

2019 Eighth Grade Pre-AP Summer Reading Project

Dear Incoming Eighth Grade Pre-AP English Students and Parents,

Welcome to eighth grade Pre-AP English! We look forward to meeting all of you next year. In order to enrich your learning experiences, we have prepared a curriculum that is both challenging and engaging.

How is Pre-AP different from the on-level English classes? While both courses apply critical reading, writing, listening, speaking and thinking skills to novels, short stories, plays, poems, and informational texts, you will be expected to work at a much deeper level. In order to be able to discuss, debate, hypothesize, and make connections to other literary works and other disciplines in class, you will be expected to complete some reading and writing at home.

This summer you will have the opportunity to select and read one of the novels from our district list. All of the novels focus on topics from early American history. Included in this letter are your summer reading directions. If after reading the directions you have further questions, please feel free to call or email the campus or district contact.

You will turn in your summer reading project on August 28, 2019 to your Pre-AP ELA teacher. Please allow yourself enough time to thoroughly read the novel and complete the assignment. This will be your first major grade of the nine weeks. In addition, you can expect an assignment or multiple assignments over your summer reading book during the first nine weeks of class as you and your teacher make connections between the literary elements and author's craft in your chosen text and the other texts being read. In order to make sure that you are well-prepared, make sure that your project has been completed on or before Wednesday, August 28, 2019.

Enjoy your summer and happy reading!

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All summer reading projects for Pre-AP or AP English are available on the campus and district websites.

Eighth Grade Pre-AP Summer Reading Book Options

Below are the approved novel choices for 8th grade Pre-AP ELA courses. Please select one of the following texts for your summer reading project.

Chains by Laurie Halse Anderson

Fever, 1793 by Laurie Halse Anderson

My Brother Sam is Dead by James Lincoln Collier

The Witch of Blackbird Pond by Elizabeth George Speare

Johnny Tremain by Esther Hoskins Forbes

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Over your summer break, you will complete a dialectical journal based upon the novel that you have selected. Your dialectical journal should either be turned in written in ink, typed, or submitted electronically on or before **August 28, 2019**.

Annotations: While reading the selected novel, students are highly encouraged (if possible) to highlight and make notes in the margins of the text.

What kinds of things could you annotate?

- words and phrases that stand out to you
- important scenes or key sections of dialogue
- character descriptions, motivations, and flaws
- key decisions characters make
- sections that are confusing for you
- questions that pop into your head as you are reading
- inferences you make while reading
- connections you make to other texts, films, t.v. shows
- connections you make to your personal life or to the lives of others
- symbols, themes, or topics
- literary devices (flashbacks, foreshadowing, sub-plots) used
- figurative language (allusions, alliteration, metaphors, similes, etc.) used effectively

Directions for Dialectical Journal:

While reading the novel, students are expected to create at least 10 journal entries that include quotations or excerpts from the text and commentary for each. These quotations or excerpts should come from the beginning, middle, and end of the story. The commentary for each quotation or excerpt should explain and comment on the meaning or importance and not merely paraphrase or summarize the text. Below are several ideas for a dialectical journal entry.

Form, Structure, and Plot: What is happening? Choose quotations/excerpts on the chronology of the plot: opening situation, complicating incident(s), main events in the rising action, climax, outcome. How much time is covered? If the action is framed as a flashback, explain. Choose quotations/excerpts involved in forms, such as dream sequences, stream of consciousness narrative, parallel events, significant patterns of foreshadowing, or anything else interesting, along with commentary explaining why this plot or structural device is important.

Character: Choose quotations/excerpts about central characters, such as personality, function in the novel, motivations, or flaws.

Setting: Choose quotations/excerpts that show where (continent, region, state, house, room) and when (year, month, time of day) the novel occurs. Choose quotations/excerpts that show how the setting affects the plot or ideas of the novel. What mood is created by the setting?

Themes: Choose quotations/excerpts that identify major themes in the novel. What moral and ethical questions are being explored in the novel, and how are they resolved? What is the author saying about life, about mankind, or about nature? What is the big lesson that we are to learn?

Imagery: Choose quotations/excerpts that appeal to one or more of the five senses. What is the effect? Look also for recurring images or motifs (light/darkness, colors, clothing, odors, sounds, etc.). How are these images or motifs used?

Symbolism: Choose quotations/excerpts that use an image to suggest complex or multiple meanings. When something is used metaphorically, like a conch shell to represent authority, it becomes a symbol. Choose quotations/excerpts in the novel that use these symbols. What is the effect of the symbol? Are there patterns? Do these symbols advance one or more themes?

Figurative Language: Choose quotations/excerpts to identify effective examples of these devices: metaphors, similes, personification, and/or allusion. An allusion is a reference to someone or something known from history, literature, religion, politics, sports, science or some other branch of culture.

Dialectical Journal Entry Example:

Text Evidence:	Commentary
<p>“It’s small and red with tight steps in front and windows so small you’d think they were holding their breath. Bricks are crumbling in places, and the front door is so swollen you have to push hard to get in. There is no front yard, only four little elms the city planted by the curb. Out back is a small garage for the car we don’t own yet and a small yard that looks smaller between the two buildings on either side. There are stairs in our house, but they’re ordinary hallway stairs, and the house has only one washroom. Everyone has to share a bedroom- Mama and Papa, Carlos and Kiki, me and Nenny.”</p> <p>p. 4</p>	<p>The author’s use of imagery and personification helps the reader imagine exactly what the narrator’s house looks like. Each description of the interior and exterior of the house helps the reader better develop an understanding of how the house that the narrator’s family purchased differed from the house that her parents and she had dreamed of owning. This description also allows the reader to learn about the family’s financial situation.</p>

Helpful Suggestions:

- Don’t wait until the week before school starts to begin reading your novel and completing your dialectical journal. Unexpected events may occur that could make it difficult for you to complete these tasks on time.
- Make a plan for the number of pages or chapters that you are going to read per week, and stick with it.
- Annotate the text and find your quotations/excerpts as you are reading. Do not wait until you have completed the novel because it may become difficult to remember exactly why you believed that part of the text to be so important or noteworthy.