

Honors English 2: 2011 Summer Reading Assignment

(All essays must be turned in to your English 2 teacher on the first day of school)

PHS English Department Summer Reading Philosophy: In conjunction with Plainfield High School's stated mission to help students develop into lifelong learners, the PHS English Department requires students to complete an independent reading project over the course of each summer. Summer reading assignments are designed to be rigorous, yet flexible enough to accommodate each student's individual needs and interests. Each summer reading assignment includes a writing piece which will engage students' critical thinking skills. All summer reading work correlates directly with course curricula, introducing students to important themes and concepts that will be further explored in their upcoming English classes.

Students must read any two of the following novels:

- The Things They Carried by Tim O' Brien
- The Lovely Bones by Alice Sebold
- Feed by M.T Anderson
- Flowers For Algernon by Daniel Keyes

Essay Prompt: In Honors English 2, students will examine the theme of "The Individual Versus Society" and its impact across a wide body of literature. The theme of "The Individual Versus Society" could be applied to any text that features a protagonist who faces pressure from his/her community to behave in a way that contradicts his/her morals or beliefs. The theme could also be applied to situations in which a young person begins to question the authority of adult figures or adult society in general.

Choose any two of the texts listed above. Then, write a 4-5 page essay analyzing conflicts between the protagonists of each text and the societies in which they live. Compare and contrast the conflicts each character faces, as well as how each character handles these conflicts. Your essay must be written in MLA format and feature at least two direct quotations from each text. Support your opinions with as much textual evidence as possible. When crafting your essay, you may want to consider each of the following points:

- What conflicts exist between the protagonists of each text and the societies in which they live? How does each protagonist respond to these conflicts?
- What causes each character to question society? Is it a moral issue? Does the character simply object to being told what to do? Explain.
- How does each protagonist's relationship with society evolve over the course of the novel? How do these changes influence each protagonist's personality and actions?
- Which protagonist do you think handled their conflict with society in the most effective way? Explain.
- How do you think a person should respond when they find themselves questioning the society around them? Do you agree or disagree with the way in which the protagonists in each text handled the situation?

If you have any questions regarding this assignment, please contact Mr. Farrish by e-mail at either of the following addresses: Farrishj@Plainfieldschools.org or Mrfarrish99@hotmail.com