

May 26, 2010

Dear Sophomore Students and Parents,

Before this school year ended, I wanted to give you the summer reading requirements for next year. The PCA English Department has instituted the summer reading policy for two reasons. First, research in learning and best education practices indicate that students should read during the summer in order to maintain their reading and comprehension skills. While summer is for recreation, it is also a time when the brain can "atrophy" due to lack of "mental exercise." Please know that a student's performance on the verbal portion of SAT's and the other standardized tests has a direct correlation to critical reading ability. Encouraging your child to read—especially by modeling the practice of reading yourself—will result in better performance in all school subjects. Also, as students become avid readers, they simultaneously choose quality literature and non-fiction material. We look forward to hearing about your children's summer reading experiences when they return from vacation. We hope all of them will benefit personally and academically from the books they choose.

The second reason for the summer reading policy is that the school year is very busy for many of our students. By reading during the summer, the students can prepare for their academic year, thereby reducing some of the stress that they might experience. Students who are active in sports year-round should read as much as possible, and student football players should endeavor to read the first two novels on the course reading list as extensive knowledge of these works are required during the busy football season.

Summer Reading: This summer, please choose a book (or books) that you have not read that total **300 pages**.* While you may choose your own book, please ensure that your parents approve of your choice. Your book choice must not involve or concern the occult, horror, gory violence, or sexual content. As a guide, ask yourself if you would be comfortable presenting the details of your book to your parents, your teachers, and Mr. Emler!

Assessment: For all books read, complete a write-up using the attached form as a guide for content. Each report should not exceed two pages, typed, following MLA specifications: 4-line heading, double-spaced, size 12, Times New Roman, one-inch margins. Bring your book(s) along with your report to class on **Tuesday, 24 August** so that your teacher may verify page numbers read.

Course Reading for English II

Semester 1: *Antigone* by Sophocles *in text

Julius Caesar by Shakespeare *in text; purchase a side-by-side if desired

The Merchant of Venice by Shakespeare * please purchase; you may use a side-by-side if desired

Semester 2: *Animal Farm* by George Orwell *please purchase

A Separate Peace *please purchase

***Note: If you read a 200-page book and a 100-page book, then complete the write-up for the whole book first, and a write-up for the first 100 pages of the second book as well—this second write-up will naturally be shorter. Also, if you read OVER 300 pages, keep documentation so that those pages may count towards your first quarter outside reading requirement!**

If you have any questions regarding the appropriateness of a book, or any questions regarding this requirement, please send an email to aiwasko@pantego.com by June 3 to ensure a timely response.

(on the back of this page you will find your write-up guide)

Name: _____

Summer Reading Report Format

Book Title and Author:

Number of Pages Read: _____ *(title page, table of contents, index and glossary do not count!)

In complete sentences and in paragraph form where applicable, please discuss the following:

1. Characters:

Protagonist: Identify and detail character's role, traits, and features

Antagonist: Identify and detail character's role, traits, and features

2. Conflict: What is the major conflict in your book, and what role(s) do the main characters play in this conflict?

3. Minor characters: Briefly identify and describe

4. Time and Place Setting: Briefly describe

5. Narrator and point of view (perspective from which the story is told, NOT referring to the narrator's opinions)

6. Summary of plot

7. Symbols: Are there any symbols in your book? What are they, and what might they represent?

8. Theme/Message: What is the author trying to say through this book? What insights into the life do you get from this book?

9. Evaluation: What is your opinion of the story itself, the characters, the lesson/message, the writing, the author's feelings?

10. Recommendation: Would you recommend this book to people your own age? Why or why not?