

English 1 Pre-AP
2017-2018 Summer Reading Assignment
Mrs. Wyatt

The coursework for English 1 Pre-AP starts with this assignment. This year's summer assignment involves reading a novel and completing several activities in conjunction with the reading.

Supplies you will need for your summer work and the 2017-18 school year:

- A 3 subject spiral with dividers and pockets. A majority of your work throughout the year will be done in this spiral. This spiral will be very important in tracking your notes and work throughout the coming school year, so please invest wisely.
- A copy of the book *How to Read Literature Like a Professor, Revised Edition* by Thomas C. Foster. This book outlines specific strategies and concepts that will enable students to become better critical thinkers and better writers. This book will be used for the English Pre-AP and AP program for the duration of the student's 4 years at Needville High School. It is important that each student buys his or her own copy as students will be marking and annotating directly in the books. The book can be purchased online at Amazon.com or at any major bookstore.
- Sticky notes (Post-Its), highlighters, and pens/pencils. You may use any color except red or purple.
- A copy of *A Separate Peace* by John Knowles. The book can be purchased online at Amazon.com or at any major bookstore.

Summer Work Assignments:

Activity 1: Pre-Reading

1. Read the attached handout over John Knowles and *A Separate Peace*.
This handout will provide important information on the setting and theme of *A Separate Peace*.

Activity 2: Read *How to Read Literature Like a Professor*

Read the following chapters in *How to Read Literature Like a Professor* and underline or highlight the answers to the following questions for the listed chapters.

Note: When reading the chapters, you can skim over any specific pieces of literature that Foster addresses that you may not understand. You are looking for the main ideas that Foster presents in the chapters. You do not need to understand the literary references. Look at the provided page numbers for help.

Introduction: How'd He Do That?

How do memory, symbol, and pattern affect the reading of literature? (pgs. xxvii-xxix)

Chapter 12: Is That A Symbol?

How do we figure out what a symbol means? Does a symbol have to be an object? (pgs. 106-10/112)

Chapter 15: Flights of Fancy

What can flight or falling mean in literature? (pgs. 134,136,139)

Activity 3: Read *A Separate Peace* by John Knowles

While reading the book, underline/highlight statements or descriptions that seem significant to you. These can seem significant because they are important to the book's plot, theme, or character development. They can also seem significant because you are able to make a connection to an idea or concept outside of the book itself.

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After reading the book, select 5 of the statements that you underlined/highlighted. Be sure to show a progression of statements throughout the book. Create a Says/Means/Matters chart similar to the one below that contains the specified information in your spiral. You will have 5 entries in your chart.

Be sure to complete the chart in your spiral. You will be tearing it out and turning it in. However, the assignment must be completed and stay in your spiral until you are asked to tear it out by the teacher on the first day of school. The chart must be hand written.

SAYS	MEANS	MATTERS
Provide the direct textual evidence from the novel. Include the page number(s).	Explain what was happening at this point in the book. What does the quote mean in connection to the content of the book? (1-2 sentences)	Explain why this quote matters. Connect the textual evidence to importance of the book as a whole or to an outside concept or idea. (2-3 sentences)

Activity 4: How to Read Literature Like a Professor Connection Assignment

Based on the information you previously highlighted or underlined in Activity 2, answer the following questions in order to connect the information from *How to Read Literature Like a Professor* and *A Separate Peace*.

You should type the answers to the **bolded questions** for each chapter.

- The answers should be written in complete sentences.
- Do not complete this assignment in your spiral.
- You will turn this in separately on the first day of school.
- Don't rely on your peers or the Internet. Use only your brain.

Introduction: How'd He Do That?

Explain how memory, symbol, or pattern was important in your reading and understanding of *A Separate Peace*.

Chapter 12: Is That A Symbol?

Explain how one event/action/item has more than one symbolic meaning in *A Separate Peace*?

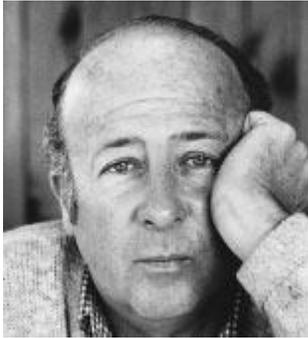
Chapter 15: Flights of Fancy

What did the fall in *A Separate Peace* influence the most: plot, character, or theme? Explain.

Other important information:

- All assignments are due on the first day of school.
- A test will be given over the reading during the first week of school.
- For any questions over the summer assignment, please email Mrs. Wyatt at wytatk@needvilleisd.com. Please note that this email is not checked daily. Please allow several days for a reply.

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Meet John Knowles

Author John Knowles was born in 1926 in Fairmont, West Virginia, deep in the heart of coal-mining country. Although some of his works reflect his West Virginia roots—in *A Vein of Riches*, for example, he tells the story of an early twentieth-century miners strike—Knowles’s best-known works are set in New England. His father and mother were originally from Massachusetts, and the family often spent summer vacations there.

Knowles’s love of New England stems from his experiences as a student. At the age of fifteen, he applied to an elite New Hampshire boarding school, Phillips Exeter Academy. Much to his surprise, he was admitted. At first, Knowles felt out of place. He has said that his classmates seemed “too eastern for me, too Yankee, too tough,” and that he found the New Hampshire winter “breathtakingly cold.” Moreover, his grades were not the best. He admits:

It quickly seemed probable that I would flunk out. . . . Then somehow or other I knuckled down, learned by myself how to study, discovered I had a brain which had more potential than a knack for writing, and by the end of that first term, I was passing every course comfortably. . . . Meanwhile, I was falling in love with Exeter.

Knowles’s affection for the school is reflected in his first—and most famous—novel, *A Separate Peace*.

Shortly after Knowles entered Exeter, the United States declared war on Japan and entered World War II. Like other young men of the time, Knowles went into the military after he graduated from high school. He trained to be a pilot in the United States Army Air Force aviation program, but when the war ended he decided to go back to school. He attended Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut, where he received a bachelor’s degree in 1949.

During his twenties, Knowles traveled and earned a living as a freelance writer. He wrote the stories “Phineas” and “A Turn in the Sun,” which were to form the core of *A Separate Peace*. Knowles then took a job as an associate editor of a travel magazine. Early each morning, before going to the office, he worked on *A Separate Peace*.

The novel, which was first published in England in 1959 and the United States in 1960, proved to be a success—so much that Knowles was able to resign from his job and devote his time to writing and to travel. Since then, Knowles has written a variety of novels, a short story collection, a travel book, and several essays. None of these works has been as successful as *A Separate Peace*, but the fact does not seem to trouble him. He says that because he does not write with a particular audience in mind he is delighted that he has found any audience at all. Knowles may be too modest. He is likely to continue to have an audience for many years to come.

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Introducing the Novel

To read A Separate Peace is to discover a novel which is completely satisfactory and yet so provocative that the reader wishes immediately to return to it. —James Ellis, "A Separate Peace: The Fall from Innocence"

It is unusual for an author's first novel to earn awards and a wide audience, yet John Knowles's *A Separate Peace* did just that. In 1960, the year that the novel was first published in the United States, the book won both the William Faulkner Award and the Richard and Hinda Rosenthal Foundation Award. Today, *A Separate Peace* is standard reading in many high schools. Why is the novel so popular and so well respected?

One reason may be the time in which the novel is set. The action takes place during the early years of America's involvement in World War II, a period in which many teenaged boys faced a difficult decision: Should they enlist or wait to be drafted into the armed services? As a teenager during World War II, Knowles himself faced this decision, and he drew on memories of this experience and others to portray what it is like to be a young man during wartime. Many critics consider the portrayal to be sensitive and convincing. In the words of Warren Miller: *Mr. Knowles has something to say about youth and war that few contemporary novelists have attempted to say and none has said better.*

Although World War II affects the lives of the characters in the story, it would be wrong to call *A Separate Peace* a novel about the war. The story does not take place overseas, in the thick of battle, but rather in the United States, at a fictional New England boys' school named Devon. Knowles based Devon School on Phillips Exeter Academy, the school he attended as a teenager.

Similarly, Knowles based many of the characters on former classmates of his. He has said that Phineas ("Finny") was, in part, inspired by David Hackett, a classmate who went on to play hockey on a U.S. Olympic team. The inspiration for Brinker Hadley was Gore Vidal, an Exeter graduate who today is a noted author. Knowles loosely based the central character, Gene Forrester, on himself. In fact, there is a little bit of Knowles in all the characters. The author says:

It is true that I put part of myself into all four main characters in A Separate Peace: Phineas, Gene, Leper, and Brinker. In addition to using [Gore Vidal] for Brinker, and myself for Gene, I had to, as most novelists do, draw from myself for everyone in the book.

As summer turns into fall, the characters experience conflicts that many readers have found to be absorbing and true to life. If the conflicts seem real, it is because they represent the kinds of inner struggles that everyone experiences. Like real people, the characters discover that the most challenging battles in life are often the battles within.