

Summer Reading for Incoming 11th Graders

Response Essay (50 points)

Group Presentation (50 points)

Step 1: Choose and obtain one book from the list below to read over the summer before your junior year.

Step 2: Read your chosen book and write a 2–3-page response essay about the book. *Anything less than 2 FULL pages will lose points.* Your response should discuss your thoughts and reactions to your chosen book considering its themes, characters, cultural or historical context, setting, or plot. The point is to consider **your** response to a given piece of literature. What makes you like or dislike a book? What grabs your attention?

The response essay should follow MLA guidelines for formatting: double-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman font, 1" margins with proper heading information, page numbers, and your last name on top right of the pages.

Response essays are due the first day of classes.

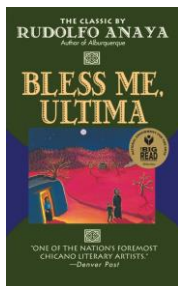
Step 3: During the first week of classes, you will work together with others who read the same book to create and deliver a presentation that will teach the rest of the class about the book's content, literary merits, and author.

Slaughterhouse-Five By Kurt Vonnegut



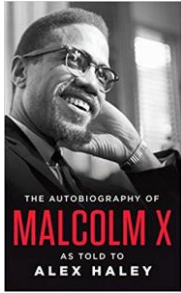
Slaughterhouse-Five, an American classic, is one of the world's great antiwar books. Centering on the infamous World War II firebombing of Dresden, the novel is the result of what Kurt Vonnegut described as a twenty-three-year struggle to write a book about what he had witnessed as an American prisoner of war. It combines historical fiction, science fiction, autobiography, and satire in an account of the life of Billy Pilgrim, a barber's son turned draftee turned optometrist turned alien abductee. As Vonnegut had, Billy experiences the destruction of Dresden as a POW. Unlike Vonnegut, he experiences time travel, or coming "unstuck in time." (Provided by the publisher)

Bless Me, Ultima Rudolpho Anaya



Set in rural New Mexico in the 1940s, the novel tells the story of a boy who learns to navigate the changing American landscape during World War II with the help of a *curandera* (spiritual healer) who guides him through the cultural, religious, and moral contradictions he faces in his community of farmers, priests, cowboys, and soldiers. Like his protagonist, Rudolpho Anaya grew up in a New Mexico community heavily influenced by both Catholicism and spiritual healers, with a *vaquero* (cowboy) father and three older brothers who went off to war in their youth. Anaya is an "extraordinary storyteller" that has "always written unpretentiously but provocatively about identity." (National Endowment for the Arts)

The Autobiography of Malcolm X Malcolm X, Alex Haley, Attallah Shabazz



In the searing pages of this classic autobiography, originally published in 1964, Malcolm X, the Muslim leader, firebrand, and anti-integrationist, tells the extraordinary story of his life and the growth of the Black Muslim movement. His fascinating perspective on the lies and limitations of the American Dream, and the inherent racism in a society that denies its nonwhite citizens the opportunity to dream, gives extraordinary insight into the most urgent issues of our own time. *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* stands as the definitive statement of a movement and a man whose work was never completed but whose message is timeless. It is essential reading for anyone who wants to understand America. (Provided by publisher)

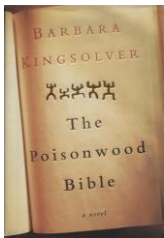
The Catcher in the Rye J.D. Salinger



Holden Caulfield, about to be kicked out of yet another boarding school for flunking most of his courses, decides not to wait until the end of term and takes off for his hometown, Manhattan, a few days early. He figures he'll hole up in a cheap hotel, look up a few friends, then arrive home on time. But Holden is deeply troubled by the death of his beloved younger brother from leukemia, as well as a classmate's suicide. Alone in an uncaring city, his already fragile psyche begins to unravel. There are three true things that can be said about J.D.

Salinger's masterpiece: It is one of the great works of American literature, it is one of the most frequently challenged by would-be book-banners, and, therefore, it is one of the most misunderstood books of the 20th century. (Common Sense Media)

The Poisonwood Bible Barbara Kingsolver



The Poisonwood Bible is a story told by the wife and four daughters of Nathan Price, a fierce, evangelical Baptist who takes his family and mission to the Belgian Congo in 1959. They carry with them everything they believe they will need from home, but soon find that all of it—from garden seeds to Scripture—is calamitously transformed on African soil. What follows is a suspenseful epic of one family's tragic undoing and remarkable reconstruction over the course of three decades in postcolonial Africa. The novel is set against one of the most dramatic political chronicles of the twentieth century: the Congo's fight for independence

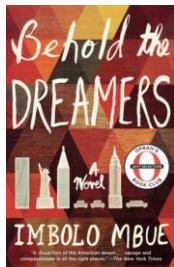
from Belgium, the murder of its first elected prime minister, the CIA coup to install his replacement, and the insidious progress of a world economic order that robs the fledgling African nation of its autonomy. Against this backdrop, Orleana Price reconstructs the story of her evangelist husband's part in the Western assault on Africa, a tale indelibly darkened by her own losses and unanswerable questions about her own culpability. Also narrating the story, by turns, are her four daughters—the self-centered, teenaged Rachel; shrewd adolescent twins Leah and Adah; and Ruth May, a five-year-old. These sharply observant girls, who arrive in the Congo with racial preconceptions forged in 1950s Georgia, will be marked in surprisingly different ways by their father's mission and by Africa itself. (Provided by the publisher)

Girl, Interrupted Susanna Kaysen



In 1967, after a session with a psychiatrist she'd never seen before, eighteen-year-old Susanna Kaysen was sent to McLean Hospital, where she spent most of the next two years on the ward for teenage girls in a psychiatric hospital renowned for its famous clientele--Sylvia Plath, Robert Lowell, James Taylor, Ray Charles--and for its progressive methods of treating those who could afford its sanctuary. Kaysen's memoir encompasses horror and razor-edged perception while providing vivid portraits of her fellow patients and their keepers. It is a brilliant evocation of a "parallel universe" set within the kaleidoscopically shifting landscape of the late sixties. *Girl, Interrupted* gives lasting and specific dimension to our definitions of sane and insane, mental illness and recovery. (Provided by the publisher)

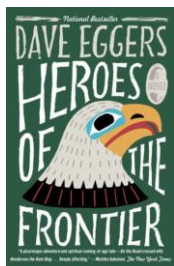
Behold the Dreamers Imbolo Mbue



Jende Jonga, a Cameroonian immigrant living in Harlem, has come to the United States to provide a better life for himself, his wife, Neni, and their six-year-old son. In the fall of 2007, Jende can hardly believe his luck when he lands a job as a chauffeur for Clark Edwards, a senior executive at Lehman Brothers. Clark demands punctuality, discretion, and loyalty—and Jende is eager to please. Clark's wife, Cindy, even offers Neni temporary work at the Edwards' summer home in the Hamptons. With these opportunities, Jende and Neni can at last gain a foothold in America and imagine a brighter future.

However, the world of great power and privilege conceals troubling secrets, and soon Jende and Neni notice cracks in their employers' façades. When the financial world is rocked by the collapse of Lehman Brothers, the Jongas are desperate to keep Jende's job—even as their marriage threatens to fall apart. As all four lives are dramatically upended, Jende and Neni are forced to make an impossible choice. (Provided by the publisher)

Heroes of the Frontier Dave Eggers



Josie and her children's father have split up, she's been sued by a former patient and lost her dental practice, and she's grieving the death of a young man senselessly killed shortly after enlisting. When her ex asks to take the children to meet his new fiancée's family, Josie makes a run for it to Alaska with her kids, Paul and Ana. At first their trip feels like a vacation: they see bears and bison, they eat hot dogs cooked on a bonfire, and they spend nights parked along icy cold rivers in dark forests. But as they drive in their rattling old RV, pushed north by the ubiquitous wildfires, Josie is chased by enemies both real and imagined, and past mistakes pursue her tiny family, even to the very edge of civilization. A captivating, often hilarious novel of family, loss, wilderness, and the curse of a violent America, *Heroes of the Frontier* is a powerful examination of our contemporary life and a rousing story of adventure. (Provided by the publisher)