

“Diving Into the Deep End” Mini-Project

“The role of a writer is not to say what we can all say, but what we are unable to say.”

--Anais Nin

Part I – Organizing

Please note:

While I do want you to explore the organizational tip videos below, you are (of course!) free to use whatever notetaking process fits you best. I will be asking you to take notes, make notes, and transcribe notes into other forms, but essentially, they must be *yours*.

Text – Videos: Cornell Notes, How I Take Notes, and 10 Note-Taking Tips

The videos are on our class’s AP Lit “Thinking About Literature” Page (look on www.thatenglishteacher.com) and are recorded here for your viewing pleasure:

“Note Taking 10: using the Cornell Method” <https://youtu.be/HJCnqj7j7rU>

“How I Take Notes” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=amVHB1hWwCo>

“10 Note-Taking Tips” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m5cQ5bWLi2A&t=104s>

After watching these three notes systems, I want you to think about how you can benefit from this organization method that will be used throughout the year.

Assignment -- Get a notebook of your choice with the style of paper that you prefer (lined, graph, blank, bullet point, etc.). We will use this notebook to create notes for the major works that we study, so find one that you really like. This will be your *Reading Notebook*. You will also have a Writing Notebook (more about that later).

Why it is important -- The process of learning something often starts out feeling disorganized and unwieldy; the most important aspects are not always salient. Consolidation helps organize and solidify learning. This notebook will serve to consolidate what you have learned throughout the year, allowing you to retrieve the significant progress we make. Make it your own. Decorate it if you like or keep it clean and clear.

Due: _____

Part II -- Seeing

Text -- The NerdWriter Analyzes Edward Hopper's "Nighthawks"

This video is on the AP Lit “Thinking About Literature” Page, but also here:

<https://youtu.be/7j5pUtRcNX4>

Evan Puschak has his own YouTube channel (NerdWriter) in which he offers video essays. I admire these essays that range from art, to film, to politics, to literature. He is thoughtful, well-researched, and has a keen sense of timing and audience awareness. In this video essay he analyzes one of the iconic 20th century American paintings, “Nighthawks.” Pay attention to not only what he sees, but also notice the biographical and historical context he weaves into his analysis. I admire how he uses both images and words to teach you about the painting.

Assignment --For your first set of notes, I want you to write two pages. Choose a work of art that has had meaning to you. It can be a work of literature. It can be a painting. It can be a song. A film. Any work of art. It can be any creative endeavor that has some fascinating artistry. I want you to analyze that work of art on a similar level to Evan Puschak (the NerdWriter). If you look at his show notes on the YouTube page for the “Nighthawks” video essay, he

has done a fair amount of research. I want you to do the same. In your notes, find an organized way to explain its *artistic merit* and value. Don't just provide a summary of what it is, analyze how it operates and why it is important.

For a succinct and engaging piece on "artistic merit," please read this from BrainPickings.org

<https://www.brainpickings.org/2012/06/22/what-is-art/>

Great stuff here!

Why it is important -- I want you to use your notes to enrich your personal language, background knowledge, and vocabulary. For that to happen, these notes should be so much more sophisticated than a summary. They should reveal the complexity of the work of art. You must articulate not only what it means to you; you should also have a broader appreciation for the artist, the cultural and historical context in which it was created, and how the work has transcended time and remain relevant.

Due: _____

Part III -- Reading

Text 1 -- Leo Babauta's Why I Read (+ a Dozen Book Recommendations)

Here is the URL for the article (also on the classroom AP Lit "Thinking About Literature" Page):

<https://zenhabits.net/why-read/>

Assignment -- Write a page of notes about your relationship with reading. Share an honest assessment of the role that it plays in your life. Think about how you would conceptualize and categorize reading's impact on you. I value honesty over flattery. If reading is not your thing, say it. If you love it, then let me know. I don't care so much which side you take. More important than what you choose is the truth of your reflection. I want to read about why you feel the way that you do. I want to get to know you as a reader.

Why it is important -- This is the first step in me getting to know you as a reader. What's more important than that?

Due: _____

Text 2 -- Any novel on this list (<https://www.nationalbook.org/national-book-awards/years/>) **or this one** (<https://www.pulitzer.org/prize-winners-by-category/219>)

***** Please note that the due date for Text 2 of the "Part III – Reading" section of the "Diving in the Deep End" mini-project is NOT due until AFTER Unit 2 (Poetry I). This is your first Choice Book Project.**

Assignment -- Read any novel on the National Book Award list or the list of Pulitzer Prize winners for fiction from the past 20 years. You can click on the titles to learn a bit more about each book. It is worth your time. There are so many great books on these two lists to choose from and I want you to pick a book that you will enjoy.

Then create 3 pages of notes about your book. How you organize those three pages is up to you. I know that this is vague and undefined but look at it another way...I am empowering you to do what you feel is right. You have the freedom to do what you want. You can create whatever you want. All I'm asking you to do is create three interesting pages of notes about your reading experience. When there are little to no rules, the possibilities are endless. It is up to you to make it awesome!

Why it is important -- A mature thinker chooses and develops his or her own criteria in order to evaluate the quality of texts. I respect your ability to make connections to other texts, ideas, cultural perspectives, eras, and personal experiences and when you have control over how you do that, you often exceed my expectations. So do it.

Due: _____