

Dear student,

Congratulations on your choice of Pre-AP English 2 for your sophomore year. I am looking forward to working with you on what is sure to be the beginning of a challenging but rewarding year together.

The summer reading assignment for this year is the Pulitzer Prize-winning novel *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee. The book was published in 1960, and it has become a classic of modern American literature. Read this book slowly and thoughtfully; do not read it all the night before school begins. Take weeks to read and digest it. It takes place in Alabama, a lot of it during the summer, so maybe try reading some of it outside (don't forget the lemonade or sweet tea!)

You can borrow a copy of the text in room C111 any time before May 25, or you may purchase your own copy so you can make notes in the book. You need to complete the attached assignments and be prepared for a test over the novel within the first week of school.

As you look over your summer assignment, I want to share with you two principles of scholarship that undergird almost everything we do in English class. I think you are familiar with them, but I hope you'll bear with me as I believe it is important for you to understand my perspective on typical academic temptations.

Principle One: Academic Honesty

Throughout the school year, I will expect you to complete many essays and writing assignments, and for each one of them, plagiarism will be an option you'll need to resist. Plagiarism is taking someone else's work and pretending it is yours, which means everything from research papers to worksheets can be plagiarized. It goes without saying that I believe plagiarism is wrong, but I mention it because I want to make clear how it affects our goals in the classroom.

When we as people are under pressure to excel, we often choose to whitewash the surface and make things look okay when they're not. If you're stuck, for example, and the paper is due tomorrow, taking someone else's ideas may seem like a feasible way to cover your lack of ideas, to rid yourself of your predicament and move on without anyone knowing what lies beneath the veneer. When such a temptation arises, please remember this: I would always rather read your weak idea or your sloppy paper than someone else's great idea you are pretending is yours. Dishonesty completely undercuts the student-teacher relationship and makes teaching impossible. If I don't know the truth about what you understand and know, how can I help you learn?

Principle Two: Shortcuts

Related somewhat closely to plagiarism, but slightly different, is students' use of "shortcuts" like Spark Notes and Shmoop. Most of the books we will read in Pre-AP English 2 are available in summary form on Spark Notes and elsewhere on the internet, so the temptation to read the summaries will always be present. While a Spark Notes summary can have useful applications, it is not a substitute for reading a book. I think of Spark Notes and Shmoop as places for those who want to appear as though they have read, not for those who actually want to read. If you want to read, and if you want to learn to comprehend what you read more effectively and intelligently (definite goals of ours in this class), then you'll need to discipline yourself and make time to read the actual books. If not, then Pre-AP English 2 is probably not the best fit for you.

What follows is your summer assignment for our class. I cannot stress this next part enough:

If you get stuck, please do not hesitate to text or call me for clarification.
My cell phone # is (713)501-5150.

YOU ARE NOT BOTHERING ME WHEN YOU CONTACT ME ABOUT SCHOOL WORK. I will be glad to help if I can. I would much rather hear from you over the summer than find out on the first day of school that you were unable to complete your assignments and will no longer be enrolled in our class.

Remember, both assignments must be turned in no later than Wed. August 1, 2018.

This policy applies to students who have already requested Pre-AP English 2 and those who plan to appeal.

Failure to meet this requirement will result in automatic removal from the class. NO LATE WORK WILL BE ACCEPTED.

Have a wonderful summer. I look forward to learning with you.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Laura Nix

Assignment 1 – To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee

Cast of Characters

*Atticus Finch	*Bob Ewell	*Tom Robinson	*Scout Finch	Burrus Ewell
Mrs. Dubose	*Jem Finch	*Mayella Ewell	*Walter Cunningham	*Arthur “Boo” Radley
Miss Caroline	Stephanie Crawford	*Dill Harris	Dolphus Raymond	Uncle Jack
*Aunt Alexandra	Judge Taylor	Little Chuck Little	*Calpurnia	*Maudie Atkinson
Mr. Nathan Radley				

Design a 16” x 20” (minimum) full color poster with one (1) of the three (3) following options:

(a) Create a movie poster for a new version of the film with appropriate casting for the following characters: Atticus Finch, Scout Finch, Jem Finch, Dill Harris, Boo Radley, Calpurnia, Bob Ewell, Tom Robinson, and Maudie Atkinson. You also need to include the release date, two specific movie review quotes, one to two images, the film’s rating and why it’s rated that way, and a tag line for the film. Do NOT use any stills or shots of actors from the 1962 film.

(b) Design a new book cover for the novel. The new book cover should include everything that would normally appear on the cover of a book including artwork, author’s name, publisher, and a tag line. Do NOT recycle an existing cover design. Remember, I can Google things, too.

(c) Create a poster depicting the social caste system in Maycomb, AL, (circa 1935) and a diagram of where all of the characters listed above would fit. Primary characters (all those with a (*)) should have an accompanying picture. After each character’s name a sentence should define their placement in the social caste system.

All projects should be turned in to the front office of Needville High School no later than Wed. August 1, 2018.

Assignment 2 – selections from How to Read Literature Like a Professor:

A Lively and Entertaining Guide to Reading between the Lines, Revised Edition by Thomas C. Foster

If you had Ms. Wyatt for Pre-AP English 1, you should already own a copy of this book. If not, you will need to purchase one, as you will continue to use it throughout your time in the AP English program at NHS.

These excerpts are an interesting nonfiction read that should help enlighten you on your journey with literary analysis.

This year's assigned tasks are set forth below. You should type your answers and share them with me on Google Drive at nixL@needvilleisd.com. Please respond using complete sentences. Each chapter does NOT need its own page; however, your answers should be thorough. Please label each section that requires a response and include the questions with your responses. Content from these chapters will be referenced in class throughout the year.

Both the written component and the poster project must be turned in no later than Wed. August 1, 2018. This policy applies to students who have already requested Pre-AP English 2 and those who plan to appeal.

Chapter 2 -- Nice to Eat with You: Acts of Communion

1. What does "communion" mean?
2. For what reason does Foster suggest that authors often include meal scenes?
3. What does a failed meal suggest in literature? Explain thoroughly.

Chapter 3: --Nice to Eat You: Acts of Vampires

1. What is literal vampirism?
2. What is symbolic vampirism?
3. What are the "essentials of the vampire story", and what do they represent?

Chapter 9: -- It's More than Just Rain or Snow

1. How can weather be symbolic in literature?
2. How can weather serve as a plot device in literature?
3. What are some of the common "meanings" of various types of weather?

Chapter 23 -- It's Never Just Heart Disease...And Rarely Just Illness

1. What are some of the symbolic possibilities associated with the heart? Explain thoroughly.
2. What elements make for a "prime literary disease"?
3. What are some of the conventional symbolic meanings of various illnesses?

Chapter 25 -- Don't Read with Your Eyes

1. Why is "your" italicized in the chapter title above?
2. What is Foster's main point in this chapter?
3. Do we have to accept the values of another culture to accept the impact those values had on the writing? Explain thoroughly.