

English 10 Honors Summer Reading

2009 - 2010 School Year

Dear Parents and Incoming Sophomore Honors Students,

Recent research suggests that today's teens do not read enough outside of school. As part of a district goal to expand reading opportunities for students, the English Departments at Plainfield High School – Central Campus, Plainfield South High School, Plainfield East High School, and Plainfield North High School are requiring that all honors students read a novel over the summer. We believe this assignment will strengthen our students' skills as readers and also as writers. Additionally, many honors students will take the AP examinations during their junior year; thus it is imperative that each student is exposed to a wide range and background of literature, especially in the area of twentieth century authors and issues. Like Stratford P. Sherman, author of *America Won't Win Till it Reads More*, we believe "Reading transcends the mere transmission of information: It fosters an imaginative dialogue between the text and the reader's mind that actually helps people think."

Over the past few months, English teachers have read and discussed many possible titles for this summer reading program. We have chosen the following selections for incoming sophomore honors students. Please, choose one novel and complete a reader's log (the directions are on the back) to be turned in to the English 10 Honors teacher the **FIRST** day of student attendance.

We will alert the manager of the local Barnes and Noble Bookstore (at 127th Street next to Target and the one next to the Louis Joliet Mall) so that she knows there will be a demand for these novels this summer. This letter and the actual assignment also are included in the English Department's section of the school web site at: <http://www.learningcommunity202.org/PSHS/>

- ※ *Things Fall Apart* (Achebe)
- ※ *Martian Chronicles* (Bradbury)
- ※ *The Joy Luck Club* (Tan)
- ※ *Cat's Cradle* (Vonnegut)

If you have any questions about the summer reading, feel free to contact Ms. Smith or Ms. Stashak at the respective email addresses: tsmith@learningcommunity202.org or [sstashak@learningcommunity202.org](mailto:ssstashak@learningcommunity202.org). We wish you an enjoyable summer and eagerly anticipate classes beginning in August.

Thank you,

- The English Faculty of Plainfield High Schools

Creating a Reader's Log

A reader's log is a method of recording one's reactions to literature while it is being read. It may include opinions, feelings, connections to real life or other literature, analysis of specific lines of the text, examination of unclear words or passages, or questions. Its purpose is to assist a reader in examining the text more carefully and as a source of material for later thinking, discussion, or writing.

This kind of writing is done in two columns with a quotation or fact from the text (*including page numbers*) on the left and the reader's corresponding comment on the right. It is evaluated on the basis of its quality as well as quantity; therefore, the reader will want to put thought into each entry.

Quotation / Fact	Reader's Comments
<hr/>	

Sample reader's log reactions (right side) based on well-known literary passages

1. **Connections to other literature:** The end of *West Side Story* makes me think of *Romeo and Juliet*, both of which *are* tragic ends to a beautiful love story.
2. **Feelings:** How sad that Romeo and Juliet died for love. It made me cry to think how foolish it was that they could not be together.
3. **Analysis of the text:** The line, "It was the best of times; it was the worst of times" really sums up the themes of this story in one sentence. That makes it a very effective first line on the novel, making the reader want to know what events prompted that comment.
4. **Examination of unclear words or passages:** If the Wife was boiling puddings in the pan, that can't be chocolate or tapioca. The dictionary says that this pudding is a sausage -- that makes more sense.
5. **Questions:** Why does Chaucer describe only two women in the *Prologue*? Was this usual for a trip at this time?

Students should respond on a frequent, consistent basis throughout the reading of the novel.
(suggested minimum – 40 comments)