

AP LANG & AMERICAN LITERATURE SUMMER READING 2024

MR. TROWELL

INTRODUCTION

Congratulations on choosing to take AP Language and American Literature - one of Northside High School's most rigorous courses.

This class promises to challenge you intellectually, spiritually, and emotionally. It will also sharpen your confidence and facility with language as you approach meaningful work. Malcolm Gladwell, whose book *Outliers* we will read this year, defines meaningful work as having autonomy, complexity, and a direct relationship between effort and reward.

Your summer reading assignment attempts to fulfill this definition, offering a challenging product, and a reward directly related to the quality of your effort.

For the summer of 2024, we will be reading *The Martian Chronicles* by Ray Bradbury. "This very loosely linked volume of short stories follows humans as they attempt to colonize Mars, an imagined place of blue hills, Greek temple-like glass houses, and bubbling silver lava beds. How earthlings and Martians interact provides much of the drama against the shimmering, mid-century dream of another planet."

You will need to get a **physical copy** of the book as you will not be allowed to use digital books in class.

READING AND ANNOTATING

While you read your book, be sure to annotate thoroughly in order to be well-prepared for class discussion as well as a test.

Focus on identifying the novel's themes as well as the variety of techniques, devices, and strategies Bradbury uses to develop the story. I will expect at least one annotation every five pages. If you are uncertain about what this means, ask your current teacher or stop by my room before you leave for summer break. I will check your annotations when you return in August.

CREATIVE WRITING

Bradbury proposed that writing “reminds us that we are alive and that it is a gift and a privilege, not a right. We must earn life once it has been awarded us. Life asks for rewards back because it has favored us with animation.” So in honor of Mr. Bradbury’s excellent book, we too will write this summer from an assignment he designed. Using a pen and paper (perhaps in a journal or notebook) make a list of nouns and ask yourself, what does each noun mean? The orange street light. The owl & the covered bridge. The dance. The temperate cup of coffee. The meteor shower. Your own list, I suspect, will be much different than mine. Then, word associate around each noun. Why did you put this word down? What does it mean to you? Why this word and not some other word? According to Bradbury, “do this and you’re on your way to being a good writer.

"EXCELLENCE... IS NOT AN ACT BUT A HABIT" - JOHN WOODEN

PARTING THOUGHTS

One final reminder—AP Language and American Literature is for contenders not pretenders. By choosing to take this class, you are choosing to adopt a rigorous schedule that will develop a sound mind capable of meeting the challenges of mastering rhetoric and composition while also preparing for the American Literature & AP Lang. exams. The rewards you receive for taking this class will be the satisfaction of a challenge well-met, the college credit received from the AP Exam, and the life-long skills to navigate a thematically and rhetorically complex society.

The quality of each of these rewards will be directly related to the effort you apply and the consistency with which you apply it.

If, as John Wooden claims, “we are what we repeatedly do” then it stands to reason that “excellence is not an act, but a habit.” Practice excellence this summer. I look forward to working with you in the fall.

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