

AP Language & Composition (11th grade)

Summer Reading Advanced Placement Composition

If you are taking AP Language & Composition (11th Grade) in August 2010 here is the summer reading assignment.

Required - Read *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* – Mark Twain.

Also, read one piece of fiction and one piece of non-fiction from the four choices below. Create a dialectical journal with your responses as you read. Your summer reading notes for the two books will be collected in class. Each chapter should be about ½ page long.

Fiction

The Joy Luck Club – Amy Tan

OR

Black Boy – Richard Wright

Non-fiction

Founding Brothers – Joseph Ellis

OR

1776 – David McCullough

As you read, think on these quotations and consider how you would define the American experience and the American Dream. Bring your notes from both books to the first day of class.

“I know of no way of judging the future but by the past.”

- Patrick Henry – speech to the Virginia Convention (March 23, 1775)

“The history of free men is never really written by chance but by choice – their choice.” – Dwight D. Eisenhower - Address at Pittsburgh (October 9, 1956)

“There is no agony like bearing an untold story inside you.”

Zora Neale Hurston – Their Eyes were Watching God (1937)

“If there is no struggle there is no progress.”

Frederick Douglass (August 4, 1856)

“The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.”

Martin Luther King, Jr. – Strength to Love (1963)

“I celebrate myself and sing myself,
And what I assume you shall assume. “

Walt Whitman “Song of Myself” Leaves of Grass (1881)

Things for you to think about as you read Joy Luck Club
(Be prepared to write about these topics when you return to school.)

Take a look at Chinese history. What were the social conditions of the 20th century? How are those social conditions reflected in the novel?

How does Jin-Mei feel about taking her mother's place in the Joy Luck Club?

Consider these themes as you read

Mother –daughter conflict

Expectations of parents

Searching for the past

Pressure to succeed

Living in a new culture

Know these words

admonish

brigand

fiasco

obstinate

apparition

discordant

malignant

staccato

arpeggio

embezzlement

malodorous

Things for you to think about as you read Richard Wright's Black Boy
(Be prepared to write about these topics and questions when you return to school.)

Vocabulary

1. elude v. to avoid or escape by cleverness
2. retaliated v. struck back; returned injury for injury
3. injunction n. court order forbidding an act
4. surreptitiously adv. secretly
5. dissuaded v. kept (someone) from doing something by persuasion
6. antagonism n. opposition; hostility
7. appease v. to make peace or satisfy someone, especially by giving in to another's demands
8. ardent adj. eager; passionate
9. dubious adj. hesitating or doubting; of questionable value
10. doctrine n. set of beliefs held by a particular group
11. implacable adj. unable to be calmed or pacified
12. subservience n. act of being slavishly submissive in behavior or attitude
13. transgressions n. pl. violations of a law or rule
14. demented adj. insane
15. denunciation n. public expression of disapproval; open condemnation
16. dismayed v. frightened; disheartened
17. impending adj. about to happen; threatening
18. calculating adj. shrewd; scheming
19. futile adj. useless; vain
20. refuted v. proved that something is false or wrong

Discussion Questions

1. (a) How old is Richard in Chapter 1 of the autobiography?
(b) What kind of child does Richard seem to be, based on Wright's descriptions of his childhood words, thoughts, and actions?
2. How does Richard feel about his father? Why?
3. Why is Richard so fascinated by the story of Bluebeard?
4. Why won't Richard's mother explain to him the causes for the tension with whites?
5. What emotions does Richard feel toward the "invisible whites"?
6. (a) Richard says that his mother's illness "grew into a symbol" in his mind. What does the illness represent to him?
(b) How does the illness affect his attitudes later in life?
7. What is the cause of the external conflict between Richard and Granny?
8. (a) Explain the misunderstanding between Richard and Granny at the revival meeting.
(b) What unexpected positive result does this experience have on Richard?
9. In Chapter 5, what historical and cultural context does Wright provide by describing Richard's experience selling newspapers?
10. Describe Richard's reaction to his grandfather's death.
11. What effect does the publication of Richard's short story have on his friends?
12. Why does Richard refuse to give the speech that the principal has written for him?
13. What does Richard decide after enduring the hatred of the workers at the optical company?
14. Why does Richard feel uneasy when he stays with Mrs. Moss and Betsy in Memphis?
15. What is Richard's reaction to the abuse that Shorty allows himself to endure from the white people around him?
16. (a) Richard says that H. L. Mencken "was using words as a weapon." What does he mean by this metaphor?
(b) How does the discovery of Mencken's writing affect Richard?
17. Richard describes his feelings after reading Mencken and other authors as a "new hunger." What does he mean by this metaphor?
18. Richard describes a "white censor" that stands over him and monitors his behavior.
19. When a white man sits beside Richard on a streetcar in Chicago, he asks himself "how could that possibly be?" Explain how Richard's shock arises from the historical and cultural contexts of his previous experience.
20. Why don't the Hoffmans fire Richard when they know that he has lied about why he missed work?
21. What kinds of living conditions do Richard and his family generally find in Chicago?
22. How does visiting the John Reed Club encourage Richard as a writer?
23. Why are the Communist unit meetings kept secret?
24. How do the stock market crash and the Depression affect Richard and other people that he knows?
25. Why does Richard want to interview the African American Communist Ross?
26. To what does Wright compare the fear he begins to feel from belonging to the Communist party?
27. What do the Communist party leaders think about Richard's desire to write his novel?

Things to think about as you read Founding Brothers

(Be prepared to write about these topics when you return to school.)

How are the lives of the men of this time period created? How does the writer describe George Washington – how does this fit into what you have learned over the years about Washington?

How should the institution of slavery have been dealt with at the founding of the country? Was this the greatest problem the country faced at that time?

Things to think about as you read 1776

(Be prepared to write about these topics when you return to school.)

1. How do the British view the rebellion of the colonies? What do they understand? What do they feel in regard to the rebels? Is there disagreement among them?
2. What is in the minds of the Americans? Why do they rebel? What do they hope to accomplish? Is there disagreement among them?
3. Keep a record as you read, of the extent to which the leaders are prepared for an extended war.
4. What is the frame of mind throughout the country? To what extent do you see patriotism? Is the universal feeling patriotic? What contributions are made by ordinary people?
5. How does McCullough contrast the character of George III with the popular conception of him today?
6. Was independence the goal early in the war?
7. July 2, 1776: What was the effect of the Declaration of Independence upon the army?
8. Describe the effect of the British Proclamation of November 30th.
9. How does this depiction of 1776 differ from earlier history lessons? Were you surprised at the conditions? The mistakes? The lack of training of the American leaders?
10. Do the things you have learned in this book bear any relation to efforts to bring democracy to other parts of the world today? Does reading this book give you any new ideas concerning war, revolution, patriotism, democracy, “good wars” vs. “bad wars”?