Sophomore English
Summer Reading Assignments 2008

I look forward to having you as a student in September. In order to prepare for our work in the fall, I would like you to complete your summer assignment thoughtfully and thoroughly.

Please read this entire handout carefully. Speak to me if you have any questions concerning your reading. I expect you to arrive to our first day of class fully prepared and ready to begin our work together.

Your summer assignment requires you to read ***The Autobiography of a Face*** by Lucy Grealy (Harper Collins, ISBN:0060569662).

Your text must be new because you are responsible for making your own notes in the book. You should not use a text that contains notes from a previous reader.

Assignment: Read and <u>annotate</u> *The Autobiography of a Face*. It is very important that you take notes as you read because you must be prepared to take an exam on the book the first week of school. It is more effective to review your annotations in your book than to try to reread.

About Annotating: Always read with pen or pencil in hand in order to *annotate your text as you read*. I have provided **guidelines for annotating on page 5 of this handout**. Refer to this guide frequently as you do your reading. I know that Ms. Serki has asked you to annotate your texts all year long, so this task should not be new to you.

Grading: I will grade your annotations according to two criteria: (1) thoroughness and (2) your ability to explain your annotations to me.

Please keep in mind that **highlighting *by itself* is not useful or meaningful and <u>will not count as annotating</u>**. You may highlight if you wish, but do so *sparingly* and only after you have already done a first reading for comprehension. I will ignore highlighting when I look at your text, and instead evaluate your marginal notes and your ability to explain their meaning and significance.

I suggest that you also use **sticky notes** to allow yourself more room for your note taking.

About using any resources in addition to the text: It is very important to me that you read your books without consulting any outside resources, including those on the Internet (such as SparkNotes, etc.). These sources deprive you of the opportunity to think for yourself and to arrive at your own interpretations of your reading.

Of course, I hope that you will do much more reading on your own over the summer. Here is a list of recommended books that includes titles to appeal to all tastes. Happy reading!

Recommended Reading

Non-fiction

Albom, Mitch. **Tuesdays With Morrie**

The author tells of his experience with a mentor from whom he had become separated and his journey back to that relationship in the mentor's dying days. Mitch Albom spent several months regularly visiting his college professor, Morrie Schwartz, in the professor's final year until his death from Lou Gehrig's disease.

Angelou, Maya. **I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings**

The author tells of her painful childhood and adolescence, of her growth out of a childhood fantasy that she was an enchanted white girl, and of her self-acceptance. This book contains mature situations and adult language in its portrayal of abusive human rights violations. This book was published for an adult readership and thus contains mature content.

Griffin, John. **Black Like Me**

In the second half of the twentieth century, bitter race relations still characterized much of the Deep South. John Griffin decided that in order to understand the African-American experience in the South, he would need to be perceived as African-American. After chemically darkening his skin, Griffin experienced life in a way he never could have imagined.

Hickham, Homer. **Rocket Boys** (formerly called *October Skies*)

Homer Hickham, the introspective son of a mine superintendent and a mother determined to get him out of Coalwood, West Virginia, nurtures a dream to send rockets into outer space. This ambition changes his life and the lives of everyone around him in Coalwood during the 1950s.

Hilebrand, Lauren. **Seabiscuit: An American Legend**

Seabiscuit was an unlikely champion: an undersized, awkward horse that no one would peg as a winner. But, thanks to the efforts of three men, Seabiscuit became one of the most spectacular performers in sports history.

Lee, Helie. Still Life with Rice

In this memoir of her grandmother's life, Lee recovers the family's history, as well as begins to understand her own identity.

Wong, Jade Snow. **Fifth Chinese Daughter**

A sensitive and revealing story of a Chinese American girl's coming of age in America.

Wright, Richard. **Black Boy**

The author writes about his own childhood and emerging sense of racial marginalization in this pivotal book about the black experience. Wright portrays the political and social influences of the United States during the middle of the twentieth century and human rights violations with emotional intensity.

Fiction

Adams, Douglas. **Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy**

Seconds before Earth is demolished to make room for a galactic freeway, an earth man is saved by his friend. Together they journey through the galaxy.

Agee, James. **A Death in the Family**

A story of loss and heartbreak felt when a young father dies.

Alcott, Louisa May. **Little Women**

A story about family love and devotion, the novel follows four poor sisters in New England as they experience the Civil War at home.

Austin, Jane. Emma

This Jane Austen novel is set in early nineteenth-century England. Emma Woodhouse's manipulations of the characters around her in matchmaking lead to humorous surprises even to herself. It is truly a fine novel of manners and social comedy.

Bradbury, Ray. **Something Wicked This Way Comes**

Two boys, best friends in a small Midwestern town, finally come to understand that of all the terrors threatening them from Cooger and Dark's Pandemonium Shadow Show, the greatest menace exists within themselves.

Bradley, Marion Zimmer. The Mists of Avalon

This retelling of the King Arthur story, presented from the perspective of the women, incorporates the clash between pagan and Christian worlds.

Burns, Olive Ann. **Cold Sassy Tree**

Grandpa Blakeslee marries a young milliner just three weeks after Granny Blakeslee's death. Young Will is boggled by this act, but becomes the newlyweds' conspirator and confidant, while doing some growing up of his own.

Buck, Pearl. The Good Earth

This classic portrays the lives of peasants in pre-revolutionary China with warmth and accuracy.

Card, Orson Scott Ender's Game

Ender, who was created from genetic experimentation, may be the military genius Earth needs in its war against an alien enemy.

Carroll, Lewis. **Alice's Adventures in Wonderland; Through the Looking Glass**

A fantasy in which Alice follows the White Rabbit to a dream world.

Chevalier Tracy. Girl With a Pearl Earring

Forced to help support her poverty-stricken family, sixteen-year-old Griet becomes a maid in the household of Dutch artist Johannes Vermeer. Told from Griet's perspective, first as maid and then as artist's model, the story transports the reader to everyday life in seventeenth-century Delft and the artistic process that created some of the world's most famous paintings.

Christie, Agatha. And Then There Were None

Ten strangers are gathered together on an isolated island by a mysterious host. They share the darkest secrets of their pasts, and then, one by one, they die.

Gaines, Ernest. A Lesson Before Dying

Two young black men, one condemned to death for a murder and the other a teacher, form a bond in a small Cajun Louisiana community in the late 1940s.

Hammett, Dashiell. **The Maltese Falcon**

In San Francisco in 1928, Sam Spade searches for a priceless statuette. He finds himself torn between loyalty to his murdered partner and an opportunity for personal gain.

Hesse, Hermann. **Siddhartha**

Set in ancient India, this allegorical novel details one soul's quest for the ultimate answer to the enigma of a person's role in this world. The hero, Siddhartha, undergoes a series of experiences to emerge in a state of peace and wisdom.

Kingsolver, Barbara. The Bean Trees

Taylor, a poor Kentuckian, makes her way West with an abandoned baby girl and stops in Tucson. There she finds friends and discovers resources in apparently empty places.

Knowles, John. **A Separate Peace**

This novel is the classic story of two friends at boarding school during World War II. Told in flashback, the story recounts the events of their teen years that had a life-long impact on the boys.

McCullers, Carson. **The Heart is a Lonely Hunter**

In the 1930s in a Georgia mill town, Mick Kelley, a lonely girl searching for beauty in a world that is often bleak, seeks understanding from John Singer, a hearing-disabled man. Singer takes a room with the Kelly family, where he is visited by the town's misfits, who, like Mick, hope to find a sympathetic soul in Singer.

McKinley, Robin. **Beauty: A retelling of the Story of Beauty and the Beast**

Beauty is the nickname of Honour, the youngest of three sisters. Her father's favorite and considering herself the least attractive and most expendable of the three, she insists on saving her father by going to live with the enchanted beast/prince. This expansion of the folktale is told in beautiful descriptive language.

Potok, Chaim. The Chosen

This is the odyssey from boyhood to manhood for two Jewish boys growing up in Brooklyn amid the conflict between generations and religious traditions. Reuven Malter and Danny Saunders, one an orthodox Jew, the other the son of a Hasidic rabbi, play a basketball game one day that turns into the beginning of a deep friendship despite their differences.

Salinger, J.D., Franny and Zooey

If you enjoy Salinger, you might like this. Here is the story of a college-aged sister and her brother who learn from each other in unexpected ways.

Shute, Nevil. **A Town Like Alice**

A young woman miraculously survives a Japanese death march through Malaysia during World War II. An Australian soldier, also a prisoner of war, offers to help her at the cost of his own life.

Smith, Betty. A Tree Grows in Brooklyn

An Irish American family living in New York City's slums during the early years of the twentieth century endures political and economic hardships. The novel's central character, an intelligent, secretive teenage girl, suffers from her father's drinking and her brother's early death.

Steinbeck, John. Of Mice and Men

George and Lenny, migrant workers in the Salinas Valley of California during the Great Depression, dream of a time when they will have enough money to buy their own farm. When Lenny, a mentally retarded young man, unwittingly gets into trouble, his friend, George, must determine how to help him.

Stevenson, Robert Louis. The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde

Dr. Jekyll, a respectable doctor by day, roams the streets of London as the evil Mr. Hyde at night. The young Robert Louis Stevenson, who suffered from repeated nightmares of living a double life, wrote this story in three days.

Tsukiyama, Gail. The Samurai's Garden

On the eve of the Second World War, a young Chinese man is sent to his family's summer home in Japan to recover from tuberculosis. He meets four local residents - a lovely young Japanese girl and three older people who will have a profound impact on his life.

Vreeland, Susan. **The Girl in Hyacinth Blue**

This novel follows the trail of an unknown painting, *The Girl in Hyacinth Blue*, by the Dutch master Vermeer from the time of its creation in seventeenth-century Holland to the present day. In each of the eight independent chapters, the painting shows up as a prop in the lives of different owners and tells the circumstances under which these people acquire or lose it.

See the next page for **Guidelines for Annotating Texts**

Guidelines for Annotating Texts

There is not one "right" way to annotate as you read, but there are some general principles for good annotating that you should keep in mind. You should write marginal notes in the text that consist of questions and comments, essentially your dialogue with the text itself.

Review this guide frequently as you are completing your assigned reading. Close reading takes more time than quick, superficial reading, but doing so will save you time and anxiety later as you prepare to discuss and write about the literature.

1. **Always read with a pen or pencil in hand**. Doing so helps you to focus and to stay alert.

2. Always **take your time** as you begin a new text. Ask yourself many questions as you begin: Who is telling the story? What is the setting? What details does the author provide about characters when they are first introduced?

3. **Abbreviate** as you take notes. Use **initials** for characters. Try to develop your own set of **symbols** for important ideas. For example, you might place a **star** next to key passages.

4. Keep a **list of characters** and their **key traits**. A good place for this is the inside cover of the book. You can add brief notes to your lists as you read.

   ***Front and back covers** are also good places to jot notes about important settings, key ideas, and key page numbers.

5. Look for **patterns** as you read. What ideas do you see repeated? What **connections** can you draw between different characters and different events?

6. Try to make **a quick note on the top of each page** indicating the most important point there.

7. Think of a **memorable title for each chapter** and write it down at the beginning. (You can still make your own title even if the author has provided one.)

8. On the first or last page of a chapter, **bullet-point the key events** as a summary of that section.

9. **Use question marks**. Be alert to what puzzles you. Good readers do not zip along without stopping to monitor their comprehension. They stop to think and to note what they don't understand. You should also write down questions you would like to discuss.

10. Of course, you should always pay attention to **vocabulary**. A strong vocabulary comes from *reading*, not from memorizing lists. Your text includes many words that will be new to you. Circle or star these words. Try to determine meaning from the context. If you are really puzzled by a word, look it up.

I suggest that you use sticky notes in addition to writing marginal notes in order to give you enough space for your thoughts.