

St. Rita School

Grade Five going into Grade Six

2014-2015

Summer Prep Work for Mr. Matthews' Language Arts/Literature Classes

Dear Students: You have just finished a solid, academically oriented school year and are (hopefully) motivated to continue your preparation for high school. This is not busy work. The vocabulary is important, as is the practice of reading something thoughtfully and carefully before producing a written response. The reading is intended to be enjoyable yet provocative. Film is a key part of our literature curriculum and is excellent for providing a visual perspective on the 'human condition.'

Some of these things may appear somewhat esoteric at first, but don't worry; a little intellectual humility is good for us. There is a big difference between difficulty and discomfort. Stay focused on the salient points; the rest will fall into place. The 8th grade has survived two years of this...you will too. As has been my practice every year that I have been a teacher, I will give you the best I've got. What you take is up to you.

ALL SUMMER WORK MUST BE DONE ON THE COMPUTER AND PRINTED OUT- PLEASE-NO COVERS OR FOLDERS...JUST A STAPLE IN THE UPPER LEFT-HAND CORNER...CAPISCE? **ALL WORK IS DUE ON THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL**

1. Read the short stories "After 20 Years" and "A Retrieved Reformation" by O. Henry (you can find them on line). Write a brief response (4 or 5 sentences) to the following questions for EACH story and support your position.

Was the outcome fair and just?

What is the main conflict in each story? Do you note any similarities?

2. Read the attached interpretation of "The Human Condition." Try to extract as much meaning from it as you can. Don't worry about it-just read it as thoughtfully and seriously as you can. When you have done so, write a brief (3-4 sentences) statement explaining what YOU think is meant by the human condition.

3. Given the fact that you young people are intelligent, these are some the words I will use when I speak with you. Since we will be writing and discussing things in an intelligent fashion, I have prepared a list of “intelligent” words to be used in literature class. Take a look at them and see how many you know or may have heard. They may seem esoteric now, but I can assure you that you will learn all of these words – and more – by the time we’re finished. You may want to look them up in order to get a sense of how they are used.

There is one more thing. KIND OF, SORT OF, MAYBE, LIKE, KIND OF LIKE, MAYBE LIKE, AND...YEAH, TOTALLY LIKE, and even AWESOME are simply not part of the language of our literature class. These words certainly have their purpose and their place, and I have no problem at all with how you choose to communicate before 8:00 and after 3:00, but when it is time for you to express yourself with eloquence and precision, “kind of like” just doesn’t work. I don’t kind of teach, and you don’t sort of learn.

It is my expectation that you will enjoy our class, and in your own very important way make some very important contributions to your class, our school, and eventually to a much larger world than the one you presently enjoy.

THE SIXTH GRADE BRILLIANT WORDS

(Be careful how you use them; these words have a lot of power...)

salient	esoteric	obscure	innocuous
subsequent	nuance	reticent	obsequious
garrulous	transient	expedient	amorphous
pensive	morose	diffident	succinct
loquacious	verbose	pragmatic	ambiguous
dichotomy	predisposition	disinterested	uninterested

Make sure you keep this list; bring it to class and use it.