

Summer Reading Assignment: Junior English Honors

Basic Requirements: You are to select, read and **annotate** a nonfiction book (minimum 200 pages) that is centered on research published within the last ten years or so. You will eventually use this nonfiction text as the main source in a research essay in which you present your own argument when it comes to the text's issue. (For example, if I select a book exploring teenagers' addiction to technology, I may end up writing a research essay that argues teens need to make a conscious effort to spend more time disconnected.)

The purpose is also to get a model of strong, research-based writing on a single topic; therefore, your selection should NOT be a textbook or a collection of essays by different authors. The book should have a clear perspective/ argument. Make sure to do some looking around before settling on a book!

You will hand in your annotated book the first day of school, and you will have an in-class assignment that first week which uses your annotations.

Essay Prompt:

Take a side on a relevant issue (inspired by your chosen nonfiction) and effectively use a variety of research to prove your claim. Topics are endless; your topic can be an issue that involves psychology, has something to do with a growing global issue, explores new philosophies you've been interested in, etc.

We will spend a significant amount of time on this project after summer break, so don't worry so much about the details within the essay. Make sure you read and annotate for the following:

1. Quotes that clearly capture the central claim of your book
2. Quotes that strike you as powerful supporting evidence
 - a. *Remember, you'll use this book as the basis for a research paper, so the quotes you select should reflect the central claim.*
3. Quotes reveal a possible bias or fault in the proposed argument
4. Quotes that appeal to your emotions or logic, and use reputation to convince you

NOTE: Last year, too many people were annotating by simply labeling or restating facts directly stated in the book. While this is helpful for your own comprehension, focus more on **noting your OWN insights/ understanding:** ask more questions, make more connections, analyze the author's bias, and ultimately track your THINKING.

How to Pick a Book:

While the book is a jumping off point for your paper (you will be required to include research from many other and varying sources) please make sure to *preview your book and possibly its reviews* before settling on one. Your book should *inspire* your argument (which can definitely include arguing against it, by the way!). Please do not select a biography, memoir or a book of essays.

Suggested authors include:

1. Steven Dubner - *Freakanomics, Think Like a Freak, When to Rob a Bank*
2. Malcolm Gladwell - *What the Dog Saw, Blink, The Tipping Points, Talking to Strangers*
3. David McRaney - *You Are Not So Smart, You Are Now Less Dumb*
4. Dan Kindlon - *Raising Cane, Alpha Girls*
5. Rebecca Skloot - *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*
6. Luis Alberto Urrea - *The Devil's Highway*
7. Johann Hari - *Chasing the Scream or Lost Connections*
8. Michelle Alexander - *The New Jim Crow*
9. Jonathan Safran Foer - *Eating Animals*

Interesting topics to explore:

1. Effects and dangers of technology
2. Effectiveness of meditation
3. Nature vs. nurture
4. Privacy, hackers, and/or surveillance
5. Legality and/or morality hunting; other animal rights issues
6. Political involvement vs. political ignorance
7. Truth behind myths, legends, or superstitions
8. Rights of underrepresented groups (people with disabilities, minority races, people with intellectual disabilities)
9. Discrimination or other social issues (Me Too Movement, gun control, student rights)
10. Incarceration
11. Addiction, the Drug War, and what to do about it
12. Depression and Anxiety causes and treatment

Other jumping off points to find inspiration:

- **Podcasts!** Check out This American Life, Radiolab, Reply All, or Embedded.
- Netflix Documentary Series, such as Thin Blue Line, Blackfish (animal rights), Fed Up (obesity), Into the Abyss (capital punishment), Food Inc (food regulation), The 13th, and many more.
- TED talks

Please email Mrs. Alderson aalderson@d127.org with any questions regarding your book selection and/or annotation requirements.