

Summer Reading Assignment for Rising Seniors

Westfield High School, Chantilly, Virginia
2009-2010

Select **one book** to read independently. Type a summary sheet and be prepared to share about your summer reading in a group book discussion. A sample summary sheet is provided here.

Guidelines for choosing books:

- Choose a novel or memoir by an author from a country other than the USA.
- Make age-appropriate choices.
- Remember the academic environment in which you will present your books.
- Feel free to select a "classic" book, but refrain from re-reading a required book from a previous English course.
- Visit the school or public librarian; she can assist you in making selections.

Objectives of Summer Reading:

- To encourage independent book selection and independent reading.
- To provide a forum for discussion of independent reading.
- To practice oral communication skills in a small-group format.
- To practice summary and evaluation of self-selected reading materials.
- To evaluate individual and group performance and participation.

Grading System:

You will receive a grade for the written component of your summer reading, the typed summary sheet. You may also receive points for participation in a discussion group in English 12.

- Typed summary sheet: the equivalent of one homework grade
- Oral presentation and specialized participation in a small group: one homework grade

Sample Book Talk Summary Sheet

Iman A. Student
English 12, WHS

Tan, Amy. *The Hundred Secret Senses*. New York: Ivy Books, 1995.

ISBN # 0-8041-1109-X

Summary:

Kwan, the narrator's half sister, arrives from China to join the Yee family following the family patriarch's death. Kwan is nothing like anyone in the Yee family expects, but she works hard find a place for herself in everyone's hearts. The sisters struggle with their relationship throughout the story, and each sister views the other from a "foreign" (Chinese or American) perspective. Kwan is both innocent and worldly, and her Yin eyes serve her on two continents.

Reading Response:

Having thoroughly enjoyed Amy Tan's *The Joy Luck Club* and *The Kitchen God's Wife*, I was eager to jump into *The Hundred Secret Senses*. The story wasn't as riveting, in my opinion, as the previous stories were; however, the relationship between Kwan and her sister Olivia was something I could understand. (I have three sisters of my own!) I was touched by Tan's portrayal of the irrepressible Kwan, and I learned lots more about China and Chinese culture, a large part of all of Amy Tan's books.

Recommendation:

Readers who might enjoy *The Hundred Secret Senses* include anyone who likes Tan's other novels, anyone interested in China or who is of Chinese origin, or anyone who struggles to love a sister. Because there are many adult themes and adult situations, I recommend the book to older students, perhaps ages 16+, and adults. Much of the book takes place when Olivia is an older teenager, and older teens will be able to relate to her situation. I caution potential readers who are easily spooked or who do not like to read about ghosts to shy away from *The Hundred Secret Senses*.