

Summer Reading Options

For the 2019 Summer Reading Project, incoming 10th, 11th, and 12th grade students at St. Joe will have three options. Each option comes with a list of books and other texts from which you may choose (you may not mix and match texts and projects). During the first week of the 2019-20 school year, students will reflect on and present their summer reading projects.

Option 1: Autoethnography

Ethnography is type of research, specifically a method of studying people and cultures. The prefix “auto” means self. Autoethnography, then, is the practice of studying one’s self in relation to people and cultures. To practice autoethnography, authors write about their own personal experiences as a means of understanding culture and cultural experiences. This includes reflective, narrative, and analytical writing.

Your task: For this option, you will choose one of the books from the list to read during the summer. You will also keep a reflective journal of your own summer experiences. As you read the book, you will write journal entries analyzing and reflecting on how the book represents a particular culture and unique aspects of that culture.

Project requirements:

- Use Google Docs to create and keep your journal. You will write a total of 10 journal entries throughout the summer—five about the book and five about your own experiences. All entries should be on the same document. Note that this project will be much more effective if you write your journal entries throughout the summer rather than writing them all at the end.
- For the five personal journals, you will write about your experiences throughout the summer and reflect on your own cultural position. What culture(s) do you identify with? What are the values, beliefs, practices, and behaviors of this culture? How are you situated within it? How do you participate in this culture through your own actions and experiences? Each of these entries should include both narrative and reflective writing. Narrative writing retells actions, experiences, and feelings. Reflective writing involves considering the meaning or significance of what you’ve experienced. For example, a personal journal entry might describe a recent experience and then reflect on how it’s significant in relation to some of the above questions about culture. You may also include some writing comparing your own experiences and cultural position to a character from the book or a different culture you’ve encountered (perhaps in your summer travels).
- For the five journals about the book, you will identify the culture(s) the book represents and analyze specific parts of the book to consider unique aspects of the culture, such as values, beliefs, practices, behaviors, social institutions, works of art, etc. You will also reflect on how one character from the book is situated within the culture. Use the same reflection questions you use for your personal journal to consider the character’s cultural position. The book journals should include a quote from the book, analysis of the quote that explains how it represents unique aspects of a culture, and a discussion of how one character connects to the aspect(s) of culture you’re analyzing and how the character is situated in the culture overall.
- Each journal entry must be at least 500 words. Each book journal entry must include a quote from the book. The quotes you include must span the book from beginning to end; no quotes from the same or consecutive chapters. Use quotation marks around all quotes fewer than 40 words and include an in-text citation with the page number on which the quote appears, like this (#). Use block format for quotes longer than 40 words (indent the entire quote one inch from the left margin, don’t use quotation marks, and place the in-text citation after the period in the last sentence). All journal entries

should be on the same Google Doc. Consider alternating your journal entries throughout the summer—i.e., one personal entry, one book entry, another personal entry, and so on.

Book choices:

- *If I Grow Up* by Todd Strasser
- *The Field Guide to the North American Teenager* by Ben Phillipe
- *Americanah* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie
- *Purple Hibiscus* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie
- *The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hoseinni
- *In the Language of Miracles* by Rajia Hassib
- *Reading Lolita in Tehran* by Azar Nafisi
- *The Joy Luck Club* by Amy Tan
- *White Teeth* by Zadie Smith
- *The Sun is Also a Star* by Nicola Yoon
- If you have another book choice you'd like me to consider, send me an email at whitney.naylorsmith@stjosephhs.org to request approval. Please include the title and author of the book in your email.

Option 2: Classic + Contemporary Connections

Understanding the conventions and themes of classic works provides readers with a traditional understanding of literature, showing us the foundations on which more modern books are constructed. Literature does not exist in a vacuum—books often share themes, plots, character types, and more. Some books are even directly patterned after earlier works to serve as a modern retelling. An experienced reader can recognize the patterns and features contemporary works borrow from their classic predecessors, which helps them understand the purpose and meaning of what they're reading.

Your task: For this option, you will choose two of the paired books from the list below to read throughout the summer. These books share similar themes, plots, and/or other textual elements. After reading each book, you will compose a short essay explaining what you see as the five most important text elements of each book. By "text elements," I mean specific parts of the book such as character, conflict, setting, theme, etc. See the complete list of literary elements with definitions at the end of this document. After you've read both books, you will compose one more essay comparing/contrasting the text elements of each book and reflecting on what you've learned from reading the books together.

Project requirements:

- Essay 1: This will be a 600-word expository essay on the first book you read. "Expository" means describing or explaining. For this essay, then, you'll choose what you see as the five most important text elements, give an example of each one from the book, and explain why they're important to the overall story.
- Essay 2: This essay has the same requirements as essay 1, but it will be on the second book.
- Essay 3: This will be a 600-word comparative essay in which you compare and contrast the two texts based on several of the specific text elements you've identified and then reflect on what you've learned from reading the books as a pair.
- Compose all essays on a single document in Google Docs.

Book choices:

- *The Fault in Our Stars* by John Greene and *Romeo and Juliet* by Shakespeare

- *The Goldfinch* by Donna Tartt and *Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens
- *Speak* by Laurie Halse Andersen and *The Scarlett Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne
- *Beautiful Creatures* by Kami Garcia and Margaret Stohl and *Macbeth* by Shakespeare
- *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* by Sherman Alexie and *Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain
- *Feed* by M.T. Anderson and *1984* by George Orwell
- *The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins and *Lord of the Flies* by William Golding
- *Girl, Interrupted* by Susanna Kaysen and *The Bell Jar* by Sylvia Plath
- If you have a different paired book choice you'd like me to consider, send me an email at whitney.naylor-smith@stjosephhs.org to request approval. Please include the titles and authors of the books in your email.

Option 3: Reading the World with Poetry

Some readers find poetry difficult to understand, and perhaps have even more trouble connecting poetry to the real world. Poems, however, contain powerful worldly themes as well as observations about the way things are. Poets often choose familiar objects or experiences as their subjects and write about them in abstract ways that make common things seem strange or newly interesting. By helping us deconstruct what we know about people, objects, and the world around us, poetry allows us to see things in new ways. Another way of learning about the world around us is reading the news. The news gives readers an objective, straightforward view of current events, allowing us to learn more about our own communities, nations, and the world. Both are valuable ways of discovering the objects, people, and events around us.

Your task: For this option, you will choose a collection of poetry from the list below. You will also choose several news articles—either print or online—to read along with your poetry collection. Throughout the summer, you will write ten journal entries making connections between the poems you're reading and the current events you're learning about in the news.

Project Requirements:

- You will write a total of 10 journal entries throughout the summer. Compose all entries on one Google Doc.
- Each entry must be 500 words and discuss one poem and one news article. Begin your journal with brief summaries of each text—i.e., what the poem is about and what the news article is about. Note that you might need to read a poem several times, look up words, and decipher phrases to really understand it. Following the summaries, discuss your experience reading each text and the connections you see between the two. You may include quotes if you wish to point out a specific phrase or line of either text.
- Include the title and author of each poem in your journal entry and provide a link to the news article at the end of your entry.
- News articles must come from reputable sources. Personal websites and blogs are not acceptable for this assignment. Some possibilities include *The New York Times*, *BBC*, *NPR*, *PBS*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Washington Post*, *The Economist*, *The Atlantic*, *Politico*, *TIME Magazine*, *CNN*, *The Los Angeles Times*, and similar publications.

Book choices:

- *Ariel* by Sylvia Plath
- *Brown Girl Dreaming* by Jacqueline Woodson
- *Milk and Honey* by Rupi Kaur
- *The Sun and Her Flowers* by Rupi Kaur

- *Love and Scorn* by Carol Frost
- *Leaves of Grass* by Walt Whitman
- *Birthday Letters* by Ted Hughes
- *Valley Girl* by Crystal Good
- *The Balloonists* by Eula Biss
- *Why I Wake Early* by Mary Oliver
- *Upstream* by Mary Oliver
- *The Dream of a Common Language* by Adrienne Rich
- *Diving into the Wreck* by Adrienne Rich
- Billy Collins (any)
- *Essential Bukowski: Poetry* by Charles Bukowski
- Maya Angelou (any book of poetry)
- Langston Hughes (any book of poetry)
- *The Essential Gwendolyn Brooks* by Gwendolyn Brooks
- *Poems* by Elizabeth Bishop
- *Loose Woman* by Sandra Cisneros
- *Complete Poems* by Marianne Moore
- If you have another book choice you'd like me to consider, send me an email at whitney.naylorsmith@stjosephhs.org to request approval. Please include the title and author (or editor, if an anthology) of the book in your email.

Literary Elements

1. **antagonist:** The person(s) or force(s) that work(s) against the protagonist (main character) of the story.
2. **character:** one of the people or animals in a story:
 - **dynamic character:** Character who undergoes an important change in personality, outlook, perspective (e.g. change of heart or opinion; learning a valuable lesson).
 - **static character:** Character who remains the same throughout the narrative.
3. **characterization:** Technique used to create and develop characters. Authors help readers make sense of characters' behavior in a story by helping us understand their thought processes through what they say, what other characters say about them, or how other characters react to them. A good use of characterization always leads the readers or audience to relate better to the events taking place in the story.
4. **climax:** A Greek term meaning 'ladder', the climax is that point in the narrative in which the conflict or tension reaches the highest point (turning point).
5. **conflict:** struggle between two opposing forces in a story – There are four basic conflicts:
 - **person against person:** a problem between characters
 - **person against self:** a problem within a character's own mind
 - **person against society:** a problem between a character and society, school, the law, or some tradition or institution
 - **person against nature:** a problem between a character and some element of nature: a blizzard, a hurricane, a mountain climb, etc.
6. **exposition:** introduction of background information about setting, characters, etc.
7. **falling action:** The action and dialogue following the climax that lead the reader to the story's end.
8. **mood:** The atmosphere of a literary work that evokes certain emotions **in the reader**.
9. **moral:** lesson a story teaches
10. **narrator:** The character who actually tells the story, filling in the background information, bridging the gaps between dialogue, and showing us opinions or feelings of the characters. (See point of view.)

- 11.plot:** series of events in a story – There are six parts: **exposition, conflict, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution.**
- 12. point of view:** The vantage point from which the story is told.
- **first person POV:** The story is told by a narrator who is either a major or minor character using his or her own words—uses “I” or “me”.
 - **third person POV:** The story is told by the narrator using “he”, “she”, or “they”.
- a) **omniscient** (all knowing): The narrator describes all the characters and actions in the story, as well as comments on what the characters think and feel.
- b) **limited:** The narrator tells the story from the point of view of only one character.
- 13.protagonist:** The main character in a story, often but *NOT ALWAYS* a good or heroic type.
- 14.resolution:** The part of the story in which the conflict is solved and the action comes to a satisfying end.
- 15.rising action:** The central part of the story during which various problems arise after a conflict is introduced.
- 16.setting:** The place and the time frame in which a story takes place.
- 17.style:** The distinctive way that a writer uses language including such factors as word choice, sentence length, arrangement, and complexity, and the use of figurative language, imagery, etc.
- 18.theme:** A message about life or human nature that is the focus of the writer’s story. The theme is the author or poet’s opinion about the subject or topic of the literary work.
- 19.tone:** The ***author’s attitude or feeling*** toward his/her topic, character, or situation.