

English III CP: American Literature Summer Reading Assignment

Welcome to English III! This summer, you are assigned two books to begin this course's study of American Literature. These works will begin our exploration of the course's central questions about the existence of the American Dream, perspectives on the American experience, and possible recurring American ideals and values. You will also complete a written assignment to continue to build the analytical and writing skills that you have learned and will continue to develop throughout the school year. The required summer reading books are listed below, followed by the assignments that should be completed during the reading process. All written assignments are due the first full day of school.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Ms. Cady at victoria.cady@saintjosephprep.org.

Required Reading:

- *Death of a Salesman* by Arthur Miller (Penguin Books, ISBN 9780140481341)
- *Fences* by August Wilson (Plume, ISBN 9780452264014)

Tasks:

1. Please **annotate as you read** each work. This is intended to encourage active reading in which you are engaged in the material and noting important developments or literary elements as you go.
 2. After reading both books, please **choose one prompt** below and **write a 2 page paper** in which you discuss the topic of that prompt.
 - a. Compare and contrast the American values and ideals that are portrayed in each of these works. What are some commonalities between what the characters value and in what ways do they differ?
 - b. How does the fact that these works are written as plays impact how we understand them? For example, how do the plays develop characters or convey themes in a way that is different from a novel? How does the structure of the work complement its function?
 - c. Discuss the portrayal of gender in each work. What does it mean to be a man or a woman in these plays? Why?
 - d. Discuss the significance of mortality in the plays. What role does death play in each work? Does it have a symbolic meaning? How does it shape those who survive? Does it help them to grow or cause them to crumble? Why?
- You should write in MLA format, including the proper header, font, margins, etc.
 - You will need to include textual evidence (quotations) with proper parenthetical citations to support your ideas in each body paragraph.