

ST. XAVIER JUNIOR SUMMER READING

KLARA AND THE SUN

by kazu o ishiguro

Welcome, St. X Juniors! Whether you're headed to the beach, the ball field, the lake, or your own backyard, we encourage you to carve out time to read. The act of reading has tremendous intellectual, emotional, and psychological benefits, and becoming a better reader will change your personal, educational, and work lives for the better. Also, reading can be just plain fun. Let this summer reading allow you to escape into your imagination—to "travel without moving your feet" (Jhumpa Lahiri). Happy reading!

Directions/English Department Expectations:

1. Read *Klara and the Sun* by Kazuo Ishiguro
2. Use the discussion questions included in this packet to guide your understanding of the novel.
3. Read the two (2) articles about artificial intelligence.
4. Write two (2) responses using the directions provided in the "Articles" section.
5. Bring your novel and your responses to class for the first day of classes.
6. Teachers at the Junior level may use the novel and articles for beginning quizzes, first class discussions, and/or material for writing prompts.

A quick word on beginning the novel:

Klara and the Sun by Kazuo Ishiguro features an unusual narrator introduced throughout the first pages of the novel. The narrator, Klara, is a form of a humanoid robot or artificial intelligence, called an AF ("Artificial Friend"). Getting used to her narration and thoughts may be confusing at first, so pay attention to how Klara observes the world around her, to how she learns more and more, and to how she begins to change. This may help you understand her perspective as the plot unfolds.

Reading Questions:

1. Klara's relationship to the sun is essential throughout the early part of the novel. List several ways Klara comes to understand how essential the sun is to others. Why does she place the sun foremost for other characters as well as herself?
2. AFs are named for their friendship. What is the role of these "artificial friends" in the world of this novel? What quality are the other types of friendships in the novel? How does the author present the role of a friend?
3. Human lives are marked by loss. Why is the grieving process important? How do characters in the novel respond to grief or loss? How might Klara's presence help or hinder how other characters respond to loss or grief?
4. Ishiguro's novel contains several elements of science fiction. List several ways the author creates a futuristic world for Klara and the other characters to inhabit. What seems so strange about Ishiguro's futuristic world? In what ways does the world connect firmly with our current world?
5. Many characters in the novel wish for better lives for their loved ones. This can create tension as others try to live life through someone else. List the character relationships involving a wish for someone else. Does this wish help or hinder their relationship?
6. As you consider the character of Klara, what does the Catholic doctrine that humans are created in the image and likeness of God cause you to reflect upon? Which traits of Klara's are most human? Does she have traits that separate her from human beings?
7. To what extent does Klara qualify as *human*? What sort of judgment are we called to make about Klara in terms of her humanness? To what extent can we fairly judge her character in this regard?
8. What sorts of knowledge does Klara possess from the outset, and what sorts of knowledge does she acquire over the course of the novel? Which of Klara's thinking patterns seem "programmed" into her system and which ones appear to be learned?

9. How does Klara come to know the things that she knows? How would you describe Klara's learning process with regard to her understanding of human behavior? In which cases does Klara get things right and in which cases does she get them wrong? How can we explain this development?

10. How would you describe Klara's "moral sense"?

NON-FICTION ARTICLES ANALYSIS

Nonfiction Articles Analysis—Complete this AFTER you finish *Klara and the Sun*.

Read and respond to the **two** articles linked below:

#1	https://www.humanium.org/en/the-influence-of-emotional-artificial-intelligence-and-digital-toys-on-child-development/
#2	https://perma.cc/G3E7-B6KA (AI, machine learning and deep learning v. creativity)

- Step 1: Print, read, and annotate the article. (Your annotations will help you write your paragraphs.)

- Step 2: Write two paragraphs for each article:
 - a. Paragraph one-a summary: list the title of the article and write a summary of the author’s main points. What does the author want readers to take away with them? (minimum of 100 words)

 - b. Paragraph two-your thoughts: again list the article’s title and explain what the article caused you to consider that relates to events, characters, or themes in *Klara and the Sun*. (minimum of 100 words)

- ❖ Type your responses in Times New Roman, Size 12, double-spaced.
- ❖ LIST THE TOTAL NUMBER OF WORDS at the end of each paragraph. Each article’s response should be a minimum 200 words (100 wds. per paragraph). (2 article responses x 200 wds.=TOTAL 400 wds. minimum for Assignment #2)
- ❖ You will turn in your typed responses the first day class meets.