

## Honors English 4: Voices in Literature Required Summer Reading Assignment

### Assignment Overview

This summer, you will read a memoir of your choice and complete a series of activities designed to help you think critically about the author's experiences, choices, and message. A memoir is a nonfiction narrative in which an author reflects on meaningful moments, relationships, challenges, or discoveries from their life.

### Choice of Memoirs

- Choose ONE of the following books:
  - *A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier* by Ishmael Beah
  - *Left to Tell: Discovering God Amidst the Rwandan Holocaust* by Immaculée Ilibagiza

### Suggested memoir elements to consider when reading:

As you read, pay attention to:

- |                              |                            |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| • Turning points             | • Tone and mood            |
| • Conflicts                  | • The author's voice       |
| • Relationships              | • Flashbacks and structure |
| • Themes                     | • Lessons or realizations  |
| • Repeated symbols or images |                            |

**Assignment:** There are 3 parts to your assignment: Part 1 Reading Log; Part 2: Memoir Analysis Questions; and Part 3: Letter to the Author. Read the requirements that follow *carefully*. You will create a single Google doc with page breaks for each and submit it in the first week of class.

### Part I: Reading Log

As you read, keep track of important moments, quotations, and ideas. You should have at least:

- 10 meaningful quotations
- 5 moments of conflict or change
- 5 examples of literary devices or writing techniques
- 5 personal reactions or connections

Your work should demonstrate:

- Careful reading
- Critical thinking
- Textual analysis
- Personal reflection
- Clear written communication

**Directions:** Create a Google doc to be submitted during the first week of class.

**NOTE:** See next page!

### Quotes

| Page # | Quote | Why It Matters |
|--------|-------|----------------|
|        | 1     |                |
|        | 2     |                |
|        | 3     |                |
|        | 4     |                |
|        | 5     |                |
|        | 6     |                |
|        | 7     |                |
|        | 8     |                |
|        | 9     |                |
|        | 10    |                |

### Conflict / Change

| Page # | Event | Why It Matters |
|--------|-------|----------------|
|        | 1     |                |
|        | 2     |                |
|        | 3     |                |
|        | 4     |                |
|        | 5     |                |

### Literary Devices or Writing Techniques

| Page # | Quote w Device | Why It Matters |
|--------|----------------|----------------|
|        | 1              |                |
|        | 2              |                |
|        | 3              |                |
|        | 4              |                |
|        | 5              |                |

### Personal Reaction

| Page # | Quote or Event | Your Reaction |
|--------|----------------|---------------|
|        | 1              |               |
|        | 2              |               |
|        | 3              |               |
|        | 4              |               |
|        | 5              |               |

### Part 2: Memoir Analysis Questions

Compose responses to each of the following questions. Your writing should be thoughtful, specific, and supported with evidence from the memoir.

#### Author & Purpose

1. What major life experiences or events shape the author's story?
2. Why do you think the author chose to write this memoir?
3. What message, lesson, or insight does the author want readers to understand?

#### Character & Relationships

4. How does the author change throughout the memoir?
5. Which relationship in the memoir is most important? Explain why.
6. Describe a moment when the author faced a challenge, conflict, or turning point.

#### Themes & Ideas

7. Identify at least two major themes in the memoir.
8. How are those themes developed over the course of the book?
9. What does the memoir reveal about identity, family, culture, society, or resilience?

#### Writing Style

10. How does the author make real events feel engaging or emotional?
11. Identify one example of imagery, symbolism, humor, dialogue, or figurative language.
12. How does the author's voice influence the reader's understanding of the story?

#### Personal Reflection

13. What part of the memoir affected you the most? Why?
14. Did the memoir change your perspective on anything? Explain.
15. Would you recommend this memoir to another student? Why or why not?

### Part 3: Letter to the Author

Write a 1–2-page letter to the author. Incorporate the following:

- **Acknowledge the author's experiences with empathy and respect**  
Respond thoughtfully to the challenges, losses, or hardships described in the memoir. Show compassion and sensitivity in your language.
- **Discuss moments that emotionally impacted you**  
Explain which parts of the memoir stayed with you and why they were powerful, moving, upsetting, inspiring, or eye-opening. *Choose a minimum of 2.*
- **Reflect on what you learned about the human experience**  
Share what the memoir taught you about resilience, identity, family, trauma, survival, courage, or hope.
- **Make a sincere personal connection**  
Describe how the memoir changed your thinking, helped you better understand others, or connected to experiences or emotions in your own life or community.
- **Write with authenticity and care**  
Use a respectful, genuine voice that feels honest and human rather than overly formal or analytical.