Dear Student,

Welcome to AP Language and Composition! This course is intended for students who enjoy reading/writing and who would like to improve their skills in analysis, writing, and speaking. If you typically rely on study guides (Spark Notes, Shmoop, etc.) to assist you with homework, or if you sometimes do not complete homework assignments, THIS IS NOT THE CLASS FOR YOU. The following reading assignment will be due on Tuesday, September 4th.

The Assignment:
PART 1: Read and annotate the following texts:
1. *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain
2. *Black Boy* by Richard Wright *(There are two versions of this book; make sure you get the one that has two parts: “Southern Night” and “The Horror and the Glory”).*
3. *On the Road* by Jack Kerouac

If you borrow a book, please use sticky notes for your annotations. If you need to return the book before school starts, transfer the sticky notes to binder paper organized by page number/chapter. **In order to receive credit for these annotations, you must cite the page number for each note and identify which edition of the text you read.**

In addition to earning a grade for your annotations, a multiple choice test based on these texts as well as in-class essays will figure heavily into your first quarter grade. You will also be evaluated on your participation during class discussions centered on these works. Use the attached Close Reading and Annotation handout to guide you as you read.

PART 2: Vocabulary
Identify 50 vocabulary words that you believe are important to know and/or you could potentially use in your own writing and speech. At least 30 of the words should come from the literature listed above. The remaining words can come from either those works or something else you read over the summer. For each word, provide the part of speech, the correct definition based on context, the sentence the word is used in, and a citation showing which text the word is from. Number each word. Here is an example:

1) supercilious (adj.) behaving or looking as though one thinks one is superior to others

“Now he was a sturdy straw-haired man of thirty with a rather hard mouth and a supercilious manner” (*The Great Gatsby* 7).

Your vocabulary list should be typed using a readable 12-point font.

PART 3: “Book Review”
For each of the three texts, type me a one page “book review” in which you explain your overall evaluation of the text. Questions to consider: How did you (or didn’t you) connect with the text? How did it remind you of other literature you have read? On an analytical level, which part(s) of the text seemed most thematically significant or powerful? Which parts from the text resonated with you or provoked a response from you as you read? Would you recommend this book to a friend? One typed page per book should work for this. This is your chance to showcase your abilities as a writer and demonstrate that you thoughtfully read each book.

If you feel intimidated by the requirements of this class, please consider withdrawing your application before the end of the school year since you may not be allowed to transfer out of this class when school begins in August. Please come see me in C-2 if you have any questions.

And finally, enjoy the reading and your summer!

Sincerely,

Mr. Coito
Close Reading and Annotation

To grasp the full meaning of a piece of literature, it is important to read closely – to interact with the text as you read and reread it. Close reading helps you get beneath the surface of the text to those bottom layers, where all the good stuff resides. As you read closely, it is helpful to annotate – to underline or highlight significant sentences, to circle and define unknown words, to make note of how the text reveals the author’s purpose, tone, themes, symbolism, and other literary/rhetorical devices. Annotating also helps prepare you for writing assignments and discussions based on the text.

Here are some tips for close reading and annotation:

Close Reading
- Pre-read the text to understand the basic plot, meaning, etc.
- As you pre-read, look for patterns and repetitions, recurring elements of the text including images, phrases, and situations. Why has the author used these repetitions? What is their significance?
- Identify passages that strike you as highly significant and explain why. How does the passage contribute to the characterization, themes, symbolism, etc.? How does the passage contribute to the overall meaning?
- Consider how the text relates to other texts you have read.
- Read the text in context. Take into account the time period in which it was written and/or set, the literary period (Romantic, Realist, Modern, etc.), and the social and/or political atmosphere. How does the author reveal these contextual elements in the literature? Does the author reveal a particular position on an issue? How does the author accomplish this?

Now that you have pre-read the text, it is time to annotate.

Annotation
- Circle phrases you find pithy, represent repetitive themes or images (motifs), and/or contain figurative language. Make a note in the margin explaining why they are important.
- Circle unfamiliar words, and define them in the margin.
- Bracket important sections of text, and make a note in the margin explaining their significance.
- Underline sentences that stand out or make some sort of point.
- Connect important ideas, phrases, or words with arrows.
- When you mark the text in any way, provide an explanatory note so that it makes sense when you come back to it.
- For the sake of finding particular passages during a class discussion, it is helpful to number the paragraphs of a short story.

Adapted from "Close Reading and Annotation" by Rolf M. Gunnar
Application for Admission to AP Language & Composition

Please carefully review the following information and return the form with your signature and the signature of your parent/guardian. Make sure that your writing abilities and work ethic are a good fit for this course. Once you are enrolled in the class, you may not be able to drop.

Course Content:
This AP course is designed for those students who are “willing and academically prepared” to meet the challenges of college-level reading and writing. Students who are up to the challenge should be reading at or beyond grade level, have mastered general sentence construction, and have a working knowledge of essay development. This course incorporates a vigorous study of American Literature and a thematic approach to the study of language and rhetoric using nonfiction texts.

In this class, you will
1. Maintain a journal for reflecting on reading assignments and for generating ideas for writing.
2. Read primarily nonfiction texts but expand your understanding of history and literature with samplings of American literature including drama, fiction, poetry and short story.
3. Analyze and interpret samples of good writing.
4. Identify and explain rhetorical strategies and techniques; incorporate strategies and techniques into your own writing.
5. Analyze image as text.
6. Write informal and formal compositions with an emphasis on timed in-class writing. You will write approximately one essay per week.
7. Create and sustain arguments based on readings, research and/or personal experience.
8. Evaluate reference documents and incorporate material into researched papers.
9. Use primary and secondary sources and effective citation of those sources in essays.
10. Produce expository, analytical and argumentative compositions with a complex central idea supported by appropriate evidence.
11. Write for a variety of purposes and revise for appropriate audience.
12. Work collaboratively through the writing process.
13. Develop a conscious understanding of your own writing process.
14. Develop a mature prose style as indicated by:
   a. Academically mature vocabulary
   b. Varied sentence structure
   c. Organization and coherence based on repetition, transitions, and emphasis
   d. Balance between generalization and specific detail
   e. Effective use of voice and tone

In addition to the above items, you will complete a reading/writing assignment that will ask you to read three books and complete detailed analytical responses to the texts. This assignment will be due approximately two weeks after school begins in fall but if possible, you should begin it over the summer. If you have any questions about this course, please see Mr. Coito in room C-2. By signing, you acknowledge that you have received the summer assignment and that you have read and understood the above information. You also acknowledge that you understand the rigor involved in this course and that once enrolled, dropping the course may not be an option.

Student Name (print): ___________________________ Student ID#: ___________________________

Signature: ___________________________ Date: ____________

Parent signature: ___________________________ Date: ____________