Dear Skyline Honors student,

Welcome to 9th Honors World Studies (Language Arts and Social Studies). We’re excited you registered to take this course!

We are writing for two reasons: first, we want to make you aware of the mandatory summer reading assignment for all incoming honors freshmen. Detailed information is below.

**Why summer reading?**
Students lose reading skills during the summer months. Yet, students who read over the summer break sustain reading comprehension and vocabulary acquisition and enjoy greater learning gains and test scores during subsequent school years.

**What is the learning objective?**
Students who wish to enroll in 9th honors World Studies will independently read and then write and speak about Yann Martel’s *Life of Pi* (Harcourt; ISBN-13: 9780156027328), so that teachers can assess their reading comprehension, literary analysis proficiency, thesis writing ability, public speaking skills, work ethic, and level of academic confidence.

**What will I do?**
- Honors students will read Yann Martel’s *Life of Pi.*
  - No written work is required over the summer
  - If possible, please purchase/check-out the edition listed above, so that we can avoid confusion during class discussions.
- Honors students will participate in a Socratic Seminar about the novel during the first two weeks of school.
- Honors students’ thesis pre-assessment for literature during the second week of school will be tied to their summer reading novel.
- **Important note:** the summer reading assignments are very similar to the novels read and to the work completed throughout the year. Honors World Studies may not be for the student who struggles with any part of the summer reading.

*Common Core Standards pre-assessed using summer reading texts at the beginning of the school year:*
- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.1** Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.2** Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.
- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.3** Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.
- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.1** Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.4** Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

**What do I do if I am having a hard time reading and understanding the novel?**
- Find a buddy to read with, and set a reading schedule, then hold each other accountable for due dates. Meet to discuss the text periodically throughout the summer and share your critical-reading notes.
- Look up words you don’t understand.
- Ask other students or adults questions about the story.
- Summarize passages or chapters in your own words.
- Reread hard-to-understand passages.
- Listen to an audio-version of the text as you read to increase your focus on the text.
- As a last resort, after critically reading the novel, read a summary to confirm your comprehension of the plot. **However, do not rely solely on a summary of the text: our role is to analyze what dominant writing techniques were used to convey the plot, and you won’t be able to do that if you only read a summary of the text.**
How can a parent/guardian be involved and/or figure out whether a child understands what he/she is reading?

Essentially, make reading more of an interactive process in order to boost fluency and comprehension. There are different methods, but some of the most effective are relatively simple: Ask your child questions about the story and allow him/her to ask you questions and/or to summarize chapters.

Second, we would like to strongly recommend that you purchase your own copies of the novels we will read next year. Having your own copies allows you to make personal connections with the text and solidify your knowledge of it. It will also make it much easier for you when it comes to written assignments, assessments, and studying for exams. All assigned novels will also be available for check out at no cost from the district, but students report measurable benefits when able to annotate directly on the text.

With this in mind, here is a list of the novels all honors classes read (some additional texts may be added by your teachers at the beginning of the year). Please purchase these editions to avoid confusion about page numbers during class discussions and to enhance clarity when citing the novels in essays.

*The House on Mango Street* by Sandra Cisneros; ISBN-10: 9780679734772
*Bless Me, Ultima* by Rudolfo Anaya; ISBN-10: 0446600253
*Romeo and Juliet* by William Shakespeare (Folger Shakespeare Library); ISBN-13: 9780743477116

We’re looking forward to meeting you in September. Have a great summer, and happy reading!

Your 9th Honors World Studies teachers