

## Summer Reading/Learning - Universal Understandings

Parents/Guardians/Students -

We are Bradley Rose ([bradleyrose@smsd.org](mailto:bradleyrose@smsd.org)) and Benjamin Bandel ([benjaminbandel157@smsd.org](mailto:benjaminbandel157@smsd.org)), the English 1 Honors teachers for the 2023-2024 school year. As part of enrollment in this course, summer reading is required. Please see the details below for the assignment and expectations.

### What is our approach to Summer Reading/Learning?

We want to encourage our students to discover and deeply explore universal threads by connecting our personal experiences with our reading. Contextually, this assignment has two parts, and students will be responsible for creating a final product that will ultimately display their learning from summer. This final product could be a presentation or essay that connects their (1) reading of a larger text TO (2) a cultural experience. We'll take these competencies and continue to build upon/refine our synthesis and analysis skills throughout the school year.

This *honors* course is intended for students with an intellectual curiosity to explore the more specific details and nuances that make literature engaging and captivating. Moreover, students are expected to approach their academics conscientiously and diligently - with an "honor code" in mind that focuses on academic honesty and integrity. Students looking for a shortcut around their reading/learning may struggle with our class this year. Nevertheless, it is our hope that this approach will curb that temptation.

### Requirements/Expectations

#### Part 1: Reading

Our goal for Honors English 1 summer reading is simple: for our students to be reading. Rather than assigning a particular work for summer reading, students will decide what they read. However, students must select a novel (typically 250 to 300 pages) that they have *NOT* read before. They can read fiction, non-fiction, drama, romance, dystopian, etc. - any genre is acceptable for their novel. Aside from their larger literary work, students should also be exploring informational texts. This can be accomplished by reading at least ONE article a week! Students may pull these articles from a variety of sources, such as magazines, newspapers, blogs, etc. Feel free to read articles in areas of life that interest you.

Our goals in this approach are to encourage a love of reading, foster trust with our students, and curb the temptation to be dishonest in our work. We want students to explore their passions through reading because they enjoy it and want to display their learning in a way that allows them to be proud. It is our hope that through this approach to summer reading, students realize that they genuinely enjoy the process of reading and will want to continue reading.

#### Part 2: Cultural Experience

Being a student means being well-rounded and having experiences that illuminate the cultures around us rather than simply relying on academic reading for our understanding. Understanding literature goes

beyond words on a page and involves delving into humanity, which is why good readers are those who have a wide variety of life experiences that they can connect to their reading. The experience the student participates in should be something NEW to the student, outside of their day to day routine. It should offer the student a different insight and new perspective. The experience does not need to have a direct connection to anything the student reads. As well, please note, while some of our suggestions are local Kansas City opportunities, you can absolutely engage in any of these experiences if you're traveling this summer!

Some ideas for a cultural experience:

- Go to "Shakespeare in the Park" (Heart of America [SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL](#))
  - On June 28th, the North ELA teachers will have a space reserved for North students, families, and teachers!
- Visit a historical site, museum, or landmark
- Visit the Nelson-Atkins or another art gallery
- Attend a concert (band or music genre should be new to the student), or play/musical
- Watch a foreign film (with subtitles in your first language)
- Eat at an ethnic restaurant. Have the staff order for you! Some local restaurants to consider:
  - Elsa's (Ethiopian)
  - Holy Land Cafe (Middle Eastern)
  - El Salvadoreño (Salvadoran)
  - Sohaila's Kitchen (Pakistani)
  - African Dream Cuisine (West African)
  - Anousone's (Lao and Thai)

### Summary "Checklist" of Requirements

#### Part 1: Reading

- Novel of your choice! (Must be at least 250-300 pages in length)
- "Articles of the Week" (If done weekly, students should read upwards of 10 articles total)

#### Part 2: Cultural Experience(s)

- Attend "Shakespeare in the Park" OR another play, musical, or live concert
- Visit a historical site, museum, landmark, or art gallery
- Eat at an ethnic restaurant(s)

Please let us know if you have any questions. At this point, we are not completely certain of which student has which teacher, so please include both of us in emails. A response from any one of us will be on behalf of both of us. As well, please note, we will likely not be checking work emails frequently over summer break so please reach out early and expect that a response may not be immediate.

Benjamin Bandel - [benjaminbandel157@smsd.org](mailto:benjaminbandel157@smsd.org)

Bradley Rose - [bradleyrose@smsd.org](mailto:bradleyrose@smsd.org)