

ROBINSON SECONDARY SUMMER 2009 ASSIGNMENT

Pre-IB ENGLISH 9

Congratulations on your decision to become a part of the Pre-IB program offered at Robinson Secondary School. As a survey course, the freshmen English curriculum is eclectic in nature; students experience a broad variety of literature genres, they write expository, persuasive, and creative works, as well as share knowledge through class discussions, seminars, and presentations. Though this is an academically rigorous program, we never stray far from the belief that learning should be fun, offering alternative forms of assessment above and beyond a paper and pencil test. With this in mind, the summer reading assignment is intended to be enjoyable, as well as give us an academic starting point in the fall.

Objective: You will choose your summer reading title from the attached list of nonfiction titles. Then you will gather 10-15 quotations from your book to present to your teacher on the second day of class in September.

Directions: In preparation for our work together in the fall, we would like you to do the following assignment this summer:

- Consult the list of book titles in this packet. You must select a book title from this list. These books have been carefully selected for you to help you meet the objectives of this assignment.
- Purchase your nonfiction choice book. You may be using your book at other times throughout the year, so owning your own copy will be helpful. The books can be purchased at most area bookstores including Borders or Barnes and Noble. You also may consider purchasing your book online through Web sites such as Amazon.com which offers used copies of books as well as brand new copies. Purchasing used books will help you save money and help all of us conserve paper by reusing these resources.
- Set aside enough time to complete your reading. Some of the books are longer than others, so do not wait until the last minute to undertake the reading. If you begin in August you will have enough time, and it will be fresh in your mind at the start of the year.
- As you read, it is best to keep a highlighter or colored pen with you. Underline facts that jump out at you as you as surprising, intriguing, unusual, informative, unexpected, thought-provoking. Your goal is to find ideas in this book that you find personally meaningful and that you could investigate further.
 - Resist the urge to highlight or underline too much. Highlight or underline sparingly. A rule of thumb: if you highlight items on every page of the book you will have highlighted too much.
- When you have finished reading your book, go back through your book and look at what you have highlighted. Anything written by the author of your book inside this book we will refer to as a **quotation**. At a computer please type up your list of quotations. Each quotation will need to be attributed to the author. We do this by writing a **parenthetical citation**. A parenthetical citation

provides the page number on which the quotation appeared inside parentheses immediately following the quotation. Use this format for your paper:

Your first and last name

Date

Pre-IB English 9

Summer Assignment

For my summer assignment I chose to read [*book title in italics*] by [author's first and last name].

1. "Here you will write the first quotation you found from your book. Be sure to notice that this quotation appears inside quotation marks" (5).
2. "Skip a line. Here is your second quotation. Please continue to follow this format for the remainder of your paper" (10).

Notice in the parenthetical citations in examples 1 and 2 above that:

- 1) 5 and 10 are the page numbers on which the quotations appear in the book.
- 2) The parentheses appear after the last quotation mark.
- 3) The period for the entire sentence appears after the final parentheses.

Assessment: During the first week of school, be prepared to explain orally, visually, and/or in writing, your knowledge and impressions of the text. Your list of quotations with parenthetical citations will be evaluated for credit.

Contact: If you have a question about the assignment contact Mrs. Axelrod at Stephanie.Axelrod@fcps.edu

Nonfiction Titles

Below is the list of titles for the pre-IB 9 summer assignment. You will find a variety of writing styles and subject matter is covered in this list. Please choose one of these titles. (Editorial Reviews by Amazon.com)

Fast Food Nation: The Dark Side to the All-American Meal

By Eric Schlosser

In this modern expose of the fast food industry, Schlosser uncovers eye-opening details about the growing popularity of quick hamburger and fries meals across America and the globe. He looks at how the industry got started, what's really in the fries, the reality of the meat-packing industry, and how employees are treated. Schlosser seems to have really done his research, but be warned that if you love McDonald's this book could change your lifestyle choices. This will be turned into a movie this summer!

Into Thin Air

By John Krakauer

A bank of clouds was assembling on the not-so-distant horizon, but journalist-mountaineer Jon Krakauer, standing on the summit of Mt. Everest, saw nothing that "suggested that a murderous storm was bearing down." He was wrong. The storm, which claimed five lives and left countless more--including Krakauer's--in guilt-ridden disarray, would also provide the impetus for *Into Thin Air*, Krakauer's epic account of the May 1996 disaster.

Into the Wild

By Jon Krakauer

By the author of *Into Thin Air*, this book tells the dramatic story of a young man who hitchhikes to Alaska to spend time alone roaming through the northern wilderness. A truly exciting story, it especially touches close to home because the main character, Christopher Johnson McCandless, is a native of Fairfax and a graduate of W.T. Woodson High School. If you're interested in the outdoors, this could be the book for you.

Uncommon Genius

By Denise Shekerjian

Shekerjian tries to unlock the secrets of human creativity in this book that examines some fascinating stories from winners of the MacArthur Foundation Fellowship – described as the “genius award.” This book will really expand your knowledge of a wide range of fields of study, from music, writing and film to carpentry, civil service and anthropology.

The Color of Water

By James McBride

The Color of Water tells the remarkable story of Ruth McBride Jordan, the two good men she married, and the 12 good children she raised. Jordan, born Rachel Shilsky, a Polish Jew, immigrated to America soon after birth; as an adult she moved to New York City, leaving her family and faith behind in Virginia. Jordan met and married a black man, making her isolation even more profound. The book is a success story, a testament to one woman's true heart, solid values, and indomitable will. Ruth Jordan battled not only racism but also poverty to raise her children and, despite being sorely tested, never wavered. In telling her story--along with her son's--*The Color of Water* addresses racial identity with compassion, insight, and realism. It is, in a word, inspiring, and you will finish it with unalloyed admiration for a flawed but remarkable individual. And, perhaps, a little more faith in us all.

Life on the Color Line: The True Story of a White Boy Who Discovered He Was Black

By Gregory Howard Williams

Growing up during segregation, Gregory attended an all-white school. Then, after the truth about his father's ethnicity is revealed and Gregory and his brother are labeled as black, the two are transferred to an all-black school. This story gives a compelling look at segregation from both angles.

And Still We Rise: The Tales and Triumphs of Twelve Gifted Inner-City Students

By Miles Corwin

Journalist Miles Corwin spends a year with 12 high school seniors in a gifted program in South Central Los Angeles. Each student's struggles and triumphs are chronicled in this emotionally gripping story that paints a realistic and sometimes heartbreaking picture of public education in our nation's cities.

Hamlet's Dresser

By Bob Smith

This book is the memoir of a young boy who grows up in an abusive and neglectful household and comes to find solace in the works of Shakespeare. As a teenager, Smith becomes involved in local community theater. As an adult, Smith reads Shakespeare to the elderly in nursing homes, giving many of these older people something to look forward to in their otherwise bleak lives. This book looks closely at life in America and the ability of literature to transform lives.

Fist, Stick, Knife, Gun

By Geoffrey Canada

Canada knows the world of inner-city children intimately, for he grew up in some of the most dangerous areas of the Bronx. As a young child, he learned that only those who can fight will survive. When he reached adolescence, the knife was the weapon of choice, but for today's youth, which he calls "the handgun generation," it is the pistol. Canada explains exactly what growing up

in this war zone does to the psyche: fear, doubt and anger crowd the mind, driving out love, friendship and laughter. There is no post-traumatic stress syndrome, because there is no "post." Greedy drug dealers and gun manufacturers, he says, by flooding the inner cities with their products, have made urban violence, which always existed, more deadly. He has a series of recommendations, rooted in his own experience as a child and as an adult, that are thoroughly convincing. A more powerful depiction of the tragic life of urban children and a more compelling plea to end "America's war against itself" cannot be imagined.

Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America

By Barbara Ehrenreich

Former poverty-stricken author tells the story of the "working poor" in America, particularly single women and mothers who can barely get by on their minimum wages. With some 12 million women being pushed into the labor market by welfare reform, she decided to do some good old-fashioned journalism and find out just how they were going to survive on the wages of the unskilled--at \$6 to \$7 an hour, only half of what is considered a living wage. So she did what millions of Americans do, she looked for a job and a place to live, worked that job, and tried to make ends meet. This book tells the story of her struggle as a member of the working poor.

Winterdance

By Gary Paulsen

Fueled by a passion for running dogs, Gary Paulsen entered the Iditarod--the 1150-mile winter sled-dog race between Anchorage and Nome-- in dangerous ignorance and with a fierce determination. *Winterdance* is his account of this seventeen-day battle against Nature's worst elements and his own frailty.

It's Not About the Bike

By Lance Armstrong

People around the world have found inspiration in the story of Lance Armstrong--a world-class athlete nearly struck down by cancer, only to recover and win the Tour de France, the multiday bicycle race famous for its grueling intensity. Armstrong is a thoroughgoing Texan jock, and the changes brought to his life by his illness are startling and powerful, but he's just not interested in wearing a hero suit. While his vocabulary is a bit on the he-man side (highest compliment to his wife: "she's a stud"), his actions will melt the most hard-bitten souls: a cancer foundation and benefit bike ride, his astonishing commitment to training that got him past countless hurdles, loyalty to the people and corporations that never gave up on him. There's serious medical detail here, which may not be for the faint of heart; from chemo to surgical procedures to his wife's in vitro fertilization, you won't be spared a single x-ray, IV drip, or unfortunate side effect. Athletes and coaches everywhere will benefit from the same extraordinary detail provided about his training sessions--every aching tendon, every rainy afternoon, and every small triumph during his long recovery is here in living color. *It's Not About the Bike* is the perfect title for this book about life, death, illness, family, setbacks, and triumphs, but not especially about the bike.

Little Girls in Pretty Boxes: The Making and Breaking of Elite Gymnasts and Figure Skaters

By Joan Ryan

"The female gymnast's career is a race against time and nature," writes *San Francisco Chronicle* sports columnist Ryan, and the same appears to be true of world-class female figure skaters. In both sports, the contemporary ideal is a girl with a boy's body: sans breasts and hips. To achieve this "ideal," the athletes overtrain at a time when their skeletal development is supposed to be the greatest, suffering injuries to vertebrae, arms and legs at the same time that they are constantly being ordered to lose weight. The result: anorexia and bulimia. This expose, which absolves the exploited trainees of most blame?though some are apparently monomaniacal about becoming Mary Lou Retton or Dorothy Hamills?is scathing on the subjects of parents, coaches, judges, the U.S. Gymnastic Federation and the U.S. Figure Skating Association. Ryan concludes that females aged 13 to 18 are not only exploited but abused. Such a powerful plea for reform may have some results.

We Wish to Inform You That Tomorrow We Will Be Killed With Our Families: Stories from Rwanda

By Philip Gourevitch

"Hutus kill Tutsis, then Tutsis kill Hutus--if that's really all there is to it, then no wonder we can't be bothered with it," Philip Gourevitch writes, imagining the response of somebody in a country far from the ethnic strife and mass killings of Rwanda. But the situation is not so simple, and in this complex and wrenching book, he explains why the Rwandan genocide should not be written off as just another tribal dispute.

The "stories" in this book's subtitle are both the author's, as he repeatedly visits this tiny country in an attempt to make sense of

what has happened, and those of the people he interviews. These include a Tutsi doctor who has seen much of her family killed over decades of Tutsi oppression, a Schindleresque hotel manager who hid hundreds of refugees from certain death, and a Rwandan bishop who has been accused of supporting the slaughter of Tutsi schoolchildren, and can only answer these charges by saying, "What could I do?" Gourevitch, a staff writer for the *New Yorker*, describes Rwanda's history with remarkable clarity and documents the experience of tragedy with a sober grace. The reader will ask along with the author: Why does this happen? And why don't we bother to stop it?

The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference

By Malcolm Gladwell

"The best way to understand the dramatic transformation of unknown books into bestsellers, or the rise of teenage smoking, or the phenomena of word of mouth or any number of the other mysterious changes that mark everyday life," writes Malcolm Gladwell, "is to think of them as epidemics. Ideas and products and messages and behaviors spread just like viruses do."

Although anyone familiar with the theory of memetics will recognize this concept, Gladwell's *The Tipping Point* has quite a few interesting twists on the subject.

For example, Paul Revere was able to galvanize the forces of resistance so effectively in part because he was what Gladwell calls a "Connector": he knew just about everybody, particularly the revolutionary leaders in each of the towns that he rode through. But Revere "wasn't just the man with the biggest Rolodex in colonial Boston," he was also a "Maven" who gathered extensive information about the British. He knew what was going on and he knew exactly whom to tell. The phenomenon continues to this day--think of how often you've received information in an e-mail message that had been forwarded at least half a dozen times before reaching you. If these ideas above interest you, you'll love this book about how an idea turns into a trend.

Blink

By Malcolm Gladwell

Blink is about the first two seconds of looking--the decisive glance that knows in an instant. Gladwell, the best-selling author of *The Tipping Point*, campaigns for snap judgments and mind reading with a gift for translating research into splendid storytelling. Building his case with scenes from a marriage, heart attack triage, speed dating, choking on the golf course, selling cars, and military maneuvers, he persuades readers to think small and focus on the meaning of "thin slices" of behavior. The key is to rely on our "adaptive unconscious"--a 24/7 mental valet--that provides us with instant and sophisticated information to warn of danger, read a stranger, or react to a new idea.

Gladwell includes caveats about leaping to conclusions: marketers can manipulate our first impressions, high arousal moments make us "mind blind," focusing on the wrong cue leaves us vulnerable to "the Warren Harding Effect" (i.e., voting for a handsome but hapless president). In a provocative chapter that exposes the "dark side of blink," he illuminates the failure of rapid cognition in the tragic stakeout and murder of Amadou Diallo in the Bronx. He underlines studies about autism, facial reading and cardio uptick to urge training that enhances high-stakes decision-making. In this brilliant, cage-rattling book, one can only wish for a thicker slice of Gladwell's ideas about what Blink Camp might look like.

Freakonomics: A Rogue Economist Studies the Hidden Side of Everything

By Steven D. Levitt

Forget your image of an economist as a crusty professor worried about fluctuating interest rates: Levitt focuses his attention on more intimate real-world issues, like whether reading to your baby will make her a better student. Recognition by fellow economists as one of the best young minds in his field led to a profile in the *New York Times*, written by Dubner, and that original article serves as a broad outline for an expanded look at Levitt's search for the hidden incentives behind all sorts of behavior.

There isn't really a grand theory of everything here, except perhaps the suggestion that self-styled experts have a vested interest in promoting conventional wisdom even when it's wrong. Instead, Dubner and Levitt deconstruct everything from the organizational structure of drug-dealing gangs to baby-naming patterns. *This book could change the way you look at the world!*

Seabiscuit By Laura Hillenbrand

He didn't look like much. With his smallish stature, knobby knees, and slightly crooked forelegs, he looked more like a cow pony than a thoroughbred. But looks aren't everything; his quality, an admirer once wrote, "was mostly in his heart." Laura Hillenbrand tells the story of the horse who became a cultural icon in *Seabiscuit: An American Legend*.

Angela's Ashes or Tis'

By Frank McCourt

Despite impoverishing his family because of his alcoholism, McCourt's father passed on to his son a gift for superb storytelling. He told him about the great Irish heroes, the old days in Ireland, the people in their Limerick neighborhood, and the world beyond their shores. McCourt writes in the voice of the child with no self-pity or review of events and just retells the tales. He recounts his desperately poor early years, living on public assistance and losing three siblings, but manages to make the book funny and uplifting.

Marley and Me: Love and Life with the World's Worst Dog

By John Grogan

Labrador retrievers are generally considered even-tempered, calm and reliable; and then there's Marley, the subject of this delightful tribute to one Lab who doesn't fit the mold. Grogan, a columnist for the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, and his wife, Jenny, were newly married and living in West Palm Beach when they decided that owning a dog would give them a foretaste of the parenthood they anticipated. Marley was a sweet, affectionate puppy who grew into a lovably naughty, hyperactive dog. With a light touch, the author details how Marley was kicked out of obedience school after humiliating his instructor (whom Grogan calls Miss Dominatrix) and swallowed an 18-karat solid gold necklace (Grogan describes his gross but hilarious "recovery operation"). With the arrival of children in the family, Marley became so incorrigible that Jenny, stressed out by a new baby, ordered her husband to get rid of him; she eventually recovered her equilibrium and relented. Grogan's chronicle of the adventures parents and children (eventually three) enjoyed with the overly energetic but endearing dog is delivered with great humor. Dog lovers will love this account of Grogan's much loved canine.

Riding the Bus with My Sister

By Rachel Simon

Beth is a spirited woman with mental retardation, who spends nearly every day riding the buses in Philadelphia. The drivers, a lively group, are her mentors; her fellow passengers are her community. When Beth asks her sister Rachel to accompany her on the buses for one year, they take a transcendent journey together that changes Rachel's life in incredible ways and leads her to accept her sister at long last—teaching her to slow down and enjoy the ride. Full of life lessons from which any reader will profit, *Riding the Bus with My Sister* is "a heartwarming, life-affirming journey through both the present and the past...[that] might just change your life" (Boston Herald).

The Perfect Storm

By Sebastian Junger

October 1991. It was "the perfect storm"—a tempest that may happen only once in a century—a nor'easter created by so rare a combination of factors that it could not possibly have been worse. Creating waves ten stories high and winds of 120 miles an hour, the storm whipped the sea to inconceivable levels few people on Earth have ever witnessed. Few, except the six-man crew of the *Andrea Gail*, a commercial fishing boat tragically headed towards its hellish center.

When I Was Puerto Rican

By Esmeralda Santiago

Santiago's artful memoir recounts her childhood in rural Puerto Rico and her teenage years in New York City. Esmeralda and her seven siblings live in a corrugated metal shack in Puerto Rico. She is uprooted as a result of poverty and her parents' quarreling and suffers blows to her ego from their expectations of her. The girl goes to New York, where her grandmother lives, and must rely on her intelligence and talents to help her survive in an alien world in which being Puerto Rican is not advantageous. Her story rings true and will be an inspiration to young adults forced to make their own way in a sometimes hostile environment.

Gifted Hands

By Ben Carson

A brief, easy-to-read autobiography of a black man who is one of today's leading neurosurgeons. While pursuing his career, Carson encountered prejudice, negative peer pressure, and politics in getting a job. His sense of humor, faith in God, patience, and his belief in the work ethic come through without preaching. In the last chapter, Carson gives recommendations to students on ways to live and to achieve.