EHS Gifted & Talented Academy
AP English Language & Composition
Summer Reading Assignment

Overview
Summer reading is an integral part of the English curriculum of the EHS Gifted Academy, one that helps students to prepare for the challenges of the academic year ahead. Because the focus of this course is nonfiction, students are required to read two (2) books this summer: one nonfiction, and one fiction title. In addition to the close reading and annotation of each summer reading book, students will complete a short assignment for each text. The purpose of these assignments is to guide student thinking in the absence of a teacher. Students will write a formal essay based on the fiction book early in the fall semester; close reading of the text will prepare students for this essay. Students should bring both summer reading texts to our first class and be prepared to share their *thoughtful and thorough* annotations and notes in class discussion during the first week of classes.

The nonfiction title is William Strunk and E.B. White's brief writing guide *The Elements of Style* (Please read the fourth edition or newer). This classic writing and style manual is easy to understand, and covers topics of mechanics and usage that all writing students should have mastered, but may have forgotten. *The Elements of Style* will be an excellent reference guide both for the remainder of high school and for college.

The fiction title is Aldous Huxley's classic novel *Brave New World*. This text connects to the course thematically, exploring ideas of freedom, control, thought, and the roles of both individuals and government in modern society.

Assignment for the Nonfiction Text
Read and annotate the text. Annotations need not be extensive, but mark passages that reinforce past teaching or which contain new or helpful ideas. Then choose two principles, one from section II -- *Elementary Principles of Composition* -- and one from section V -- *An Approach to Style* -- that you find useful and/or interesting. Write a 1-2 paragraph reflection on each, explaining why you chose them and how you can employ the ideas in your own writing.

Note: failure to adhere to the basic rules and principles outlined in these sections will result in lower grades on student essays -- both formal and informal. Be smart. If you know that conventions are a relative weakness in your writing, practice them this summer.

Assignment for the Fiction Text
Actively read and annotate the text (See suggested response items on reverse.) Everyone annotates a little bit differently, but all annotations require students to underline, highlight, and/or circle literary and rhetorical devices; ask questions of the author; locate examples of imagery and figurative language; and write margin notes about the devices the author uses. When reading, students should ask themselves questions, such as: What does this mean? What is the author's purpose? What is the function of this chapter? What is the author's tone? What statements does the author make through character? Through setting? What literary/rhetorical devices does the author employ? Is the author successful?

Although it is not necessary to purchase copies of the summer reading books, it is to a student's advantage to have his/her own copies of the texts. This allows students to highlight, annotate, and take margin notes in the text itself, which is an essential skill students will expand upon as they progress through high school. Paperbacks and used books are often the best value; both are readily available online at amazon.com, half.com, or barnesandnoble.com.

Please address questions or concerns about the summer reading assignment to the instructor at lisasmith@u-46.org.
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Response Journal

RATIONALE Assigned readings are the basis of daily class discussion and activities; thus, students who choose not to do reading will be at a severe disadvantage. To keep students focused and organized as they read, they should plan to take notes on the following elements each night that reading is assigned.

ASSIGNMENT Respond in writing to each of the prompts below. Students are encouraged to add their own original ideas/responses. Try to comment on each prompt for each chapter, section, or night's reading assignment.

- SYNOPSIS: In 1-2 sentences, summarize the action of each chapter.

- REACTIONS: Write down your reaction to the night's reading. If you're intrigued by certain statements or situations or attracted to particular characters or issues, include in your statement a description of why you feel this way.

- MAKE CONNECTIONS: What does the reading make you think of? Does it remind you of anything or anyone? Make connections with other texts, concepts, or historic events. What similarities do you see?

- ASK QUESTIONS: What confuses you about a particular passage? Try beginning, "I wonder why..." or "I'm having trouble understanding how...' or "It perplexes me that..." or "I was surprised when ...."

- AGREE / DISAGREE: On what action (or inaction), or about what issues, do you agree or disagree? Support your ideas with references to the text. Try arguing with the author. Think of your journal as a place to carry on a dialogue with the author.

- QUOTES: Write down striking words, images, phrases, or details. Speculate about them. Why did the author choose them? What do they add to the work? Why did you notice them?

These guidelines are adapted from a handout from the Bard College Language and Thinking Program.