

Eleventh Grade American Literature Summer Reading Assignment

Directions:

- A. Read John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men* and respond to the following essay topic (minimum of two typed pages): Steinbeck's novel takes its title from a poem by Robert Burns, "The best laid plans of mice and men often go astray, and leave us only grief and pain for promised joy." Write a response that explains how Steinbeck conveys the theme of these lines to the novel itself.
- B. Choose one book from the following list to read this summer. Students should choose their book as soon as possible so that they can obtain a copy and begin the assignment.
- C. Answer the questions that follow for your book. Please type your responses to each of the questions. You will be assessed on the quality and insightfulness of your responses. (Please no one or two word answers. Put some thought into them.)

Please note: These should be in MLA format. If you do not know MLA format, please refer to the Purdue On-Line Writing Lab (OWL) for assistance: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/>. Writing using MLA formatting is a skill that will be a necessity this school year.

Book Review Questions:

1. What is the significance of the title, and what can we conclude from the title before opening the text?
2. What is the goal of this book?
3. Do you agree with the author's argument? Explain your answer.
4. What types of evidence does the author provide to support his/her claims? (scientific proof, anecdote, opinion, etc.) Give specific examples.
5. How does the author establish credibility?
6. What is an important event or passage in the book? Explain your choice.
7. What dominant themes permeate the book?
8. What questions do you have after reading the book?
9. What effect does the book have on your beliefs, thoughts, and/or theories? Explain.
- 10.

Lastly, you need to write a reflective letter (no more than one page) about reading the book.

Write to me about the thoughts, feelings, observations, and new insights you experienced while reading your book. Some ideas to think about for your letter may include:

*Show me where you were drawn into the book and where you were pulled away from the book.

*Identify in your opinion the author's – or the story's – greatest strength and weakness

*Discuss in what ways the book is similar to your life

*Explore what value, besides entertainment, this book has

* Share your overall impressions of the book

*Discuss if you found yourself changing your mind about the book and/or the assignment

*How did this assignment help sharpen your skills of rhetorical or argument analysis

Your REFLECTIVE LETTER is your chance to "talk" with me about your book and your experiences in completing this assignment. Be open and honest with any thoughts/feelings you have about the books.

Summer Reading Book List:

- *Fast Food Nation* by Eric Schlosser
- *An American Childhood* by Annie Dillard
- *Three Cups of Tea* by Greg Mortenson
- *In Cold Blood* by Truman Capote
- *The Last Lecture* by Randy Pausch
- *Devil in the White City* by Erik Larson
- *Angela's Ashes* by Frank McCourt
- *A Child Called "It"* by Dave Pelzer
- *Nickel and Dimed* by Barbara Ehrenreich
- *Freakonomics: A Rogue Economist Explores the Hidden Side of Everything* by Steven D. Levitt and Stephen J. Dubner
- *Outliers: The Story of Success* by Malcolm Gladwell
- *The Glass Castle* by Jeannette Walls
- *I Am Malala: The Girl Who Stood Up for Education and Was Shot by the Taliban* by Malala Yousafzai
- *There are No Shortcuts* by Rafe Esquith
- *Moneyball: The Art of Winning an Unfair Game* by Michael Lewis
- *Sacco and Vanzetti* by Bruce Watson
- *Chinese Cinderella: The True Story of an Unwanted Daughter* by Adeline Yen Mah
- *We wish to inform you that tomorrow we will be killed with our families* by Philip Gourevitch
- *A Brief History of Time* by Stephen Hawking
- *The Disappearing Spoon: And Other True Tales of Madness, Love, and the History of the World from the Periodic Table of the Elements* by Sam Kean
- *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* by Rebecca Skloot
- *The Numbers Behind Numb3rs: Solving Crime with Mathematics* by Keith Devlin