June 2019

Dear Student/Parents –

Welcome to the Advanced Placement Language & Composition/Honors American History program for the upcoming school year. Students will learn to analyze, discuss, and critically think about a wide variety of texts in preparation for the AP exam in May (all students are required to take this exam) and college. To help start the year on solid footing, you will find requirements below for the summer reading assignment and a list of books and supplies for the school year. All the books are required reading for the class.

1. Students need to get copies of the following books for the school year:
   a) Welcome to the Monkey House, Kurt Vonnegut
   b) The Great Gatsby, F. Scott Fitzgerald
   c) Song of Solomon, Toni Morrison
   d) The Things They Carried, Tim O’Brien
   e) Salvage the Bones, Jesmyn Ward
   f) Into the Wild, Jon Krakauer
   g) One additional book may be required

2. Students will need to get the following supplies
   - 1 composition notebook
   - Black and blue pens
   - Post-it notes
   - 1 three ring binder for keeping a portfolio of your classroom work with a minimum 5 dividers

3. Students will read all of Welcome to the Monkey House over the summer and complete the attached homework (questions and Dialectical Journals)

   Students need to familiarize themselves with the Dialectical Journal model, which I have attached. Please complete 3 Dialectical Journals (DJ) for Welcome to the Monkey House. One DJ focused on tone, one on syntax, and one on diction. You will find instructions and an example of a Dialectical Journal later in this document.

If you have a question, please find (room D230 or C228) or contact (cdevidal@lwsd.org; ehaskin@lwsd.org) one of us before the end of the school year. Bring summer reading assignments with you on the first day of school. Have a great summer!

Sincerely,

Ms. Emma Haskin
Ms. Christina deVidal NBCT
Welcome to the Monkey House Reading Questions

1. Write down three parts that surprised you and explain why.

2. What story did you most enjoy and why? What story did you most dislike and why?

3. What are three good TONE words for three of the stories? Explain each.

4. What stories or parts are humorous? What type of humor is most frequently used?

5. How would you describe Kurt Vonnegut’s language and style throughout the book?
Throughout the year, you will use the following terms in essays and written responses. The following words will be particularly useful when writing any kind of **Literary Analysis** (which you will do often). You will also concentrate on these words when working on **Dialectical Journals**...

- **Diction**
  - **Diction** is simply the **words** the writer chooses to convey a particular meaning.
  - When analyzing diction, look for **specific words** or short phrases that seem stronger than the others (ex. Bragg’s use of *slingshot* instead of *travel*). Diction is NEVER the entire sentence.
  - Effective diction is shaped by words that are clear, concrete, and exact. Good writers avoid words like *pretty*, *nice*, and *bad* because they are not specific enough. Instead, they rely on words that invoke a specific effect in order to bring the reader into the event being described.
    - **Examples**:
      - A coat isn’t *torn*; it is *tattered*.
      - The US Army does not *want* revenge; it is *thirsting* for revenge. A door does not *shut*; it *thuds*.

- **Syntax**
  - The arrangement—ordering, grouping, and placement—of words within a sentence.
  - **Sentence Length** - One aspect of syntax is **sentence length**. Good writers will use a variety for emphasis.
    - **Short sentences** — imply straightforward
    - **Long sentences** — imply descriptive, detailed
  - **Sentence Type** - Another aspect of syntax is **sentence type.** Again, good writers use a variety.
    - **Simple**: subject-verb (I went to the store.)
    - **Compound**: 2 independent clauses joined by a conjunction (I went to the store, and I bought candy.)
    - **Complex**: independent clause and dependent clause (While traveling to the store, I saw my friend.)
    - **Compound-complex**: 2 independent clauses and one or more dependent clauses (While traveling to the store, I saw my friend, and she gave me money for candy.)
    - **Declarative**: statement (I went to the store.)
    - **Exclamatory**: strong feeling (What a wonderful candy store!)
    - **Interrogative**: question (Is this a store?)
    - **Imperative**: command (Go to the store.)

- **Modification**
  - Most English sentences follow a subject-verb-object pattern (ex. I went to the store.) modifying or adding to this can emphasize the author’s ideas or purpose.
The Dialectical Journal

Dialectical Journal: A way for students to interact with the text as they are reading it. Dialectical Journals provide continual commentary on an author’s diction, syntax, and tone throughout pieces of literature (novels, plays...) DJs often supply the brainstorming, or the ideas that will then be used in formal essays. They push students to focus on the text and their own commentary, while keeping them above a mere plot synopsis. Appearing similar to a T-chart, DJs are easy to keep in a notebook or on a computer.
DICTION: “It was becoming a habit – this concentration on things behind him. Almost as though there were no future to be had” (Morrison 32).

SYNTAX: “Birth, life, and death – each took place on the hidden side of a leaf” (Morrison 220).

TONE: “And now he [Milkman] noticed that the ropes that held the swing were frayed and the picket fence that had looked so bright and perky before was really flaked, peeling, and even leaning to the left. The blue steps leading to the porch were faded into a watery gray. In fact the whole house looked seedy” (Morrison 320).

The use of the verb “becoming” implies that it’s not a habit yet, that there is still a chance for it not to become a fully-fledged habit. “Becoming” also evokes a sense of growth or coming-of-age which also implies the chance to change. Also, “habits” are not necessarily good or bad – they can be either – so this habit of Milkman’s isn’t necessarily detrimental. However, the next line moves on to contradict that idea, with the idea that “there was no future to be had”. Here, the author draws a parallel between Milkman and his father, both of them feeling miserable in their lives.

Here, Morrison seems to be talking about something greater than just bug and insects and plants; rather, she seems to be referencing the world as a whole, both for the characters themselves and for us. People tend to have preconceived notions of birth, life, and death, especially when they’re introduced on their own, as Morrison did here. This makes the impact of the second half of the sentence all the greater. “Each took place on the hidden side of a leaf”, especially when separated from the rest of the sentence by a dash, makes the audience think about birth, life, and death on a much larger scale.

Mileman’s yearning for a sense of belonging clouded his judgement. He became so consumed in discovering his family history that he became oblivious to the world around him. Morrison effectively pivots the tone of the novel from positive to negative. Everything seems to fade away from Milkman’s life, Examples of this are his father, Hagar, and Guitar, all of whom eventually separated themselves from Milkman, or him from them.

There are 3 quotes above, but you will need 5 quotes for each Dialectical Journal. Please note: quotes go on the left and your commentary goes on the right. One Dialectical Journal will focus on tone, one on syntax, and one on diction. (You will 15 quotes total)