

English IV/Summer Reading

Assignment: Read the following novella. Buy a hard copy. *Read actively* and *annotate*.

The Metamorphosis by Franz Kafka

Main ideas to consider while reading:

- _ To think as you read;
- _ To organize information;
- _ To retrieve information quickly;
- _ To increase your comprehension, vocabulary, analytical and evaluation skills;
- _ To help you discover meaning in a work and to state it in your own words;
- _ To have a “conversation” with an author and text;
- _ To provide ideas and questions for classroom discussion.

Why read this book:

1. Well, the most obvious answer to this is because it is expected of you. You are heading into your senior year, and it is time to take full responsibility for your actions. Reading this will set you up for success in the earliest portion of your final year of high school. Ignoring it and finding excuses not to do the work will set you up for failure. The choice is yours.
2. We will be using this to break into the Hero’s Journey and the earliest British texts early in the first term. Imagine this as an inverse hero’s journey, where instead of growing stronger and having a rebirth for the sake of evolving into a great hero to save the day, the main character does the exact opposite, becoming weaker and more burdensome to those he loves with each passing day.
3. The way we experience emotional growth is to read through the trials and hardships of others. Now, this is an extreme case, but the point remains. This book has the potential to make us more mindful and understanding of those who are different from us. If you replace being turned into a grotesque bug with something more common, like any variety of disabilities, you will see some similar themes. This book should help us expand our potential for compassion.

What is this book?

Depending on which copy you buy, you will be greeted with a different variation of the same first line (because it is translated into English): “One morning, as Gregor Samsa was waking up from anxious dreams, he discovered that in bed he had been changed into a monstrous verminous bug.”

Isn’t that a wild beginning to the book? Gregor Samsa turned into a giant bug. He was an ordinary, albeit boring, human being one day, and a bug the next. How would you respond to such a change? How would your family react? Would they be willing to do what is necessary to keep you happy, healthy, and safe in your new form? To what extent would their sympathy extend towards their “new” housemate? How far would your sympathy extend if this happened to a loved one?

How to annotate:

1. **On end flaps, using post it notes:** Use these notes for creating a sense of organization. You will want

to make notes about characters (initial thoughts on them and final notes), settings and how/why they change, symbols of any kind and what they mean, potential themes, and unfamiliar and seemingly important vocabulary (define those words). Make sure to include page numbers for quick reference.

2. ***In-text notes, using post it notes***: Speculate about the names of the title/subtitle, sections, chapters, or other divisions in the text; Keep a record of your opinions; Compare and/or contrast this text with your previous knowledge or other texts you've read; Write questions about what you don't understand; Predict what might happen; and Speculate about alternate outcomes: "What if this character had...?"

Note: Create a system that works for you, and one I can easily follow as I grade your annotations. Create a key if needed.

Books must be read by the FIRST day of class. Part of the grade for the grade for this assignment will be your annotations. Within the first weeks of school, you will write a series of essays that includes a thorough and thoughtful discussion of novella, and those annotations will be critical to the writing process. The summer may seem long and limitless, but August will be here soon. Don't put off today what you won't do tomorrow. Check school website for resources, particularly the page of Mr. Hawkins.