages from the novel with recurring symbols. If you do not own your copy, you can annotate using sticky-notes.
  + Highlight the following symbols:
    - **The** **tree**
    - **Devon River**
    - **Marble staircase**
    - **Pink shirt**
    - **The war**
    - **Blitzball**
    - **Summer**
    - **Winter**
* As you mark passages, think about - consider - what these symbols might represent.
* Symbols can be tricky things, and what you’re doing with this is PRACTICING being able to explain why something seems symbolic. There are lots of definitions, but here’s the simplified version:

|  |
| --- |
| **A symbol is a real thing in the novel; the object is concrete in the text. BUT the associations we have with that concrete object make it appropriate to stand for an abstract idea that we can’t see in the novel.** |

**Part Two: Make an Associations Chart**

* After you have read and marked your book, transfer 10 significant quotations (at least one from each category) to a reading log where you write an explanation of what each symbol represents.
* Set up your log in the following manner:
  + Divide your paper into 4 columns. You may find it easier to use unlined paper and turn it sideways.
  + Label the first column on the left QUOTATION, label the next column SYMBOL, the next SUMMARY, and label the last column EXPLANATION.
  + Place your quotations related to the symbols in the left column.
    - ***Write out the exact words of the text to which you are responding and include the page number.*** Do not just write the page number; write the exact words.
    - The quotations used should be spaced equally throughout the entire novel.
    - Quotes should be at least 5 lines in length.
  + As you copy quotations, identify the symbol in the symbol column. (Use the list of eight items from Part 1 of this assignment.)
  + Then write a summary of the passage you’ve chosen. A summary hits all the major points.
  + In the last column, explain the associations that you have with the passage.
    - How does this passage reflect the qualities of the symbol?
    - **Why does it seem symbolic to you?** Be specific; the more specific you are, the greater the likelihood that you can use this information when you return to school.
  + You are free to type this Associations Chart but it is not required.

**This is an example of what you are going to produce:**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Quotation**  **(includes symbol)** | **Symbol**  **(from the list above)** | **Summary** | **Explanation**  **(go deeper/associations)** |
| from p. 1 of *A Separate Peace*:  *It was a raw, nondescript time of year, toward the end of November, the kind of wet, self-pitying November day when every speck of dirt stands out clearly. Devon luckily had very little of such weather . . . but this day it blew wet, moody gusts all around me.* | **Autumn** (That’s  not one of your  choices) | Gene stands looking at the school on a November day that is as cold and unwelcoming as can be. | We associate “autumn” with things dying back; the world gets ready for a long winter. For Gene, this is symbolic of his feelings in the whole book. His trip back to Devon is helping him come to the end of his pent-up feelings (moody, perhaps?) toward his experience. |

**Assignment Two: Self-select Thematically Linked Novel**

https://www.goodreads.com/list/tag/high-school

**Part One: Read a Thematically-linked Novel**

* You will read a novel of your own choosing that is thematically linked to A Separate Peace.
* Below are some theme topics found in A Separate Peace
  + **War and Rivalry**
  + **Identity**
  + **Change and Growing Up**
  + **Sports**
  + **Jealous**

**Part Two: Write a Reflection Essay**

* Write a 250-500-word response in which you reflect on the similarities of a theme found in both

A Separate Peace and your chosen novel.

* **You need at least two pieces of text evidence supporting your claims, one from each novel.**
* Your essay needs to be either typed or neatly handwritten in blue or black ink, and **follow MLA Guidelines.**
* You need a properly formatted works cited page listing the MLA citations for BOTH of your novels.
* Reference the MLA Style Guide at Purdue University’s Online Writing Lab

(<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>) for detailed formatting guidelines and

<http://www.easybib.com/> for help creating your works cited page.

**How to Turn-in Your Summer Assignments**

Here’s how I’d like you to turn in your Associations Chart and Essay:

* Acquire a folder with pockets (it doesn’t have to be a fancy folder; it can be a paper folder)
* On the front of your folder, write the following information:

**Your First and Last Name**

**Pre-AP English II**

**Date**

* Place your Associations Chart (from assignment one) in one pocket and your essay (from assignment two)

in the other pocket.

**MAKE SURE YOUR NAME IS ALSO ON THE INDIVIDUAL ASSIGNMENTS INSIDE THE FOLDER**