



English 113 – Literature & Composition Summer Reading

Welcome to Detroit Country Day Upper School! The English Department looks forward to working with you during your inaugural year at the Upper School. To help prepare for your English course next year, we ask that you explore a thematic question: **“Who or what defines who we are?”**

Your exploration of the theme will begin with your summer reading. Please choose one of the following books to read:

A Separate Peace by John Knowles
or
Shadowshaper by Daniel José Older

As you read the story of your choice, we ask that you consider the thematic question, interact with the text and pay attention to details—ones that will help you analyze the literary features of the novel. One way to “read closely” is to annotate the text by highlighting important passages and adding notes in the margins.

Take notes in the margin as you read for:...

- Questions you have,
- Characterization (personality and motives of characters),
- Plot and Conflict: what are important events or moments in the story?
- Message or theme: what is the text claiming about “who or what defines who we are”?

In addition, identify in the margins as well as by writing on paper or inside the cover of your book ...

- A single passage best expressing the theme
- A single passage that best shows character (main character + some minor characters)
- A single passage best showing why this book is good or not good (this is about entertainment value; what you particularly like or dislike about the book)

By tracking your thoughts, observations and questions as you read, you will gain more insights. Your annotations will also demonstrate that you have completed and reflected on the reading assignment. By the way, make sure you look up words you don’t know.

Be prepared to show your annotations in class. During the first days of school, we will discuss your responses to the summer reading, and you will be asked to write about the text in class.