Incoming 9th Grade English
Required Summer Reading 2010
Bellaire High School

Incoming 9th Grade Academic & College Prep English

(total required reading: **1 book**)

- All Academic and Advanced Academic students must read one of the following books:
  Ender's Game by Orson Scott Card
  The Hobbit by J.R.R. Tolkien
  Speak by Laurie Halse Anderson
  The Kite Runner by Khaled Hosseini. (Students and parents should be aware this book contains some mature themes and situations.)

  See attached list to find out more about these books.

ASSIGNMENT

1. **Select** a character in the novel to profile.
2. **Find at least three (3) passages** from the novel that reveal character traits and personality of this character. These might include his/her physical description or revealing words of the character himself, other characters, or the narrator.
3. **Create one of the following:**
   - ***A movie poster*** highlighting your character with graphics or photos (may be drawings). Include a 3 – 5 sentence synopsis of the novel (do not reveal the ending), and at least 2 of the selected passages describing the character. Your poster should, of course, include the title and author of the book.

     OR
   - ***A Magazine interview*** with your character. This interview will include a photo of the character (may be a drawing), at least two (2) of the selected passages revealing his/her personality, and 15 questions created by you, the reporter, and answered as you believe the character might. Questions are to reveal the personality of the character and his/her possible motivation(s) or reaction(s) to events in the novel.

Students will be given some time in class the first two days of school to complete the project that is due at the end of class the second day, August 25, 2010.

Incoming 9th Grade Pre-AP English Assignment ON BACK…

<u>**Incoming 9th Grade Pre-AP English**</u> (total required reading: **2 books**)

- All students **must read** EITHER *The Three Musketeers* by Alexander Dumas or *Emma* by Jane Austen. Students who choose to read The Three Musketeers may read **the abridged translation by Lord Sudley.**

- Additionally, students must read **ONE of the following:**

Cold Sassy Tree by Olive Ann Burns
Joy Luck Club by Amy Tan
The Kite Runner by Khaled Hosseini. (Students and parents should be aware this book contains some mature themes and situations.)
Ender's Game by Orson Scott Card
The Life of Pi by Yann Martell
Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde by Robert Louis Stevenson
Becoming Jane Eyre by Sheila Kohler

Incoming Pre-AP students will be tested over *The Three Musketeers* **or** *Emma* the first week of school. An assignment related to the reading of the second novel will be given during the first six weeks.

ABOUT the ACADEMIC and COLLEGE PREP BOOKS:

Ender's Game by Orson Scott Card

Once again, the Earth is under attack. Alien "buggers" are poised for a final assault. The survival of the human species depends on a military genius who can defeat the buggers. But who? Ender Wiggin. Brilliant. Ruthless. Cunning. A tactical and strategic master. And a child. Recruited for military training by the world government, Ender's childhood ends the moment he enters his new home: Battleschool. Among the elite recruits Ender proves himself to be a genius among geniuses. In simulated war games he excels. But is the pressure and loneliness taking its toll on Ender? Simulations are one thing. How will Ender perform in real combat conditions? After all, Battleschool is just a game. Right? [from www.bn.com]

The Hobbit by J.R.R. Tolkien

Whisked away from his comfortable, unambitious life in his hobbit-hole by Gandalf the wizard and a company of dwarves, Bilbo Baggins finds himself caught up in a plot to raid the treasure hoard of Smaug the Magnificent, a large and very dangerous dragon. [from www.bn.com]

Speak by Laurie Halse Anderson

Speaking out at the "wrong" time-calling 911 from a teen drinking party-has made Melinda a social outcast; now she barely speaks at all. A conversation with her father about their failed Thanksgiving dinner goes as follows: "Dad: 'It's supposed to be soup.' / Me: / Dad: 'It tasted a bit watery, so I kept adding thickener....'/ Me: ." While Melinda's smart and savvy interior narrative slowly reveals the searing pain of that 911 night, it also nails the high-school experience cold-from "The First Ten Lies They Tell You" (number eight: "Your schedule was created with your needs in mind") to cliques and clans and the worst and best in teachers. The book is structurally divided into four marking periods, over which Melinda's grades decline severely and she loses the only friend she has left, a perky new girl she doesn't even like. Melinda's nightmare discloses itself in bits throughout the story: a frightening encounter at school ("I see IT in the hallway....IT sees me. IT smiles and winks"), an artwork that speaks pain.

Melinda aches to tell her story, and well after readers have deduced the sexual assault, we feel her choking on her untold secret. By springtime, while Melinda studies germination in Biology and Hawthorne's symbolism in English, and seeds are becoming "restless" underground, her nightmare pushes itself inexorably to the surface.

When her ex-best-friend starts dating the "Beast," Melinda can no longer remain silent. A physical confrontation with her attacker is dramatically charged and not entirely in keeping with the tone of the rest of the novel, but is satisfying nonetheless, as Melinda wields a shard of broken glass and finds her voice at last to scream, "No!" Melinda's distinctive narrative employs imagery that is as unexpected as it is acute: "April is humid....A warm, moldy washcloth of a month." Though her character is her own and not entirely mute like the protagonist of John Marsden's So Much to Tell You, readers familiar with both books will be impelled to compare the two girls made silent by a tragic incident. The final words of Marsden's books are echoed in those of *Speak*, as Melinda prepares to share her experience with a father-figure art teacher: "Me: 'Let me tell you about it.'" An uncannily funny book even as it plumbs the darkness, *Speak* will hold readers from first word to last. [from www.bn.com]

The Kite Runner by Khaled Hosseini

"I sat on a bench near a willow tree and watched a pair of kites soaring in the sky. I thought about something Rahim Khan said just before he hung up, almost as an afterthought, 'There is a way to be good again.'"

Now in paperback, one of the year's international literary sensations -- a shattering story of betrayal and redemption set in war-torn Afghanistan.

Amir and Hassan are childhood friends in the alleys and orchards of Kabul in the sunny days before the invasion of the Soviet army and Afghanistan's decent into fanaticism. Both motherless, they grow up as close as brothers, but

their fates, they know, are to be different. Amir's father is a wealthy merchant; Hassan's father is his manservant. Amir belongs to the ruling caste of Pashtuns, Hassan to the despised Hazaras.

This fragile idyll is broken by the mounting ethnic, religious, and political tensions that begin to tear Afghanistan apart. An unspeakable assault on Hassan by a gang of local boys tears the friends apart; Amir has witnessed his friend's torment, but is too afraid to intercede. Plunged into self-loathing, Amir conspires to have Hassan and his father turned out of the household.

When the Soviets invade Afghanistan, Amir and his father flee to San Francisco, leaving Hassan and his father to a pitiless fate. Only years later will Amir have an opportunity to redeem himself by returning to Afghanistan to begin to repay the debt long owed to the man who should have been his brother.

Compelling, heartrending, and etched with details of a history never before told in fiction, **The Kite Runner** is a story of the ways in which we're damned by our moral failures, and of the extravagant cost of redemption. [from www.bn.com] **Contains some mature themes and situations.**

ABOUT the PRE-AP BOOKS:

The Three Musketeers by Alexander Dumas

Mixing a bit of seventeenth-century French history with a great deal of invention, **Alexandre Dumas** tells the tale of young D'Artagnan and his musketeer comrades, Porthos, Athos and Aramis. Together they fight to foil the schemes of the brilliant, dangerous Cardinal Richelieu, who pretends to support the king while plotting to advance his own power. Bursting with swirling swordplay, swooning romance, and unforgettable figures such as the seductively beautiful but deadly femme fatale, Milady, and D'Artagnan's equally beautiful love, Madame Bonacieux, *The Three Musketeers* continues, after a century and a half of continuous publication, to define the genre of swashbuckling romance and historical adventure. [from www.bn.com]

Emma by Jane Austen

Jane Austen exercises her taste for cutting social observation and her talent for investing seemingly trivial events with profound moral significance as Emma traverses a gentle satire of provincial balls and drawing rooms, along the way encountering the sweet Harriet Smith, the chatty and tedious Miss Bates, and her absurd father Mr. Woodhouse–a memorable gallery of Austen's finest personages. Thinking herself impervious to romance of any kind, Emma tries to arrange a wealthy marriage for poor Harriet, but refuses to recognize her own feelings for the gallant Mr. Knightley. What ensues is a delightful series of scheming escapades in which every social machination and bit of "tittle-tattle" is steeped in Austen's delicious irony. Ultimately, Emma discovers that "Perfect happiness, even in memory, is not common." [from www.bn.com]

Cold Sassy Tree by Olive Ann Burns

The one thing you can depend on in Cold Sassy, Georgia, is that word gets around - fast. When Grandpa E. Rucker Blakeslee announces one July morning in 1906 that he's aiming to marry the young and freckledy milliner, Miss Love Simpson - a bare three weeks after Granny Blakeslee has gone to her reward - the news is served up all over town with that afternoon's dinner. And young Will Tweedy suddenly finds himself eyewitness to a major scandal. Boggled by the sheer audacity of it all, and not a little jealous of his grandpa's new wife, Will nevertheless approves of this May-December match and follows its progress with just a smidgen of youthful prurience. As the newlyweds' chaperone, conspirator, and confidant, Will is privy to his one-armed, renegade grandfather's second adolescence; meanwhile, he does some growing up of his own. He gets run over by a train and lives to tell about it; he kisses his first girl, and survives that too. Olive Ann Burns has given us a timeless, funny, resplendent novel - about a romance that rocks an entire town, about a boy's passage through the momentous but elusive year when childhood melts into adolescence, and about just how people lived and died in a small Southern town at the turn of the century. Inhabited

by characters who are wise and loony, unimpeachably pious and deliciously irreverent, Cold Sassy, Georgia, is the perfect setting for the debut of a storyteller of rare brio, exuberance, and style. [from www.bn.com]

The Joy Luck Club by Amy Tan

In 1949 four Chinese women-drawn together by the shadow of their past-begin meeting in San Francisco to play mah jong, invest in stocks, eat dim sum, and "say" stories. They call their gathering the Joy Luck Club. Nearly forty years later, one of the members has died, and her daughter has come to take her place, only to learn of her mother's lifelong wish-and the tragic way in which it has come true. The revelation of this secret unleashes an urgent need among the women to reach back and remember... In this extraordinary first work of fiction, Amy Tan writes about what is lost-over the years, between generations, among friends-and what is saved. [from www.bn.com]

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The Life of Pi by Yann Martell

Life of Pi is a masterful and utterly original novel that is at once the story of a young castaway who faces immeasurable hardships on the high seas, and a meditation on religion, faith, art and life that is as witty as it is profound. Using the threads of all of our best stories, Yann Martel has woven a glorious spiritual adventure that

makes us question what it means to be alive, and to believe.

Growing up in Pondicherry, India, Piscine Molitor Patel -- known as Pi -- has a rich life. Bookish by nature, young Pi acquires a broad knowledge of not only the great religious texts but of all literature, and has a great curiosity about how the world works. His family runs the local zoo, and he spends many of his days among goats, hippos, swans, and bears, developing his own theories about the nature of animals and how human nature conforms to it. Pi's family life is quite happy, even though his brother picks on him and his parents aren't quite sure how to accept his decision to simultaneously embrace and practice three religions -- Christianity, Hinduism, and Islam.

But despite the lush and nurturing variety of Pi's world, there are broad political changes afoot in India, and when Pi is sixteen his parents decide that the family needs to escape to a better life. Choosing to move to Canada, they close the zoo, pack their belongings, and board a Japanese cargo ship called the *Tsimtsum*. Travelling with them are many of their animals, bound for zoos in North America. However, they have only just begun their journey when the ship sinks, taking the dreams of the Patel family down with it. Only Pi survives, cast adrift in a lifeboat with the unlikeliest of travelling companions: a zebra, an orangutan, a hyena, and a 450-pound Royal Bengal tiger named Richard Parker.

Thus begins Pi Patel's epic, 227-day voyage across the Pacific, and the powerful story of faith and survival at the heart of *Life of Pi*. Worn and scared, oscillating between hope and despair, Pi is witness to the playing out of the food chain, quite aware of his new position within it. When only the tiger is left of the seafaring menagerie, Pi realizes that his survival depends on his ability to assert his own will, and sets upon a grand and ordered scheme to keep from being Richard Parker's next meal.

As the days pass, Pi fights both boredom and terror by throwing himself into the practical details of surviving on the open sea -- catching fish, collecting rain water, protecting himself from the sun -- all the while ensuring that the tiger is also kept alive, and knows that Pi is the key to his survival. The castaways face grueling pain in their brushes with starvation, illness, and the storms that lash the small boat, but there is also the solace of beauty: the rainbow hues of a dorado's death-throes, the peaceful eye of a looming whale, the shimmering blues of the ocean's swells. Hope is fleeting, however, and despite adapting his religious practices to his daily routine, Pi feels the constant, pressing weight of despair. It is during the most hopeless and grueling days of his voyage that Pi whittles to the core of his beliefs, casts off his own assumptions, and faces his underlying terrors head-on. [from www.bn.com]

Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde by Robert Louis Stevenson

Robert Louis Stevenson originally wrote *Dr. Jekyll And Mr Hyde* as a "chilling shocker." He then burned the draft and, upon his wife's advice, rewrote it as the darkly complex tale it is today. Stark, skillfully woven, this fascinating novel explores the curious turnings of human character through the strange case of Dr. Jekyll, a kindly scientist who by night takes on his stunted evil self, Mr. Hyde. Anticipating modern psychology, *Jekyll And Hyde* is a brilliantly original study of man's dual nature — as well as an immortal tale of suspense and terror. Published in 1866, *Jekyll And Hyde* was an instant success and brought Stevenson his first taste of fame. Though sometimes dismissed as a mere mystery story, the book has evoked much literary admirations. Vladimir Nabokov likened it to *Madame Bovary* and *Dead Souls* as "a fable that lies nearer to poetry than to ordinary prose fiction." [from www.bn.com]

Becoming Jane Eyre by Sheila Kohler

In Sheila Kohler's masterful re-creation of Charlotte Brontë's struggles to write her landmark Victorian masterpiece, we are introduced to Charlotte as the dutiful daughter sitting at her frail father's bedside as he recovers from eye surgery. Charlotte cherishes the silence as she conjures up the character who would become the immortal Jane Eyre, giving her "a sprite's name, a fairy's name, half spirit, half flesh, light in darkness, truth amid hypocrisy, the name of one who sees." (from www.bn.com)