

Grade 10 Summer Reading

Rising sophomores, to prepare for the oh-so-far-off -- but inevitable -- return to the classroom, please see the summer reading book options and assignments below.

Incoming sophomores will read two books: Sophocles' play *Oedipus Rex* and one additional book from the list below, and in the first week of school you will write an in-class essay that focuses on a thematic idea from Sophocles' play and turn in a journal assignment for the second book. Sophomores, there are many translations of *Oedipus Rex*, and I want all of us to read the same translation, the same language; so towards this end, I have posted a digital copy of the play, translated by Dudley Fitts and Robert Fitzgerald, on my Haiku site. Please download and read this translation.

If, however, you prefer to read a paper text, you can certainly purchase a copy. If purchasing a text, please buy Dudley Fitts and Robert Fitzgerald's translation as it is clear and straightforward. In previous years, students have purchased *The Oedipus Cycle: Oedipus Rex, Oedipus at Colonus, Antigone* from sellers like Amazon.com or Barnes and Noble.

Choose one additional book from below. Please see pp. 2 & 4 for journal assignments for both *Oedipus Rex* and your additional book selection. *All summaries adapted from Barnes & Noble.com*

The Things They Carried, Tim O'Brien

A ground-breaking meditation on war, memory, imagination, and the redemptive power of storytelling, *The Things They Carried* depicts the men of Alpha Company: Jimmy Cross, Henry Dobbins, Rat Kiley, Mitchell Sanders, Norman Bowker, Kiowa, and Tim O'Brien, who survived his tour in Vietnam to become a father and writer at the age of forty-three.

In the Time of Butterflies, Julia Alvarez

November 25, 1960. Three beautiful sisters are found near their wrecked Jeep at the bottom of a 150-foot cliff on the north coast of the Dominican Republic. The official state newspaper reports their deaths as accidental, not mentioning that a fourth sister lives; it does not explain that the sisters were among the leading opponents of Gen. Rafael Leonidas Trujillo's dictatorship. It doesn't have to. Everybody knows of Las Mariposas—"The Butterflies." In this extraordinary novel, the voices of all four sisters—Minerva, Patria, María Teresa, and the survivor, Dedé—speak across the decades to tell their own stories, from hair ribbons and secret crushes to gunrunning and prison torture, and to describe the everyday horrors of life under Trujillo's rule.

The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind: Creating Currents of Electricity and Hope, William Kamkwamba, Bryan Mealer

William Kamkwamba was born in Malawi, a country where magic ruled and modern science a mystery. It was also a land withered by drought and hunger. But William had read about windmills, and he dreamed of building one that would bring to his small village a set of luxuries that only 2 percent of Malawians could enjoy: electricity and running water. His neighbors called him *misala*—crazy—but William refused to let go of his dreams. With a small pile of once-forgotten science textbooks; some scrap metal, tractor parts, and bicycle halves; and an armory of curiosity and determination, he embarked on a daring plan to forge an unlikely contraption and small miracle that would change the lives around him.

Take your time with your summer reading: be thoughtful and don't begin reading the weekend before school begins!

Summer Reading Journals

Create double-entry journals for *Oedipus Rex* and the additional book you choose.

As you read your two books this summer, keep a double entry reading journal for each book to record your thinking and reactions to ideas, characters, and language. As students, who are reading not only for enjoyment but also to learn, it is important to think and read actively. A double-entry reading journal offers readers a way to engage thoughtfully & actively with their reading as it integrates skills of reading, writing, and thinking to promote deeper engagement with texts.

Journal Instructions for *Things Carried or Butterflies or Boy Who Harnessed the Wind*:

- Create a double-entry reading journal by dividing a page of paper into two vertical columns. In the left-hand column, record passages from the novel. In the right-hand column, write reactions to the selected passage.
- Journal entries must span the entire book; they **should not** simply restate the quoted passage. They **should** react to and engage with the book’s characters, ideas, and/or language.
- Choose passages for a variety of reasons & react to them in a variety of ways. For example, you might choose to react to a passage to question or object to its ideas, to explore a personal memory that the passage evokes, to connect the passage to another literary work, a movie, or a cultural/world/historical event or issue. Or you may find the passage inspiring -- its language or imagery beautiful -- in some way. You might also react to a passage artistically with an illustration.

Please organize your journal into three sections (see sample below)

- Section 1: 10 journal entries using the double entry format.
- Section 2: Character Notes – brief notes the summarize characters’ conflicts, thoughts, and interrelationships.
- Section 3: Summary -- a concise summary of the novel, which includes a description of novel’s central conflict (about 8-10 sentences).

Your Name

Novel: *The Things They Carried*

Author: Tim O’Brien

Sample

I. Section I—Ten Journal Entries

On the Left: The Text (include page number; entries should span entire novel)	On the Right: Reactions/Comments
<p>06/15/2010</p> <p><i>“What stories can do, I guess, is make things present. I can look at things I never looked at. I can attach faces to grief & love & pity & god. I can be brave. I can make myself feel again” (180).</i></p>	<p><i>This passage both relates to my life & it reminds me of another character. Tim O’Brien is self-medicating himself by writing about the past & he has been able to heal through his writing. I sometimes do the same thing by writing about things that are difficult for me. This also reminds me of Anne Frank who also wrote to come to terms with her situation.</i></p>

II. Section II—Character Notes

Ted Lavender: scared; carries tranquilizers; carries dope; sometimes he goes heavy on the tranquilizers; gets shot in the head.

III. Section III—Summary of Novel

The Double-Entry Journal

Some Ideas on Ways to Respond

ON THE LEFT: THE TEXT	ON THE RIGHT: REACTIONS/CONNECTIONS
QUOTE FROM THE TEXT	 <p>QUESTIONS: What makes you wonder In this novel? What confuses you?</p>
QUOTE FROM THE TEXT	 <p>CHALLENGE: Disagree with the author or character. Challenge his/her reaction or response.</p>
QUOTE FROM THE TEXT	 <p>TEXT-SELF CONNECTIONS occur when you make connections between personal experiences and the text.</p>
QUOTE FROM THE TEXT	 <p>TEXT-TEXT CONNECTIONS occur when you make connections between other texts and the text you are reading.</p>
QUOTE FROM THE TEXT	 <p>TEXT-WORLD CONNECTIONS occur when you make connections between the text and what you already know about the world.</p>
QUOTE FROM THE TEXT	 <p>PREDICTIONS: What do you think might happen based on this passage?</p>
QUOTE FROM THE TEXT	 <p>Illustrate It!</p>
QUOTE FROM THE TEXT	 <p>Digging Deep –this might be social questions (race, class, gender inequalities) or ideas you want to know more about. Focus is on “consequences of” or “alternatives to” issues/ideas expressed in the writing.</p>

Focusing on *Oedipus Rex*

Greek tragedians based their plays on well-known myths; as a result, Greek audiences knew in advance the play's story and outcome. As a modern audience, I want you to be in this same position, so read the brief summary of Oedipus' story.

In *Oedipus Rex*, the citizens of Thebes are suffering from a plague that, according to the oracle of Delphi, will continue until the murderer of King Laius, the former ruler of Thebes, is expelled or executed. Oedipus, now King of Thebes, vows to find and drive out this murderer, and the rest of the play focuses on Oedipus' efforts to do just that; however, the audience knows that Oedipus, himself, murdered King Laius. Moreover, the audience knows Oedipus' origins as told in the Oedipus myth: Oedipus, the son of Jocasta and King Laius (the murdered king), is prophesized to kill his father and marry his mother. To avoid this prophecy, the king instructs a shepherd to pierce the baby Oedipus' feet and leave him to die on a mountainside. Unable to do this, the shepherd gives Oedipus to another shepherd, who then gives him to King Polybus and Merope of Corinth to raise as their son.

Years later, an adult Oedipus flees Corinth for Thebes after an oracle tells him that he will kill his father and marry his mother. On his journey to Thebes, he meets King Laius, his true father, on the road; the two quarrel and Oedipus slays him. Continuing on to Thebes, Oedipus encounters a sphinx, which had been destroying crops and killing travelers unable to answer its riddle: what walks on four feet in the morning, two in the afternoon, and three at night? Oedipus answers the riddle, rids the city of the sphinx, and upon his arrival in Thebes, he is a hero, who is rewarded with marriage to the queen, his mother. *Oedipus Rex* opens with Thebans assured belief that the hero Oedipus will save them as he saved them from the sphinx and with Oedipus' belief that he is the son of Polybus and Merope of Corinth.

In the first week of school, you will write essay on one of the thematic ideas identified below, so READ ACTIVELY! Most of us when we watch a movie or video respond out loud with what we are thinking and feeling as a way to make sense of what we see and to share our thoughts with others. Reading is no different; reading actively means charting your inner voice by asking questions, making predictions, tracking ideas, noting when we don't understand a passage and rereading to clarify our understanding.

Journal Instructions for *Oedipus Rex*:

- Create a double-entry journal. See suggested format below.
- Journal entries should focus on the **three** thematic ideas below & span the entire play.
- There are no minimum or maximum journal entry requirements. The only requirement is to take notes to improve your engagement with and comprehension of the play.
- As you read, observe and consider and interpret. How might characters, action, language, imagery, etc. relate to themes below? What might the work be saying about these thematic topics?

ON THE LEFT: THE TEXT	ON THE RIGHT: DISCUSS THEMATIC CONNECTION
DIRECT QUOTATION/SUMMARIZE INSTANCE FROM PLAY	

Major Themes on which to Focus in *Oedipus Rex*

1. **Fate or Free Will:** Which truly governs – fate or free will? Do characters control outcomes? Or are characters merely part of a scheme they cannot control?
2. **Sight & Blindness:** consider literal & metaphorical references. For what might sight be a metaphor? Who has “sight” and who is “blind”?
3. **Oh the irony!** Where do you observe elements of irony in this play? Significance?

FAQs

Do I have to type my journals?

No. While I prefer that your journals be typed (they are easier to read), it is not required. However, if you know that even your best handwriting is illegible, please type.

How long should my journal responses be?

Responses should be brief paragraphs of about 3-6 sentences and span the entire text; they should engage with or react to the passage, not merely restate the passage.

Do I have to write a character annotation for every character?

No. If the book has many characters, focus on the novel's main characters. Write no more than eight character overviews.

How long should my summary be?

Summarize the plot in as concise a manner as possible; it should be in paragraph form, and it should not exceed 10 sentences.

When are my journals due?

Your journals will be due the first week of school.

Still have questions?

Email me at kbaumeis@vischool.org