FOREST RIDGE
SCHOOL OF THE SACRED HEART

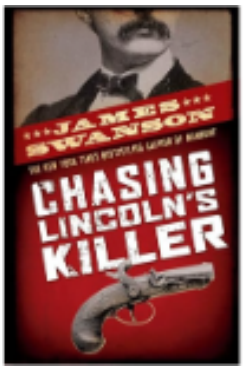
Incoming 10th Grade Summer Reading and Key Dates Assignment

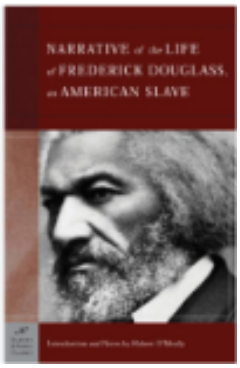
Choose one of these two books to read by the first day of AmEx in August 2026. If you need help deciding which one might be right for you, please connect with Ms. Gareis for guidance.

Chasing Lincoln's Killer by James Swanson

or

Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass an American Slave by Frederick Douglass





Key questions for *Chasing Lincoln's Killer* by James Swanson. Use these to guide your reading and Double Entry Journal choices. You do not need to directly respond to these questions.

- **Motive:** What series of circumstances in the United States motivated Booth to assassinate Lincoln?
- **The Escape Strategy & Mistakes:** Why did Booth choose the path he did, and what fatal errors did he and David Herold make?
- **Betrayal and Luck:** Booth was a famous actor; did his notoriety help him, or was it a hindrance? How did he manage to survive for nearly two weeks with a broken leg?
- **Conspirator Failures:** How did the failure of co-conspirators like George Atzerodt change the scope of the conspiracy and the subsequent hunt?
- **The Role of Locals:** Examine the motivations of those who helped Booth versus those who feared or betrayed him.
- **The Final Confrontation:** Was Boston Corbett justified in his actions?
- **The Aftermath:** How did the nation's reaction to Lincoln's death differ from what Booth expected?

Key questions for *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* by Frederick Douglass. Use these to guide your reading and Double Entry Journal choices. You do not need to directly respond to these questions.

- **Literacy, Power, and Humanity:** How does Douglass's journey from learning to read to forging documents demonstrate that literacy is a form of power? How does Douglass connect the ability to read with the desire for freedom, and how does education "unfit" a person for slavery?
- **Dehumanization and Transformation:** How does the dehumanizing nature of slavery affect the psychology of slaves as depicted in the book? What does Douglass mean when he writes, "You have seen how a man was made a slave; you shall see how a slave was made a man" (Chapter X)?
- **Religion and Morality:** How does Douglass maintain his personal faith while exposing the hypocrisy of slaveholders who used religion to justify their actions?
- **Freedom and Identity:** Why does Douglass refuse to disclose the details of his escape and why is this secrecy important? What is the impact on the reader of the title *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass: An American Slave*, particularly the words "Written by Himself"? How does Douglass define a "good life" in the context of his fight for liberty?
- **Rhetoric and Audience**: How does Douglass use metaphors and powerful visual imagery to influence his audience? Considering his audience was largely white abolitionists (those in favor of abolishing slavery), how does he use the narrative to persuade them to take action? Why does Douglass use a formal, educated style of writing, and what does this convey about his intended message?

You will need a copy of this book through the second week of school. If you choose to borrow a copy from the library, make sure that you can keep it checked out through the second week of September.

You will be responsible for comprehending the book at an academic level. Reading the book without any other interaction is probably not enough for most students to comprehend it to the level needed for success on assessments. For this reason, we strongly encourage you to annotate the text in whatever way works best for you (highlighters, written notes, sticky notes, flags).

Double-Entry Journals are due at the start of AmEx on the first Friday of the school year.

❑ Select 2 compelling, significant quotations that support the guiding questions above from the beginning, middle, and end of your chosen book.

❑ Create a double-entry journal entry for each of the quotations you selected, for a total of 6 entries. Your double-entry journal can be handwritten in pen on lined paper and submitted in person, or it can be typed in MLA format and uploaded to Canvas on the due date.

The use of generative AI in any way for this assignment is unacceptable. If we have concerns that you used generative AI in any way to complete this assignment, you are responsible for proving that you did not. The best form of "proof" is documentation of your thinking and writing process (annotations in the text, drafts, saved versions in Word or Google Docs, handwritten notes).

Formative and Summative Assessments

❑ You will have a formative discussion during the first week of school.

❑ You will have a summative writing assessment on your chosen book in AmEx during the second week of school.

Double-Entry Journals:
A double-entry journal is a way for you to interact with what you are reading, to engage with the words and ideas, and to deepen your understanding of the text. Just like a journal is a space for you to have a "conversation" with yourself by writing your thoughts, feelings, and memories, a double-entry journal is a space for you to have a "conversation" with the text.

Quotation	Personal Response

• "Juicy" quotations are word-for-word quotations from the text that give you a lot to "squeeze" out—they are rich for exploration and analysis.
• Your quotation should be 2-4 sentences in length.
• Include the page number in parentheses, like this: "Quotation" (35).
	• Your response should be 100-200 words.
	• Your response could include any of the following:
	  ○ connections (text-to-text, text-to-self, text-to-world) or specific ways in which you can personally relate to the text
	  ○ inferences that you can make, using what the text explicitly says with your own conclusions
	  ○ observation of concepts and themes that are developed through this passage
	  ○ questions, curiosities, issues, or concepts that this passage raises for you

Model Double-Entry Journal

Quotation	Personal Response
"Just. Peaceful. Good. And free. With astonishing regularity, Americans have held fast to these ideals, despite the clickbait stories that portend calamity. And America has too often fallen short of these standards. Both of these things are true at the same time" (12).	It's interesting to me that McMahon seems to be especially focused on how the Internet and social media have impacted our perception of American values. She mentions here the "clickbait stories that portend calamity," meaning attention-grabbing headlines, presumably about the utter collapse or downfall of the United States. I have definitely seen headlines like that in the last several years, so I'm curious why McMahon seems to dismiss these headlines. She seems to believe very strongly that Americans are united in a desire for justice, peace, goodness, and freedom, even if we don't always live out those ideals. I don't know if I agree with her or not. It makes me curious to see what evidence from history she can provide to support her claim. I like that she acknowledges that multiple truths can exist simultaneously.

American Experience Key Dates Summer Assignment 2026-2027

Directions: Make a set of flash cards on a ring to use as a reference during class next year. Here's an image of what we have in mind. You are welcome to buy something pre-made or make your own version using your own supplies. Some of these dates may be familiar to you. If you don't remember details, do some independent research to refresh your memory. Note key details on the flash card for that event. You can also sketch a symbol or include an image to help anchor the event in your mind.

1607	Jamestown, the first permanent English settlement, founded in Virginia
1609	First Africans arrive in Virginia; House of Burgesses established
1620	Pilgrims arrive at Plymouth Rock in Plymouth, Massachusetts
1754-1763	French & Indian War (Seven Years' War)
1763	Treaty of Paris ends the French & Indian War
1776	Declaration of Independence is written
1787	Constitutional Convention held in Philadelphia, PA
1789	Constitution is ratified
1791	Bill of Rights is ratified
1803	Louisiana Purchase, Lewis & Clark expedition
1812-1815	War of 1812 with Britain, White House is burned
1820	Missouri Compromise
1823	President James Monroe issues the Monroe Doctrine
1830	Indian Removal Act is passed, Trail of Tears begins
1846-1848	Mexican-American War
1849	Gold Rush
1850	Compromise of 1850, Fugitive Slave Act is passed
1854	Kansas-Nebraska Act passed; leads to "Bleeding Kansas"
1857	*Dred Scott v. Sandford* decision
1860	Abraham Lincoln elected president, South Carolina secedes from the Union
1861-1865	Civil War
1865	13th amendment ratified
1869	Transcontinental Railroad is completed
1877	Compromise of 1877 ends Reconstruction