

Summer Reading 2026

Welcome to 10th grade Pre-AP English. We are looking forward to an awesome year of learning together! Please read this summer reading packet immediately.

You have elected to take Pre-AP English II. This class is designed to give you a strong foundation, not only for Advanced Placement English, but also for college, the ACT, and the PSAT. The curriculum for this class includes literary vocabulary, rigorous reading, analytical writing, class discussions, and, yes, homework. You are expected to complete all assignments and to come to class prepared to participate. With this preparation comes summer reading. If you are dismayed by any of this, please remember that this level of English II is optional.

You are to read *Educated: A Memoir* by Tara Westover. We advise you to read (or reread) the book in late July or early August so that it will be fresh on your mind when school begins, but do not wait until the last minute!

About *Educated*:

Tara Westover is an American author living in the UK. Born in Idaho to a father opposed to public education, she never attended school. She spent her days working in her father's junkyard or stewing herbs for her mother, a self-taught herbalist and midwife. She was seventeen the first time she set foot in a classroom, and after that first taste, she pursued learning for a decade. She graduated magna cum laude from Brigham Young University in 2008 and was subsequently awarded a Gates Cambridge Scholarship. She earned an MPhil from Trinity College, Cambridge in 2009, and in 2010 was a visiting fellow at Harvard University. She returned to Cambridge, where she was awarded a PhD in history in 2014.

As of May 2020, *Educated* has spent 114 weeks on *The New York Times* Non-Fiction Best Seller list. It won a 2019 Alex Award and was shortlisted for the 2019 PEN/Jean Stein Book Award.

Memoir definition:

A **memoir** is a true account about a subject of which the author has intimate or personal knowledge. You can think of it as a kind of biography/autobiography, but it is usually more narrow in focus. Rather than recounting an entire life story, a memoir might be shaping a theme or focusing on one aspect of the author's life or one feature of a historical event.

Why read the actual book when you could read an online summary of it or watch the movie?

- Reading books of literary merit provides many benefits including expanding vocabulary; broadening knowledge of history, culture, geography; improving critical/analytical thinking skills - all thereby making you a better reader and writer.
- Reading someone else's summary of *Educated* robs you of all of those benefits. You miss out on the author's language, the vicarious experience, specific details, and the effects that literary moves, such as creating surprise, have on you as a reader.
- You need practice reading the kind of language these authors use, and you need to experience the events of the book firsthand. We will analyze the rhetorical choices of the author, and you will be unprepared if you haven't read the book.
- Be warned. We feel so strongly about this that we designed your reading check quiz to test you on details only in the book and not included in online synopses. Do not expect to pass this 100 point test if you do not read the actual book.

Your Assignment (This is our first impression of you as a student. Impress us!)

1. Read the actual book. Have a positive attitude! Try to appreciate the story and the language. (You may want to annotate as you read so your first impressions are fresh. Or you may want to read once to enjoy the story, and then go back through it to annotate. I tend to do a combination of the two. ☺)
2. We recommend that you annotate your book. As you read, underline or highlight important words or passages, and make notes about them in the margin. If you aren't sure what to mark, just mark what seems important to you, moves you, or resonates with you in some way.
3. Keep a response journal. As you read, select sections of text of 2-3 sentences each, and record them in a response journal along with your commentary. See the response journal instructions and example below. **Response journal – 100 point grade. Due Friday, August 14, 2026.**
4. You will have a reading check test the first week of school. This is to hold you accountable for reading the actual book. This will not test you on deeper meanings such as symbolism, but this WILL test that you read the actual book by testing you on details NOT included in online summaries, and this will test that you have a surface level comprehension of the events of the story. If you closely read the actual book, you will be fine. **Reading Check Test – 100 point grade. On Friday, August 14, 2026.**

5. The first several weeks of school will include our study of your book. We will deeply analyze it. We will compare and contrast it to other texts. Then we will transfer the skills we developed through this study to new texts, and we will build upon these skills. If you do not read the actual book before the first week of school, you will be lost, your first 9 weeks grade will be severely, negatively affected, and the references we make for the rest of the year will be lost on you. On the flip side, if you complete your assignment, you do your future self a huge favor! Your first 9 weeks grade will be positively affected, and you will have a strong foundation on which to build knowledge the rest of the year.

Response Journal (100 points)

Keep a journal of FIVE MEANINGFUL quotes to which you will respond. Choose sections of text that are 2-5 sentences long and that contribute to Westover's overall purpose in some way. These rhetorical moves might be narrative elements since a memoir sometimes feels like reading a novel even though it's a true story. Put her last name and the page number in parentheses after the closing quotation mark and before the period (as in the example). Your commentary on the quote should EXPLAIN HOW it contributes to the overall purpose or message of the book. You may include other quotes from *Educated* in your commentary to make connections or justify a claim, but they must be short (no more than 6 words) and be integrated INTO your own sentence. Do not simply restate your chosen quote. You are striving for explanation and analysis.

You may type in Times New Roman 12 point font or write by hand neatly in black ink. The following is an example of a response journal entry so you can follow this format and also have an idea of the type of analysis we'd like you to strive for.

Plagiarism (words in your commentary that are not your own) will result in a zero on the summer reading assignment. Do your own thinking and your own work! Sections of text will be run through a plagiarism detector.

Please be aware that AI use is strictly prohibited and will be considered plagiarism. If you are submitting a digital copy of your response journal, all work should be typed directly into your submitted document, not copied from an outside source.

Use the following format:

Response Journal by:

Title of Book: *Educated* by Tara Westover

Quote	Commentary
“The hill is paved with wild wheat. If the conifers and sagebrush are soloists, the wheat field is a corps de ballet, each stem following all the rest in bursts of movement, a million ballerinas bending, one after the other, as great gales dent their golden heads. The shape of the dent lasts only a moment, and is as close as anyone gets to seeing wind” (Westover xi).	Westover opens by describing her home, and this setting reflects her family’s attitude toward education, contributing to a theme developed over the course of the memoir: education is powerful because it changes the learner. Her family’s resistance to education results from a fear of change. Westover’s memoir conveys the wisdom in opening the mind to new ideas that can be accepted or rejected, but at least the decision is an informed one, and either way the learner is not the same person, but is, rather, a more knowledgeable, developed human being. Westover describes fields of wheat, exposed to the wind, but remaining unchanged. Later, a “school bus rolls by without stopping,” reflecting the family’s rejection of any exposure to education and resulting in change that is “never fundamental, only cyclical” like that of the sunrise and seasons on the mountain. Westover is only 7 in this vivid memory, but as she looks back on it and infuses it with meaning, the prologue suggests she will at some point open herself to new ideas and to allow them to change her if she believes they are right.

If you have any questions, you may email Mr. Taylor – ryantaylor@opsb.net or Miss Tubbs - zaria.tubbs@opsb.net