

English II and Honors English II  
Ms. Blain

***Summer reading assignment: Before We Were Free***

This summer, dive into the vibrant pages of Julia Alvarez's captivating novel, *Before We Were Free*. It's a quick read, leaving you plenty of time for summer activities. As you journey through the story, take notes in the margins to deepen your understanding (check out the annotation guide below). When you return to school, be prepared for engaging discussions and insightful writing assignments. This emotional novel transports you to a new world, filled with excitement and heartfelt moments. It might become your new favorite book.

***Key ideas to annotate in Before We Were Free:***

- 1. Coming of age*
- 2. Freedom and power*
- 3. Religion*
- 4. Cultural awareness*

***Annotating Literature:***

*Whenever you read a book for English class, you should do so with pen or pencil in hand, ready to add your own thoughts and questions to the book. This will help prepare you for class discussions and writing essays. In class, keep your pen handy to write down thoughts directly in the book. Don't ever be afraid to mark up your book!*

***How to Annotate:***

- Mark passages that seem important. (You can highlight them, or put stars next to them.) These might be a hint about something to come, a key moment in the plot, a bit of dialogue that reveals character, clues about the setting, an arresting figure of speech or image, an interesting sentence pattern, etc.*
- Write questions and comments to yourself in the margin. You might ask questions about information you don't understand, why a character would act in a certain way, or comment on something surprising.*
- Look for patterns and label them. Is there an image that keeps reappearing? Or a repeated phrase? Or a similar action that keeps happening to a character?*
- Circle words you don't know. Try to guess what they mean. If you can, look the word up in a dictionary (your phone is useful for this!) and write a synonym or quick definition in the margin (don't write the whole dictionary definition - put it in your own words). You can also use sticky notes to flag words you don't know and look them up later.*
- At the end of each chapter, write a bulleted list of key plot events. This not only forces you to think about what happened, see the novel as a whole, and identify patterns, but also gives you a convenient record of the whole plot.*