

Summer Assignments

from the English Department at Gulf Shores High School, 2024

(Submission guidelines: All work should be typed and ready to submit into Canvas on the first day of school. Use MLA formatting: 12 point, Times New Roman font and double-space.)

Viewing and Responding:

All grade levels should watch the following commencement speech given by Navy Admiral William McRaven at the University of Texas' 2013 graduation: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TBuIGBCF9jc> as well as list the 10 things that he learned during Navy Seal training.

9th grade: Reflect upon your middle school years: what were the challenges you faced and lessons you learned during this time in your life? Compile a short list of 10 lessons that you learned in middle school based on your successes and challenges.

10th grade: Reflect on your freshman year: what were the challenges you faced as a new high school student? What did you learn? Compile a short list of 10 lessons your freshman year based on your successes and challenges.

11th grade: Think ahead to your senior year: what do you hope to accomplish during your junior year that will help you to achieve your goals for senior year and beyond? Set three goals for your junior year and one additional long-term goal you hope to achieve by graduation 2026.

12th grade: Reflect upon all of your previous years in school: what valuable lessons have you learned from your experiences in grades kindergarten through junior year? Now create your own Top 10 List to be shared with the class of 2026.

Reading and Responding:

Read the assigned piece for your grade level. Then complete the discussion assignment provided. (PDFs of each text are available for free online via multiple sources. Linked PDFs are also provided here.)

9th grade: "I Am Very Real" by Kurt Vonnegut "[I Am Very Real](#)"

Respond to the following question: In the context of this letter, which is more important: freedom of speech or the security and protection of young people against what some see as potentially harmful ideas? Cite evidence from the letter, your own experience, and/or other literature, art, or history in your response.

10th grade: "My Name" by Sandra Cisneros "[My Name](#)"

11th grade: "Before the Law" by Franz Kafka "[Before the Law](#)"

Respond to the following discussion question: Describe some of the unrealistic aspects of the story. Then, what might be the "moral" of the story? Or, is this story merely a commentary about some other aspect of existence?

12th grade: "Sunday in the Park" by Bel Kaufman "[Sunday in the Park](#)"

Respond to the following question: Within the text, there are several conflicts that occur, and each character responds differently. Is there one way to overcome conflict? Why or why not? What are some considerations you must make when dealing with adversity? How do these impact your approach when resolving a conflict?