



Hello Incoming Juniors! I feel energized just by writing this salutation in anticipation of a new school year!

So much is new in the Year of Corona, including Tokay's summer reading assignments. The PreAP/AP team met and brainstormed ideas to revitalize our assignments, I read countless assignments posted online, falling through a rabbit hole of texts, and I've finally landed back where I began. I really do enjoy the three books I've offered in the past so will keep those but add three additional options that appeal to me personally. Truly, I value all of my offerings, so will complete them all myself. Whichever you choose, you will be expected to "check in" at least three times over the summer on Google Classroom (join code: tekydhy). In past years, some students have begun the day they receive the assignment, others at some point during the summer, and others the last day; consider the first impression you will make with the choice you will make.

### Option 1: Tried and True

Choose one of these three books this summer, perhaps researching which sounds most appealing. With Corona-closures, students choosing this option will need to purchase their own copies.

1. John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*: this option is for you "serious" readers who want a beautifully written classic of academic merit—it's not hard to understand but long and, considering that it's set during the Great Depression, rather dismal in mood.
2. Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*: this is one of my all-time favorites, written in the 19th century with its less familiar writing style and conventions for 21st century readers, so consider buying David Shapard's annotated version and/or watching a film version first.
3. Markus Zusak's *The Book Thief*: for those of you who want a very readable book that jumps about in time and place, this one is narrated by Death, who is very busy in World War II Germany. With its young adult reading level, perhaps CollegeBoard would not deem it of "academic merit," but many of my past smart cookies have told me this ranks among the best books they've ever read.

Whichever you choose, actively read and annotate with sticky notes. As you read, marvel. Use the brightest color post-it you can find to mark instances of stunning writing—the types of sentences in which the author shows s/he's an artist. Effective writers form sentences in ways that have NEVER been written exactly in that way before: sentences with engaging syntax or diction, sentences with vivid imagery, sentences that sound like music, sentences that surprise and satisfy. Find such lines. Mark them with your WOW colored post-its on which you note what you find striking about the author's style. As all three authors are oh-so-stylish, I expect plenty of bright post-its. Such annotations are the real practice for the close reading we will be doing all year, so the more time you spend practicing with post-its, the better your essays and your own precise use of language should be.

As you read, wonder. Use another color post-it to write questions that occur to you and at least one possible answer for each question; these questions may be plot related (e.g. Why is the narrator talking about colors?), vocab related (e.g. What does ---- mean?), or "text to world" related (e.g. Does California still have the appeal it did in the 1930s?). How many post-its? How curious are you?

### **Option 2: for Readers (not merely readers, but Readers, capital R)**

Most of the enthusiastic bibliophiles I know have long lists of titles and often stacks of books they would like to read someday. If this sounds like you, choose one such book that you deem AP worthy then send me an email with the title/author and the reason you think it's worth your time. Once we agree on a selection, actively read as explained in Option 1

### **Option 3: my Emersonian offer**

Every year I read at least one of Ralph Waldo Emerson's essays--he is often an idealist (more accurately, he's classified as a Transcendentalist, which we will explore in the spring). In one of his essays, he explains why individuals should be trusted to direct their own education, to discover and pursue learning that most appeals to them. Do you have such drive? If so, put together an informal proposal explaining what you would like to learn this summer and how you will demonstrate that learning. Once we agree, the responsibility to be self-directed will be yours.

### **Option 4: Write, write, write**

When I sat in Emerson's parlor on a tour, the docent reminded guests of Emerson's exhortation to write in a journal every day. Countless writers echo this advice. Write daily for at least four weeks to discover for yourself the power of your own writing. Write without judging yourself, just filling pages with whatever comes to your mind. Ideally you already have a stack of binder paper left over from the school year or notebook or two or three or four with enough blank pages left to let your writer's mind play (please first remove the whatever used pages might already be in your notebook). How much should you write? Enough. At least at least at least two sides of a sheet of binder paper per day. This might also be a good time to conscientiously find "the" pen that feels best in your hand.

Questions? Be sure you've read these directions carefully then don't hesitate to email me; as explained, this is a new assignment, so my directions might not be as clear as I intend.