

Vidor High School
English I Pre-AP Summer Reading Project
2010-2011

Students enrolled in English I Pre-AP are required to read and study two pieces of literature throughout the summer. You should return to school in August ready to test and participate in detailed discussions and activities over these two novels:

- **October Sky** by Homer H. Hickam, Jr. (also published as **Rocket Boys**)
Autobiography of Homer Hickam, a 15 year old boy living in the coal mining town of West Virginia and the struggles of changing his future.
 - **Lord of the Flies** by **William Golding** A fiction novel portraying a group of young boys' struggle to stay alive while contending with their own savagery in the absence of law.
- Highlighting and annotating a text is like having a conversation with a book – it allows the active reader to ask questions, comment on meaning, and mark events and passages he or she wants to revisit. I strongly recommend that you annotate your novels as preparation for class discussion and the test(s) you will take the first week(s) of class. An instruction page is attached.

Helpful hint for success: The more you read, your vocabulary, reading comprehension, and writing skills will improve. Students should constantly read, gaining knowledge all around them to make better decisions and applications in their work. Above all, READ FOR FUN!!!

Suggestions for Annotating a Text

Annotate – v. To furnish (a literary work) with critical commentary or explanatory notes.

Careful readers often annotate their texts. Here are some suggestions for how to make notes in your novels. (If the book is NOT yours, you may use stickies/post-it notes.) Some of these terms may not be familiar to you, but as an independent learner, you should be able to research and find definitions and examples to help you.

Be prepared to use annotations and notes marked in your novels as a resource during the tests.

HINT: Taking the time to annotate your novel closely may aide in your success on the tests.

Inside Front Cover – Character list with small space for character summary and for page references for key scenes, moments of character development, etc...

Inside Back Cover – Themes, allusions, symbols. List and add page references and / or notes as you read.

Chapter summaries / titles -- At the end of each chapter, write a brief summary of the plot as it occurred in that chapter. This does not have to be long or greatly detailed, but should include all relevant incidents.

Underline – Within the text of the book, and **as you read**, underline or otherwise note anything that strikes you as important, significant, or memorable. If possible, write brief comments in the side margins that indicate your motivation in underlining. Focus on elements of literature (plot, setting, characterization, point of view, and theme). Explain significance of the underlined text in the margin

in a few words. Note questions or comments about the text in the margins. These will lead to class discussion opportunities.

Vocabulary / unusual diction – Within the text of the book, circle words that are unfamiliar to you or whose use strikes you as unusual or inventive. Look up words in a dictionary that seem essential to an understanding of the meaning or the sense of the author. Jot a brief definition or synonym in a nearby margin. Ultimately you will need to compile a 50 word list for your word log. Each entry for the word log should have a dictionary definition, antonym, synonym, and a sentence in which the word is used correctly.

Close-reading clues:

- Bildungsroman: a novel in which the main character or characters grow, mature, or understand the world in adult terms. This is a recurring theme in both novels. Be prepared to discuss and provide examples of changes experienced by characters in both novels.
- *October Sky* is a novel rich with symbolism. Mark these symbols in your novel and be prepared to discuss the significance of each.
- An allusion is a reference to an event in history, the bible, or another piece of literature. Mark examples of allusions in both novels and be prepared to discuss why it is mentioned.
- In each of the novels, the protagonists share many of the same qualities and characteristics. Be prepared to discuss the similarities and explain how they affect the themes of each book.
- Research the setting (time & place) of each novel and be prepared to discuss what was going on in history during each time period.
- The two novels share similar themes. Be prepared to state the theme(s) of each in complete sentences. (A theme is not the topic or subject and cannot be stated in one word)

Essay: After the two novels are read you will need to do two 250 word essays.
ESSAY 1: Explain how the authors use symbolism to elaborate on important concepts of each novel (example: the conch in “Lord of the Flies” and the coal mine in “October Sky”). You need to provide textual evidence from both novels in the essay.

ESSAY 2: Write a comparative essay on four characters, two from each novel, explaining how they share similar traits. Some ideas could include: (but are not limited to) leadership characteristics, imagination, willingness to help others or weaknesses.

*****ESSAYS need to be typed in 12 point font. The spacing should be set at double space.