

To: **All English II Honors Students**
From: Carrie Denman & Meagan Ostroff, Legend High School English Department
Date: May 2009
Re: **Summer Reading**

Welcome to Honors English II! Congratulations on your decision to challenge yourself with an honors-level English class. The extra effort you will put forth will make you a better reader, writer, and critical thinker. The challenge—and the learning—begin this summer! The following summer reading assignment is designed to give you an opportunity to read, write, and think during the hot, lazy months of summer, so that when we return in August, your skills are sharp and we're ready to dig in to a year full of literary exploration and growth as writers.

This summer you will read two books: *The Catcher in the Rye* by J.D. Salinger (1951) and *The House on Mango Street* by Sandra Cisneros (1984). Both books are “coming of age” novels with young, perceptive protagonists trying to find their place in the sometimes confusing and troubling world. While *Catcher* uses a flashback structure to tell the story of three days in the life of narrator Holden Caulfield, *Mango* covers a year in narrator Esperanza’s life through a series of vignettes (or what Cisneros calls “lazy poems”—not quite poems and not quite full stories). Both books are highly acclaimed by critics and readers alike (*Catcher* always finds a spot on those “Best American Novels” lists) and offer a plethora of themes, literary elements, and stylistic devices for us to explore. The following assignments will help us do just that. In addition, be prepared to discuss, analyze, and write about the novels when we meet in August.

REQUIRED HONORS ENGLISH II SUMMER READING ASSIGNMENTS:

- **Read *The Catcher in the Rye*.** We encourage annotating your thinking as you read!
- **Complete the symbols/images/motifs chart on *Catcher* and the symbol project included in this packet.**
- **Read *The House on Mango Street*.** We encourage annotating your thinking as you read!
- **Examples and explanations of rhetorical strategies from *The House on Mango Street*.**
- **Write 3 vignettes as explained in this packet.**

**ALL ASSIGNMENTS ARE DUE THE FIRST DAY OF CLASS!*

Book Information

Students are expected to have a copy of each novel listed below. We encourage honors students to purchase their own copies of each novel so they may annotate and interact with each one. If you are unable to purchase books, you may check them out from the Legend library, but you may not write in these books (therefore, annotating will need to be done on sticky notes).

Novels, Authors

1. *The Catcher in the Rye*, J.D. Salinger (summer)
2. *The House on Mango Street*, Sandra Cisneros (summer)
3. *The Crucible*, Arthur Miller
4. *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Mark Twain
5. *The Old Man and the Sea*, Ernest Hemingway
6. *The Great Gatsby*, F. Scott Fitzgerald
7. *The Grapes of Wrath*, John Steinbeck

If you have any questions during the summer, e-mail Mrs. Denman at carrie.denman@dcsdk12.org or Ms. Ostroff at megan.ostroff@dcsdk12.org. We'll be happy to hear from you.

Have a great summer!

The Catcher in the Rye Assignments

1. Images, Symbols, Motifs Chart: Review and reflect on how the following 12 items are presented in the novel. Create a 3 column chart on your own paper. In the first column, put the item. In the second column, state possible meanings for each item. In the third column, identify the item as an image, symbol, and/or motif (see definitions below). Your chart can be typed or handwritten, but it must be neat, organized, and complete.

Items for 1st Column

Possible Meanings

Image, Symbol and/or Motif?

Holden's red hunting hat

Pency Prep

Central Park

Museums

Movies

Unmade phone calls

Allie's baseball glove

Erasing profanity

The ducks in the park

"Little Shirley Beans" record

Mummies

The carrousel

Images: Words that create pictures in the reader's mind. Images can be visual or sensual—smell, taste, touch, or color.

Symbol: An image, person, place, or thing which also represents something larger or more abstract.

Motif: A recurring pattern of features—objects, images, symbols—in a literary work.

2. Symbol Project:

- Choose one of the items in the list above that you think serves as a symbol in the novel.
- Find or make a concrete representation of the item, some object that represents the symbol.
- On your object include 3 quotations from the novel about the item. These could be written directly on the object, taped on the object or some other way attached to it.
- For each quotation include a parenthetical citation and an explanation of how it reveals the symbol's meaning.

Have fun with this—get creative! We'll end up with a classroom museum of *Catcher in the Rye* symbols!

House on Mango Street Assignments

As you might already imagine, we're going to spend a considerable amount of our efforts next year analyzing the style an author uses when s/he writes. Specifically, we will discuss the stylistic devices that authors use to convey a particular idea or theme. What makes *The House on Mango Street* so innovative and enjoyable is Sandra Cisneros' particular style. Through the mixture of prose and poetry, she captures the time, place, and tone of her main character's adolescence. While reading this book, we would like you to begin to analyze her use of some stylistic devices in telling Esperanza's story.

1. Rhetorical Strategies

While reading, look for as many examples as possible of the stylistic devices listed below. **Copy** your two favorite illustrative quotations on a separate sheet of paper; be sure to include a parenthetical citation for each indicating the page number. **Explain** why each chosen quotation is an effective use of language. **Label** each quotation's stylistic device.

- Simile
- Metaphor
- Personification
- Alliteration, Assonance, Consonance
- Hyperbole
- Symbolism
- Allusion
- Repetition/Parallelism

If you don't know what some of these stylistic devices are, Google "literary terms" to find a definition and examples. Find out what the stylistic devices are before you begin reading; we expect you to know/understand these terms when you join us next year. This is your chance to begin to analyze Cisneros' use of language in *The House on Mango Street*!

2. Anecdotes

In response to *The House on Mango Street*, we would like you to pay Sandra Cisneros the compliment of imitation. Write 3 anecdotes (small true-feeling stories) which show aspects of who you are. Each anecdote should be filled with the kind of imagery, metaphor, and acute observation of human interaction that makes *The House on Mango Street* so special. You may use of any of the topics listed below as jumping-off points but don't feel limited by them. All anecdotes should be relatively short (1 MLA formatted page-typed, double-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman, etc.).

My house	My hair	Boys and girls	My name	My neighbor's pet
First time riding a bike	My sibling(s)	A beautiful thing	A childhood game	The times/he got caught
To be beautiful	Racism	When my attitude changed	My friend who's unhappy	Beauty
My friend's name	A dangerous moment	A horrible time at school	A moment of glory	A change I've gone through
First day of work	First kiss	An experience with death	A big regret	The spirits
A great loss	A strange neighbor	The scandal	A crush	Where I don't belong
Heartbreak	What I dream	Feeling helpless	Revenge	My own power
A parent's regret	Brutality	A wild place	Home	Getting away

What matters is the intensity and creativity of the writing. Notice how Cisneros communicates the depths of human experience through the smallest details, and try to emulate her genius. Writing is most profound when it is most specific. As you're working on your anecdotes, do your best to show experience through imagery and experience; avoid telling ideas through clichés or generalities. Have fun!