June 2026

Dear tenth grade honors English student:

As an incoming English 2 Honors student, your summer reading assignment is to read the ***Funny in Farsi***, by Firoozeh Dumas.

In her memoir, Dumas recounts the unique personal challenges and adventures of growing up as an Iranian immigrant in America, along with the abundant humor and love that shaped her into the person she is today. Her sharp wit and clever writing voice will not only entertain you, but will teach you about culture, identity, and what it means to belong in an ever-changing world.

We encourage you to read closely by keeping track of your thinking using **the double-entry journal provided below**. You are to **PRINT the journal and fill it out by hand, not electronically**. In September, we will ask you to share your notes and observations and apply your understanding of the book through class activities and a multiple-choice assessment during the first two weeks of school. Please bring your double-entry journal with you on the first day of school. *NOTE: If you don't have access to a printer, please use the digital copy as a guide and write your responses on looseleaf.*

For your summer reading assignment, it is important to submit only original work in order to maintain academic integrity and foster genuine learning. This allows you to truly showcase your unique ideas and gives your new teacher an opportunity to get to know you and your voice. Embracing your own voice not only strengthens your skills but also makes your learning experience more rewarding and enjoyable.

We hope you enjoy this reading experience — we are excited to discuss this book with you in September. Have a wonderful summer, and we look forward to meeting you in the fall!

Sincerely,

Ms. Alfalla Ms. Cykiert
Ms. McAvoy
Mr. Polanco
Ms. Reis
Ms. Simmons

Note: Funny in Farsi is available as a free eBook by clicking on this link:
https://pcenglish50.weebly.com/uploads/7/0/7/6/7076889/funny-in-farsi-book.pdf

10th Grade Honors English
Summer Reading Assignment

DOUBLE ENTRY JOURNAL

Funny in Farsi:

A Memoir of Growing Up Iranian in America

By Firoozeh Dumas

Name: _____ **Date Submitted:** _____

Due: First day of school — bring this journal with you.

Entries Required: At least one entry per chapter (26 total). Chapters 1 and 2 have passages provided. For all other chapters, you choose your own passage as you read.

Format: Write in full sentences. Thoughtful engagement earns full credit — there are no wrong answers, only unsupported ones.

HOW TO USE THIS JOURNAL

A Double Entry Journal (DEJ) is a conversation between you and a text. On the left side, you record a passage — a sentence, a phrase, or a moment — that strikes you as you read. On the right side, you respond: What does this passage mean? Why did you choose it? What does it make you think, question, or feel?

The goal is not to summarize what happens but to slow down and think about how the author is making meaning.

Chapters 1 and 2 provide a passage for you. Use the model entry to practice your analytical response before you begin finding your own passages.

For Chapters 3–26, you will choose your own passage. Use the 'As you read, look for:' prompt in the left column as a guide — not a straitjacket. If another moment strikes you more powerfully, use that instead.

Choosing a strong passage:

Look for moments when Dumas is doing more than telling a story. She is often making a quiet argument about what it means to be an outsider, about the gap between expectation and reality, about humor as survival, or about what we lose and gain when we move between cultures. Those are the passages worth sitting with.

Writing a strong response:

Don't summarize. Don't just say 'This shows that...' and stop. Ask yourself: Why this word choice? What assumption is being challenged? What does this cost the narrator? What is Dumas asking the reader to feel or understand? Go two steps further than your first instinct.

Avoid: "This quote shows that Firoozeh feels sad."

Try: "Dumas's choice of [specific word/image] captures not just the emotion of the moment but the broader experience of [connect to theme]. This is significant because..."

Chapter 1: "Leffingwell Elementary School"

Passage (with page number)	**Your Response**
Provided passage: "My father often spoke about America with the eloquence and wonder normally reserved for a first love." — p. 3	**Consider:** Dumas opens with her father's idealized vision of America. How does this image compare to what the family actually encounters on their first day, and what does the gap between expectation and reality reveal about the immigrant experience?
Your chosen passage: p. _____	**Your response:**

Chapter 2: "Hot Dogs and Wild Geese"

Passage (with page number)	**Your Response**
Provided passage: "We counted on him not only to translate the language but also to translate the culture, to be a link to this most foreign of lands." — p. 8	**Consider:** Language becomes a central obstacle in this chapter. How does Dumas use humor to explore the confusion and vulnerability of not understanding a new culture, and what does this suggest about what it really means to 'fit in' somewhere new?

Your chosen passage:	**Your response:**
p. _____	

Chapter 3: "In the Gutter"	
Passage (with page number)	**Your Response**
As you read, look for: This chapter follows Kazem's dogged optimism — his dream that a lucky break will change his fortunes. Find a passage that reveals something about Kazem's character and respond: What does his approach to money and ambition tell us about how immigrants reimagine the American Dream? **Your chosen passage:** p. _____	**Your response:**

Chapter 4: "Save Me, Mickey"	
Passage (with page number)	**Your Response**
As you read, look for: The family's enthusiasm for Disneyland and California attractions is both funny and touching. Find a moment where Firoozeh describes her family's wonder at America and respond: How does the immigrant gaze — seeing the ordinary as extraordinary — challenge or enrich how we understand American culture? **Your chosen passage:**	**Your response:**

p. _____	

Chapter 5: "Swoosh-Swoosh"	
Passage (with page number)	**Your Response**
As you read, look for: Uncle Nematollah's extended visit upends the household. Find a passage about family obligation or the clash between Iranian and American customs and respond: What tensions between cultural loyalty and assimilation does this chapter reveal? **Your chosen passage:** p. _____	**Your response:**

Chapter 6: "With a Little Help from My Friends"	
Passage (with page number)	**Your Response**
As you read, look for: The Americans Firoozeh meets are largely curious and kind, but their knowledge of Iran is nearly zero. Find a passage about how her family explains where they are from and respond: What does their effort to locate Iran in American minds reveal about visibility, invisibility, and cultural power? **Your chosen passage:**	**Your response:**

p. _____	

Chapter 7: "Bernice"	
Passage (with page number)	**Your Response**
As you read, look for: The family moves to Newport Beach, where they stand out in a predominantly white community. Find a passage about how Firoozeh or her family is perceived there and respond: How does the experience of being 'read' as a certain ethnicity shape a person's sense of identity and belonging? **Your chosen passage:** p. _____	**Your response:**

Chapter 8: "A Dozen Key Chains"	
Passage (with page number)	**Your Response**
As you read, look for: This chapter explores how one childhood moment can define a person's reputation forever in a family. Find a passage about the way family stories are told and retold and respond: What do these narratives reveal about how families construct — and sometimes trap — individual identity? **Your chosen passage:**	**Your response:**

p. _____	

Chapter 9: "You Can Call Me Al"	
Passage (with page number)	**Your Response**
As you read, look for: Las Vegas becomes the site of both family bonding and culture clash. Find a passage that captures how Kazem relates to America through ritual or routine and respond: What does Kazem's devotion to places like Denny's or the Stardust suggest about how immigrants create their own version of belonging? **Your chosen passage:** p. _____	**Your response:**

Chapter 10: "Of Mosquitoes and Men"	
Passage (with page number)	**Your Response**
As you read, look for: Firoozeh's husband François has his own wildly unconventional family history. Find a passage where François's background intersects with or contrasts with the Dumas family story and respond: How does Dumas use this cross-cultural marriage to expand her argument about identity, belonging, and shared humanity? **Your chosen passage:** p. _____	**Your response:**

Chapter 11: "The "F Word""	
Passage (with page number)	**Your Response**
As you read, look for: Firoozeh decides to adopt the American name 'Julie' to make life easier. Find a passage where she reflects on her name or the choice to change it and respond: What is lost and what is gained when an immigrant anglicizes their name? What does a name carry? **Your chosen passage:** p. _____	**Your response:**

Chapter 12: "Waterloo"	
Passage (with page number)	**Your Response**
As you read, look for: Kazem's pride and his sense of himself as a pioneer for his family run throughout this chapter. Find a passage that captures his self-image and respond: How does the way Kazem tells his own story — as an explorer, a first — shape the family's relationship to America and to Iranian identity? **Your chosen passage:** p. _____	**Your response:**

Chapter 13: "America, Land of the Free"	
Passage (with page number)	**Your Response**
As you read, look for: The Dumas family's Thanksgiving celebration blends Iranian and American traditions. Find a passage that captures this cultural hybrid and respond: What does Dumas's portrait of the holiday suggest about what it means to be both Iranian and American — and whether those identities can coexist without contradiction? **Your chosen passage:** p. _____	**Your response:**

Chapter 14: "The Ham Amendment"	
Passage (with page number)	**Your Response**
As you read, look for: This chapter interweaves Kazem's love of ham with a history of the Shah, oil, and Iranian politics. Find a passage where personal appetite and political history collide and respond: How does Dumas use the absurd details of everyday life to make political and historical commentary accessible? **Your chosen passage:** p. _____	**Your response:**

Chapter 15: "Treasure Island"	
Passage (with page number)	**Your Response**
As you read, look for: We learn about Kazem's impoverished childhood in Ahwaz and his path to a Fulbright scholarship. Find a passage about how Kazem understood education or opportunity and respond: How does the backstory of his struggle reframe the way we read the Dumas family's American journey? **Your chosen passage:** p. _____	**Your response:**

Chapter 16: "It's All Relatives"	
Passage (with page number)	**Your Response**
As you read, look for: Persian has many more specific words for family relationships than English does. Find a passage where language and family structure intertwine and respond: What does the richness or poverty of vocabulary in a given language reveal about what a culture values? **Your chosen passage:** p. _____	**Your response:**

Chapter 17: "Me and Bob Hope"	
Passage (with page number)	**Your Response**
As you read, look for: Firoozeh reflects on the contrast between her family's Iranian identity and American holiday culture. Find a passage where she navigates the tension between embracing and resisting assimilation and respond: Is it possible to be fully at home in two cultures simultaneously, or does belonging always require some sacrifice? **Your chosen passage:** p. _____	**Your response:**

Chapter 18: "I Ran and I Ran and I Ran"	
Passage (with page number)	**Your Response**
As you read, look for: The Iranian Revolution forces the family to confront their relationship to both countries. Find a passage where Firoozeh or her family must decide how to present their identity in a hostile climate and respond: How does external political violence reshape an immigrant family's sense of who they are? **Your chosen passage:** p. _____	**Your response:**

Chapter 19: "I-raynians Need Not Apply"	
Passage (with page number)	**Your Response**
As you read, look for: Kazem loses his engineering career due to anti-Iranian sentiment after the Revolution and hostage crisis. Find a passage that captures his response to this loss and respond: What does Kazem's situation reveal about how race, ethnicity, and global politics can override individual achievement? **Your chosen passage:** p. _____	**Your response:**

Chapter 20: "Girls Just Wanna Have Funds"	
Passage (with page number)	**Your Response**
As you read, look for: The Iranian Revolution affects the family's finances just as Firoozeh is entering adolescence. Find a passage where she reflects on money, class, or opportunity and respond: How does financial instability shape a young person's sense of identity, particularly in a country that equates success with wealth? **Your chosen passage:** p. _____	**Your response:**

Chapter 21: "Joyeuse Noëlle"	
Passage (with page number)	**Your Response**
As you read, look for: Firoozeh's French language skills open unexpected doors and become a source of pride. Find a passage where she reflects on the power of language and respond: What does multilingualism — knowing how to move between languages and cultures — offer a person that monolingualism cannot? **Your chosen passage:** p. _____	**Your response:**

Chapter 22: "The Wedding"	
Passage (with page number)	**Your Response**
As you read, look for: Marrying François means navigating two very different families and sets of cultural expectations. Find a passage where Firoozeh must manage or mediate between Iranian and French/American expectations and respond: What does her wedding reveal about the emotional labor immigrants and their children perform to hold multiple worlds together? **Your chosen passage:** p. _____	**Your response:**

Chapter 23: "I Feel the Earth Move Under My Feet"	
Passage (with page number)	**Your Response**
As you read, look for: San Francisco's 1989 earthquake becomes a vehicle for examining community, fear, and resilience. Find a passage where Dumas connects the earthquake to her broader themes of home and displacement and respond: What does it mean to make a home in a place that can literally shake apart under you? **Your chosen passage:** p. _____	**Your response:**

Chapter 24: "A Nose by Any Other Name"	
Passage (with page number)	**Your Response**
As you read, look for: This chapter meditates on the pressure to alter one's physical appearance — especially noses — in American culture. Find a passage where Dumas links body image to cultural identity and respond: What do the choices people make about their appearance reveal about the cost of assimilation? **Your chosen passage:** p. _____	**Your response:**

Chapter 25: "Judges Paid Off"	
Passage (with page number)	**Your Response**
As you read, look for: Travel and exposure to the wider world have shaped Firoozeh's life. Find a passage where she reflects on what moving through the world has taught her and respond: How has the experience of being perpetually between cultures — Iranian and American — become both a burden and a gift for Firoozeh? **Your chosen passage:** p. _____	**Your response:**

Chapter 26: "If I Were a Rich Man"	
Passage (with page number)	**Your Response**
As you read, look for: In the final chapter, Dumas returns to the theme of money, belonging, and what was gained and lost in immigration. Find a passage where she takes stock of her family's journey and respond: Looking at the arc of the entire book, what does Dumas ultimately argue about the price and the reward of the immigrant experience? **Your chosen passage:** p. _____	**Your response:**

SYNTHESIS QUESTIONS

After finishing the book, respond to **any TWO of the following prompts** in the space provided. These responses should be longer and more developed — aim for a full paragraph of analytical writing for each.

1. Humor as Argument	Dumas consistently uses humor to address serious subjects: racism, displacement, poverty, and cultural erasure. Choose two moments from the book where laughter does something more than entertain. What is Dumas arguing through her comedy, and why might this mode of argument be more powerful than a direct one?
2. The Immigrant Family	Kazem is in many ways the emotional center of this book. Based on the chapters you read, write a portrait of him: What does he want? What does he fear? What does he sacrifice? What does he get wrong — and what does he get right?
3. Names and Identity	The chapter 'The "F Word"' takes its title from what the American name for Firoozeh becomes. Trace the question of names through the book. What do names carry — and what do we lose when they are changed, mispronounced, or replaced?

4. Mirrors and Windows	This memoir is set in a specific family and a specific culture, and yet Dumas argues that her stories are 'really about being an outsider.' Identify two moments in the book that functioned as a mirror (reflecting your own experience) and two that functioned as a window (showing you something unfamiliar). What did each teach you?

VOCABULARY LOG

Record words, phrases, or cultural references that are unfamiliar or that you find interesting. Focus especially on moments where language itself is doing something important — where word choice, tone, or a specific cultural term shapes the meaning of a passage.

Word / Phrase	Page	Context (what's happening around it)	Meaning or significance

FINAL REFLECTION

Complete all three prompts after you have finished the book. Write in full sentences.

Before you began

What did you know or assume about Iranian culture or the immigrant experience in America before you read this book?

A moment that stayed with you

Describe one scene, image, or line from the book that you cannot stop thinking about. What is it about that moment that has stayed with you?

What the book taught you

Dumas writes that she hoped every reader would 'come away from it with the idea that our commonalities far outweigh our differences.' Did she succeed with you? Why or why not?