May 28, 2014

Dear AP student:

Welcome to Advanced Placement English Literature and Composition. We appreciate your willingness to take on the rigorous academic challenge this course offers, and we look forward to working with you during the upcoming school year. It promises to be a great time! We can assure you it will be a rewarding experience—one that will successfully prepare you for college. In the process, you will read some of the great literature of Western Civilization. Because of the quality of the literature, as well as the caliber of the typical AP student, we consider it an honor and privilege to teach the course.

Although there are no formal prerequisites for taking this course, there are three things that you will need in order to succeed. The first is a strong passion for reading. We will read several novels, essays and plays, as well as various poems. You will read quite a bit. Most of the reading will be done as homework. Therefore, you MUST want to read. There’s no escaping this important fact! You won’t do well on the all-important essay assessments if you have not done the reading. By enrolling in this course we are assuming you enjoy reading—that you are an independent reader who does not need someone nagging you to complete a book in a timely manner. Hence, if reading is not your thing, please consider the idea that you may not belong in this class. The second thing required for this class is a strong passion for writing. Most of the assessments will consist of timed essays. If you like to write but are unsure of your writing skills, we are confident you will improve as a writer this year. All we need from you is that passion. But if you don’t like to write—if you avoid writing assignments-- you will have a miserable time in this class. You will not be able to adequately express yourself, and you will not improve during the course of the year. Third, you must be willing to work collaboratively with your fellow students. We will do many classroom activities that involve you working in groups. We consider student collaboration as key to preparing for the AP exam. You will be helping each other learn. Each student has something to offer the class when working collaboratively. Come to class ready for working with any and all students in the class. We desire that a spirit of teamwork pervade the class atmosphere.

Keep in mind you will be required to read and write during the summer/intersession/vacation periods throughout the school year. There is no getting around this requirement. We have many reading assignments to cover prior to the AP exam in May 2015—this requires us to use all available time to our advantage. If you like to read and write this intersession/vacation reading requirement will not be a problem. We will maintain an online Blog to serve as a discussion forum for the intersession/vacation reading assignment. You will be able to use the Blog to ask us/the class any questions you might have about the novel we are reading. If you don’t expect to read during the intersession/vacation period, then this class might not be for you. You may do better in English-12.

We will use this on-line Blog for the summer reading assignment—Catcher in the Rye. We will expect you to read this book during our six week vacation. If you have previously read this book, we insist you take advantage of the opportunity to read it again more thoroughly. Don’t fool yourself and merely rely on your memory. The book is considered a classic American novel. More importantly, it serves as an
excellent book for practicing the skill of analysis, and for relating to other great novels. You will also be required to maintain a double-entry journal (see the attached example). It should be completed as you read the book. It is designed to make you maintain an on-going dialogue with the book—it is not designed to be completed in one night (the day before it is due). The Blog site is at http://eagleapenglishlit.blogspot.com. We will begin posting entries on July 1. We expect you to visit this site on a daily basis during summer vacation. We are hoping the entries will help give you better insight about the book’s theme. The WORST thing you can do is not read the book during the summer break. If you return to school in July without having read the book you will get off to a bad start, and you will be lost in the class coursework. Don’t let us down! Don’t let yourself down! Read the book!

We have attached a copy of a contract we will expect all AP students to sign during the first week of school. The contract best expresses our expectations of you.

Finally, we want to emphasize in no uncertain terms that our goal is to get every student in this AP class to pass the AP exam in May. Everything we do in class is designed to get you ready for the exam. But this goal requires a commitment on your part—you need to commit to hard work and perseverance. There is one thing we are sure of—that the harder a student works, the better chance that student has of being prepared for the exam. Improving your writing and analysis skills is directly proportionate to hard work and perseverance. Again, there is no escaping this fact. You must work hard on every assignment, and you must not give up the first time an assignment poses a tough challenge. Expect to hear more about this from us throughout the year.

Although we expect you to read Catcher in the Rye, we have included a list of other great AP-type books that you may want to read during the summer break. Reading one of these books will give you an idea about what AP-type books are all about. Feel free to read another book that’s not on this list if you think it qualifies as an AP-type book.

Please read the contents of this folder, and refer to it during the summer break. Please make http://eagleapenglishlit.blogspot.com a favorite on your computer. We look forward to communicating with you via the Blog site during the summer break. Feel free to email questions at steve.rodriguez@sweetwaterschools.org.

Good luck,

Mr. Rodriguez
English Teacher
Olympian High School

Ms Salinas
English Teacher
Olympian High School
Recommended AP-type Books to Read during Summer Break

Here is a list of possible books you can read:

- *Atonement* by Ian McEwan (*contemporary but challenging book*)
- Any books written by Jane Austen or the Bronte Sisters
- *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee
- *The Sun Also Rises* by Ernest Hemingway
- *Bless Me Ultima* by Rudolfo Anaya
- *Lord of the Flies* by William Golding
- *Any Amy Tan novel* (*more contemporary novels*)
- *The Lovely Bones* (*more contemporary novel*)
- *Picture of Dorian Gray* (*Oscar Wilde*)
- *A Tale of Two Cities* by Charles Dickens (*a long book*)
- *The Stranger* by Albert Camus

Note: Be an aggressive reader—you must read at least one book in addition to *Catcher in the Rye* during the summer break. If you’ve already read one of the books above, then choose another to read for this summer assignment. Don’t just re-read a book you read in 9th, 10th, or 11th grade.

No one says you can only read one additional book. Read as much as possible!
Tentative Reading Schedule for this school year

-Catcher in the Rye (J.D. Salinger)
-Ethan Fromme (Edith Wharton)
-Frankenstein (Mary Shelly)
-Macbeth (Shakespeare)
-1984 (George Orwell)/ Brave New World (Aldous Huxley)
-Different poetry selections
-The Awakening (Kate Chopin)
-Death of a Salesman (Arthur Miller), Pygmalion (George Bernard Shaw) or A Streetcar Named Desire (Tennessee Williams)
-Hamlet (Shakespeare)
-Slaughterhouse Five (Kurt Vonnegut)
Summer Reading Assignment

Note: The Summer Reading Assignment involves four parts. Please read below and familiarize yourself with the details.

Part I: Read the book *Catcher in the Rye*

Part II: Blog Site Instructions

3. Visit the site every day. We won’t be making entries every day, but you will want to read the comments made by your fellow students.
4. Make at least eight entries over the course of the summer break. Your entries can address my entries, or the entries of your fellow students. Don’t just write one sentence—take the time/effort to express your thoughts in a sophisticated, persuasive manner.
5. Don’t wait till the last day to make the eight entries.
6. If you have any questions, you can also email Mr. Rodriguez at steve.rodriguez@sweetwaterschools.org
7. The goal of the blog site is to provide an interactive way to read *The Catcher in the Rye*, to keep students motivated to read the book, to provide some additional insight regarding the contents of the book, and to answer any questions you might have about the book.
Part III: Double-Entry Journal Instructions

1. Maintain an on-going double entry journal as you read *The Catcher in the Rye*. The purpose of the journal is to have you keep up a conversation with the text.
2. Select a sentence, passage, or paragraph you find interesting, well-written, crucial to the theme of the book, or relevant to current events.
3. Write this entry in the left hand side of the journal.
4. Write your personal response to the entry. Don’t just summarize. This is your chance to express your thoughts. You may occasionally digress as your response leads you think or see things from a new perspective. Don’t be afraid to write a paragraph in length. Do not limit yourself to one/two sentence responses.
5. A sample excerpt from a student double entry journal is attached.
6. Your journal should include at least 20 entries.
7. Number each entry.
8. The double-entry journal can be typed (preferred) or neatly hand-written.
9. The entries should be distributed evenly throughout the book. Don’t write twenty entries about the last chapter of the book.
Part IV: Double Entry Journal Instructions for Other Book

1. You must read **one more** book of Literary Merit during the summer break (besides *The Catcher in the Rye*).

2. Stay away from Young Adult books like Harry Potter, or any books with Fabio on the cover. Strive for classic books that have been around awhile.

3. Follow the previous instructions for completing your Double Entry Journal Notes on this second book.

4. Reading this second book and completing a double entry journal is a good way to practice your analysis skills. If you do not read a second book this summer your grade will suffer greatly.
MY AP ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION

CONTRACT

I WILLINGLY ACCEPT THE FOLLOWING EXPECTATIONS FOR MY AP ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION CLASS. BY AGGRESSIVELY PURSUING THE FULFILLMENT OF THESE EXPECTATIONS I WILL HAVE A GREAT SCHOOL YEAR, I WILL BE PREPARED FOR THE AP EXAM, AND I WILL BE BETTER PREPARED FOR COLLEGE:

1. I WILL BE PASSIONATE ABOUT READING.

2. I WILL BE PASSIONATE ABOUT WRITING.

3. I WILL SEEK TO OVER-ANALYZE.

4. I WILL ANNOTATE. I WILL ANNOTATE. I WILL ANNOTATE.

5. I WILL COMPLETE/SUBMIT HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS ON TIME. ALL THE TIME

6. I WILL SEEK CONSTANT IMPROVEMENT.

7. I WILL USE ACADEMIC VOCABULARY IN DISCUSSIONS.

8. I WILL ENTHUSIASTICALLY PARTICIPATE IN GROUP ACTIVITIES.

9. I WILL VISUALIZE GETTING A 3, 4, OR 5 ON THE AP EXAM.

10. I WILL NEVER GIVE UP!

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PRINT NAME                           SIGNATURE