

VHHS AP Language and Composition

Summer Reading List and Assignments 2024-2025

Please join this Google Classroom to submit assignments: [qykp5v5](#)

Mr. Sinnott

You are required to read and annotate (mark passages that you find interesting and revealing --- sad, funny, poignant, ironic, exhilarating, lovely, etc. I am not checking annotations, but they will help you on the test and writing assignment) four books this summer: (1.) *A Farewell to Arms*, (2.) *Of Mice and Men*, (3.) *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, and (4.) *Several Short Sentences About Writing*

Here is some background information on the FOUR required books.

1. A Farewell to Arms – Ernest Hemingway

From an online review: “The best American novel to emerge from World War I, *A Farewell to Arms* is the unforgettable story of an American ambulance driver on the Italian front and his passion for a beautiful English nurse. Hemingway’s frank portrayal of the love between Lieutenant Henry and Catherine Barkley, caught in the inexorable sweep of war, glows with an intensity unrivaled in modern literature, while his description of the German attack on Caporetto—of lines of fired men marching in the rain, hungry, weary, and demoralized—is one of the greatest moments in literary history. A story of love and pain, of loyalty and desertion, *A Farewell to Arms*, written when he was thirty years old, represents a new romanticism for Hemingway.”

2. Of Mice and Men – John Steinbeck

An Amazon review: “Itinerant worker George reflects on the time he spent traveling with Lennie a huge childlike man. The two men drift through California during the Great Depression, looking for work. After they find jobs on a ranch, Lennie develops an infatuation with the owner's daughter-in-law. However, when George and Lennie are handed an opportunity to own part of a ranch, Lennie's fascination with the beautiful woman threatens to destroy their dreams.”

3. Their Eyes Were Watching God – Zora Neale Hurston

An Online Review: “To call Zora Neale Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God* an "African American feminist classic" may be an accurate statement-it is certainly a frequent statement-but it is a misleadingly narrow and rather dull way to introduce a vibrant and achingly human novel. The syncopated beauty of Hurston's prose, her remarkable gift for comedy, the sheer visceral terror of the book's climax, all transcend any label that critics have tried to put on this remarkable work. First published amid controversy in 1937, then rescued from obscurity four decades later, the novel narrates Janie Crawford's ripening from a vibrant, but voiceless, teenage girl into a woman with her finger on the trigger of her own destiny. Although Hurston wrote the novel in only seven weeks, *Their Eyes Were Watching God* breathes and bleeds a whole life's worth of urgent experience.”

4. Several Short Sentence About Writing – Verlyn Klinkenbord

An indispensable and distinctive book that will help anyone who wants to write, write better, or have a clearer understanding of what it means for them to be writing, from widely admired writer and teacher Verlyn Klinkenborg. Klinkenborg believes that most of our received wisdom about how writing works is not only wrong but an obstacle to our ability to write. In *Several Short Sentences About Writing*, he sets out to help us unlearn that “wisdom”—about genius, about creativity, about writer’s block, topic sentences, and outline—and understand that writing is just as much about thinking, noticing, and learning what it means to be involved in the act of writing. There is no gospel, no orthodoxy, no dogma in this book. Instead it is a gathering of starting points in a journey toward lively, lucid, satisfying self-expression.

Summer Reading Assignment:

PART A:

For ONE of the three books, you are to make a literary chart with two meaningful examples of each device (You will then have a total of 20 entries) from the list below. Include a header with the book title and author, cite the page number, copy the chosen passage, and in a sentence or two, explain the significance of each quote. (You may think, “This reaction/scene/explosion of emotion/outcry/description, etc., reveals_____.”) Compose this section carefully and thoughtfully.

Devices/choices: a. diction b. syntax c. metaphor d. personification e. allusion f. irony
g. antithesis/juxtaposition h. parallelism i. analogy/simile j. repetition

Here is an example of the device of a simile from *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. (You may not use this example in your work): Simile – “Janie saw her life like a great tree in leaf with the things suffered, things enjoyed, things undone” (13). (Now explain the significance of the passage.) Commentary: The novel, a frame narrative told through flashbacks, retells Janie’s life. Her recollection of her life as a “tree in leaf” reinforces the many figurative branches it takes. Like all lives, it includes the “good and the bad,” or as Janie narrates, the “dawn” and the “doom.”

PART B:

You are to write a narrative/memoir about your writing and reading life—a writing and reading autobiography. Consider it creative non-fiction. Apply your new knowledge from *Several Short Sentences About Writing*.

You are telling me a story in which you recount how you have developed into a reader and writer.

Consider some of these questions to help you start:

- What are your earliest writing and reading memories?
- What books or stories have shaped you into a reader and a writer?
- What teachers or classes have impacted your reading and writing life?
- How has your reading and writing life changed or evolved over time?
- What does your reading and writing life look like now?

Remember, an effective memoir needs to have some aspect of reflection—a consideration of the “so what?” in the piece.

All work is due the first day of class. Please submit the two writing assignments (the literary chart and your memoir) into Google Classroom.

Email me at sinnottmp@vhcs.us for any questions or concerns.

See you all soon! –Mr. Sinnott