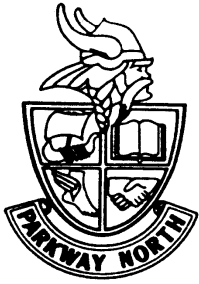


ENGLISH DEPARTMENT



PARKWAY NORTH HIGH SCHOOL

12860 Fee Fee Road
St. Louis, MO 63146
314-415-7654
FAX 314-415-7634

ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

Debbie Banashek-Cole
Mark Bannecker
David Beck
Bailey Bolinger
LuAnn Fallahi
Heather Fleming
Tricia Frank
Kim Hanan-West
Scott Kreher
Melissa Lynn Pomerantz
Allison Ramsaroop
Dana Regenbogen
Tracy Silvagnoli
Adam Stiller
Wendy Surinsky
Jennifer Voelkl
Greg Wagener

Anne Lipson
SECRETARY

26 April 2010

Dear Honors Sophomore Students,

Welcome to the fall semester of Honors English II. The literature we read this semester is modern. Modern writers typically reveal doubts about traditional values and beliefs; they raise questions about our notions of truth and reality; and, through experimenting with new narrative techniques, they challenge our assumptions about how a story is told.

Your summer reading assignment will help you appreciate the changes in modern literature. You will read two pieces: John Knowles' *A Separate Peace*, and J.D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye*. You will probably want to buy your own copies so that you can mark in them, or you can check them out of any library and mark on post-its. The school store has some copies available for much less than you could purchase them at a store.

These two works, though very different in tone and narrative technique, suggest some of the social and historical events that gave rise to modernism as they reflect the struggle for meaning in a universe that seems no longer to make sense. Read each work carefully and thoughtfully, marking key passages, keeping in mind

- the central questions and ideas in each work
- the questions and ideas that connect all three works
- the different purposes, perspectives, and narrative strategies of each work

Sign-ups—Please sign up as soon as possible, preferably before you leave school this year.

We would like to be able to contact you over the summer to give clarification and make announcements (and maybe even get to know you before school starts).

Please create a nicenet.org account (it's private and will not sell your information) by going to the website and then clicking on join class. You will enter the following class key: **22930Z2286** and enter your **full name and e-mail address (that you actually check)**.

Also, you will need a turnitin.com account. If you do not already have an account, create one at the website. Then add join the following class by entering the **Class ID: 3249778** and the **Class Password: vikings (lowercase v)**.

Directions

- Using a word processing program, create a dialectical journal of *at least* six key passages from each text. Choose passages that rise above the context of the novel and could stand on their own.
- Make sure to cover the whole text, and remember that beginnings and endings are always significant. You are looking for those passages that reveal the struggle to make sense of the modern world.
- Analyze these passages in the context of their separate works **and** as they link to each other (you will need to finish both books before you can go back and make these connections—don't worry, that's why you're using a computer ☺).
- Both the selection of quotations as well as the analysis must be *your own ideas*. Consulting outside sources suggests you are either unable or unwilling to handle the honors level. We want to see what *you* think and how *you* think (not what someone else suggests you should think).
- See below for a model excerpt, the assessment criteria, and the ISBNs so that we all have same editions. **If you don't have the same edition, you will need to hand-number your pages to match the class edition so that you can participate in class discussions.**
- Upload your journal to Turnitin.com by Tuesday, August 10th at midnight (yes, that's before school starts). Class ID = **3249778**. Password = **vikings (lowercase v)**. You will upload to Summer Reading Journal. If you have problems uploading, e-mail us at mpomerantz@pkwy.k12.mo.us or mbannecker@pkwy.k12.mo.us

Please bring the books and the printed journal with you on the first day of class and be prepared for thoughtful discussion. If you read the books in the beginning of the summer, you will want to review them before school starts in August. Of course, we hope you read all summer long.

Have a great summer. We look forward to seeing you in the fall.

Sincerely,

Mark Bannecker and Melissa Lynn Pomerantz
Honors English II teachers

Books

Please purchase or borrow the editions listed below. The PNH bookstore has discounted copies available. We recommend you purchase them there before school is out so that you can make sure you have the correct edition. Check amazon.com or other sites for inexpensive used copies (We saw many for less than \$1.25).

- *A Separate Peace* Scribner Edition ISBN 978-0743253970
- *The Catcher in the Rye* Little, Brown Edition ISBN 978-0316769488

Note: If you choose to purchase another edition, you are responsible for renumbering your pages **before** our first discussion

Model Journal Excerpt from Edith Wharton's *Ethan Frome* (which you might read in the spring)

“There was in him a slumbering spark of sociability which the long Starkfield winters had not yet extinguished. By nature grave and inarticulate, he admired recklessness and gaiety in others and was warmed to the marrow by friendly human intercourse” (Wharton 60).

This passage illuminates Ethan's character, especially in contrast with the way he was described in the introduction—slow, lifeless, and without affect. It surprised me that Ethan ever had any “trace of sociability” given how grave the narrator's description of him is early on. But that helps explain why he has such a need for Mattie and why he needs to get out of Starkfield. If he stays, that small flame of sociability will certainly become extinguished (as it does). He needs someone whose “gaiety” will enliven him, warm him so that he can flourish in that frozen world of Starkfield, Massachusetts. It reminds me of how at the beginning we are told that Ethan has been in Starkfield for too many winters. Without that “friendly human intercourse” it becomes too difficult for Ethan to stay alive spiritually. Perhaps that “spark of sociability” is Ethan's hope of escape, of something better, of a real human connection.

“. . . he had a confused sense of being in another world, where all was warmth and harmony and time could bring no change” (77).

Poor Ethan! So often he finds himself in this sort of confusion, stuck between reality and illusion. He frequently finds himself in “other worlds”: the world with Mattie, full of hope and promise; the world with Zeena, full of “frozen woe”; the almost impossible to imagine world away from Zeena. But what Ethan longs for are the short, quiet moments in which he could forget the winter and cold and could fall into the illusion of spring and warmth. But these illusions are just that—unreal. This passage shows once again how Ethan is a dreamer, but his dreams are illusory. Is this what finally disheartens Ethan? Perhaps the broken Ethan we see at the beginning of the novella is the result of the dream being broken, of the illusion being replaced by the stark reality of who he is. This reminds me of the struggles that Willy Loman has in *Death of a Salesman*. He, too, is a man plagued by illusions and he breaks when those dreams and hopes are dashed by reality.

Assessment

- Quotation selection—the passage is essential to understanding the text
- Depth—analysis shows complexity, thoughtfulness and thoroughness
- Breadth—selected passages represent the entirety of the work
- Understanding—reasonable interpretation of selected passage and work as a whole
- Connections—from part to whole (connection of individual passage to entire text) and from text to text (connections between texts), and from self to text (personal experience to text)
- Voice—discussion shows a true conversation with the text, individual and unique perspective
- Fresh, Original Thinking—shows individuality in discussion, freshness of thought, insightful and original connections

Don't be afraid to use your own voice. The most interesting and successful journals are the ones in which the student truly engages with the text, gives responses that only he or she could give, and wrestles with the passage and its nuances. We expect that you have questions and that you try out multiple possible answers. We do not expect you to write like a professor. We do expect you to write with an academic 10th grade voice. Please, revel in the complexities of these texts; enjoy your questions, be glad you are not expected to know it all.