AP English Literature & Composition – ECE Seminar in Freshman English

Summer Reading 2013

"Your vision will become clear only when you can look into your own heart. Who looks outside, dreams; who looks inside, awakes."

Year of Wonders – Geraldine Brooks *The Road* - Cormac McCarthy

Maus I & II - Art Speigelman

I. FOR **EACH** OF THE BOOKS – 200 WORD JOURNAL ENTRY - WHAT IS THE TEXT UP TO?

II. POEMS – FIND ONE POEM ON **EACH** OF THE FOLLOWING TOPICS: a. Creation b. Love c. Approval d. Heroism

THESE POEMS MUST BE BY ESTABLISHED POETS. I am not looking for poems from student publications, internet bulletin boards, etc. The following websites are excellent resources:

Poets.Org - http://www.poets.org/

Bartleby.com http://www.bartelby.com/verse/

Poet's Corner http://www.theotherpages.org/poems/

Representative Poetry Online -
http://eir.library.utoronto.ca/rpo/display/index.cfm

Favorite Poem Project http://www.favoritepoem.org/

Poetry Daily http://www.poems.com/archive.htm

Poetry 180 http://www.loc.gov/poetry/180/

The Writer's Almanac http://www.writersalmanac.org/

Journal entries for each:

1. What is the poet's purpose? Quote key words & phrases that anchor your claim.

2. How does he/she achieve that purpose? Quote key words & phrases that anchor your claim.

3. Agree or disagree with the poet? Quote key words & phrases, relate personal experiences, refer to other readings or current or historical events that anchor your claim.

In no way is this journal optional!

III. READING HISTORY

What's Your Reading History? Due date: 9/03/13 (or second class of school year)

How do our reading experiences shape who we are?

What kind of reading experiences remain etched in your minds?

Why are reading experiences powerful influences? What does it means to be "well read"?

What reading experiences are considered seminal for educated people? Why?

What does it mean to be literate? What is cultural literacy? Information literacy?

What other kinds of literacies are there?

Do you consider yourself "literate"? Why or why not? By what definition?

Is it important to you to be "literate"? Why or why not?

Italo Calvino said that a work read at a young age and forgotten "leaves its seed in us." What are some books that have left their seeds in you?

Preparation:

1. Read "I Was a Teenage Illiterate."

2. Read chapter one of *If on a winter's night a traveler*.

3. Create a timeline that chronicles your reading history. Use the "My History as a Reader" worksheet to brainstorm and draft your timeline, then create a polished piece that reflects who you are as a reader.

In your final timeline, include all types of experiences with reading that have shaped who you are as a reader today and illustrate the timeline using meaningful images, such as book cover art for favorite books, photos of characters or readers who have inspired you, elements of locations you have visited or would like to visit, etc. Minimum of 20 experiences required. Timeline can be in digital format.

4. After completing the timeline, write an autobiographical essay, no more than 1200 words, starting, like Ms. Schine, with an assessment of yourself as a reader today, then delving into your past as a reader (using your timeline), discussing formative reading experiences, and finishing with a look forward to your possible future as a reader. Alternatively, you can use chapter one of Italo Calvino's "If On a Winter's Night A Traveler" as a model for writing about your own reading history, focusing on one book that had a powerful impact on you. Or you can address the questions at the top of this page. I am looking for a personal essay with a **STRONG VOICE**.

Reading History Essay Rubric

100-94 - An outstanding essay is characterized by most of the following:

- Essay begins originally and author masterfully reveals tone through concrete detail.
- Essay presents abundant concrete sensory details with a unique voice.
- Essay is coherent and organization creatively serves the author's purpose.
- Figures of speech are creative and apt.
- Diction is concrete and exemplary, and syntax varied and flows exceptionally well.
- Uses conventions of written English effectively, with minimal errors.

93-86 A strong essay is characterized by many of the following:

- Essay begins effectively; tone is clear, but voice is less compelling than in an outstanding essay.
- Essay presents numerous concrete sensory details.
- Essay is coherent and organization serves author's purpose.
- Figures of speech help to convey author's tone adequately.
- Diction is concrete and above-average in maturity. Syntax is varied, but not as fluent as an outstanding essay.
- Uses conventions of English language effectively, with a few minor errors.

85-80 An adequate essay is characterized by many of the following:

- Introduction adequately engages reader.
- Essay presents some concrete sensory details of setting and character, but imagery less effective than in a strong paper.
- Essay is reasonably coherent, but plan may be flawed, and essay may have small areas of confusion.
- Essay employs figures of speech, but they are hackneyed.
- Diction is accurate but pedestrian. Syntax flows less than a strong or outstanding essay.
- May contain several minor errors in English conventions, but these errors do not impede the reader's understanding.

79 – 75 An inadequate essay is characterized by many of the following:

- Introduction does not adequately lead reader into story, nor is theme/reflection clear.
- Essay may present some concrete sensory details, but subject is not adequately described.
- Essay is incoherent in areas, and plan does not serve author's purpose.
- Essay does not employ figurative language.
- Some diction may be nonstandard or inaccurate; may contain a few sentence errors.
- Errors in English conventions impede the reader's understanding.

74 - ⇩ A limited essay is characterized by many of the following:

- Introduction does not address the prompt or lead reader into the story; there is no attempt to develop theme/reflect on events narrated.
- Little or no concrete sensory detail is provided.
- Essay is incoherent and difficult to follow; there is little evidence of an organizational plan.
- Essay does not employ figurative language.
- Essay contains numerous sentence errors, and nonstandard or inaccurate diction abounds.
- Makes many errors in English conventions to the point of inhibiting reader understanding.

Timeline rubric:

- Significantly increases audience understanding and knowledge of creator's reading history – **50**
- All elements are so clearly written, labeled, or drawn that timeline conveys its own message without explanation – **20**
- Uses media and makes use of font, color, graphics, effects, etc. that increase aesthetic quality of presentation - **15**
- Reflects considerable work/ creativity - **15**

Name: _____

My History as a Reader Planning Worksheet

Part 1: Use the prompts below to reflect on your history as a reader.

Books I loved as a child:

Memories I have of seeing somebody read:

People I remember who loved to read:

People who read to me when I was little:

Books I loved reading in school:

Books I hated reading in school:

Books I have read on my own and enjoyed:

Literary characters I connect to:

Books that have captured my imagination:

Books and/or writers I am interested in, but haven't yet read:

Books I pretended to read or understand:

Other types of reading materials I read and enjoy:

Other memories I have about books and reading:

Part 2: Create a timeline, plotting at least 20 experiences you've had as a reader, beginning with the earliest memory you have of reading, being read to, or seeing someone read and ending with now. For each, note your age, the readers, titles, authors (if you know them) and the contexts of your experiences. Record what was memorable in just a few words.

The experiences you choose to record need not be wholly positive. Refer to the model below for ideas, noting positive experiences with reading above the line, and negative experiences below. You might be surprised to discover that you had positive and negative experiences with the same book. Note that the sample blurbs below are focused on classic literature, but yours may well include a wide range of reading material.

Received *Little House* books for 7th birthday, devoured them with mom and on my own

Age 11 - Read *Jane Eyre*; put it down when Jane grew up

10th Grade – Read ***The Scarlet Letter***; disagreed with teacher's interpretation; hated it

11th Grade – Finished and fell in love with *Jane Eyre*

Reread The Scarlet Letter sophomore year of college - loved it!

I Was a Teenage Illiterate By CATHLEEN SCHINE

At the age of 26, when I returned to New York after an inglorious stab at graduate work in medieval history on the frozen steppes of Chicago, I had a horrifying realization: I was illiterate. At least, I was as close to illiterate as a person with over 20 years of education could possibly be. In my stunted career as a scholar, I'd read promissory notes, papal bulls and guidelines for Inquisitorial interrogation. Dante, too. Boccaccio. . . . But after 1400? Nihil. I felt very, very stupid among my new sophisticated New York friends. I seemed very, very stupid, too. Actually, let's face it, I was stupid, and it was deeply mortifying, as so many things were in those days. But I have since come to realize that my abject ignorance was really a gift: to be a literarily inclined illiterate at age 26 is one of the most glorious fates that can befall mortal girl.

Of course I could not know that then, and in a panicky attempt to rectify the situation, I slunk in shame to the Strand and stood, paralyzed by the yawning vastness of the store and of my ignorance. I have a very distinct memory of coming home, sitting on the mattress on the floor of my tiny apartment, and staring hopelessly at the forlorn little collection of books on my window sill. A fat Latin dictionary. A fat dictionary of Christian saints. To which I added the skinny gray novel I had just bought. Out of every book in the Strand's famous miles of volumes, I had desperately, randomly, impulsively grabbed a beat-up Modern Library edition of Anatole France's "Penguin Island." Oy.

Anatole France? Not Balzac. Not Flaubert. I'd never heard of them. I didn't know them from Maupassant. Or Anatole France, for that matter. As for English or American literature, I had never read Austen or Eliot or Dickens or Melville or James or Wharton or. . . .

I blame Dostoyevsky.

When I was a child, I was always allowed to stay home from school with even the flimsiest of maladies (had I known the word "neurasthenic" I would have employed it weekly) if I promised to sit quietly and read. I read "The Cricket in Times Square" and Beverly Cleary and books about horses and young Indian braves and biographies of George Washington Carver from the school library. At home, there were books by Albert Payson Terhune about collies (we had a collie) and my father's Hardy Boys collection and my mother's Louisa May Alcott novels. I read a lot. I was one of those children they used to call "readers."

So what happened between "Mr. Popper's Penguins" and "Penguin Island"?

"The Idiot" happened. In seventh grade I saw a copy of Dostoyevsky's novel in the library and, thinking it would be a funny book about a stupid person, began to read it. I read and I read and I read. I developed a crush on Prince Myshkin. He seemed so sweet. I did not know what epilepsy was, and I was too lazy to look it up in the dictionary. I did not know what naïve meant and was, again, too lazy to look it up. But I kept going, in my own naïveté, fascinated and absorbing perhaps a tenth of what was there. A tenth of Dostoyevsky is plenty for a seventh grader, I think. The problem is that now, when as an adult I might

understand the other 90 percent, I have no desire ever to read Dostoyevsky again. Ever. Dostoyevsky ruined Dostoyevsky for me.

Which is why I am grateful to him. My Dostoyevsky phase, in which I lugged one heavy volume or another everywhere (there are photos of me stubbornly pretending to read on a sailing trip, on a ski trip, on the beach), lasted through most of high school. If you spend all your time reading books that you only pretend to understand, year after year, there isn't much room for anything else. In school, we were inexplicably forced to read "The Ox-Bow Incident," I recall, and there was some Shakespeare. But it was the '60s, and for one entire year I managed to get away with reading "The Forsyte Saga" (the television series, which was fantastic, was being shown on public television) as an independent study. I also wrote a paper on existential despair in "Crime and Punishment," "The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter" (assigned to the class) and (my one foray into contemporary American literature) "Portnoy's Complaint." Look, I didn't say I wasn't pretentious; I said I wasn't well read.

A few oddities cropped up on my high school reading list, some unfortunate (like Robbe-Grillet: I had never read Emerson, but I'd read Robbe-Grillet?); and others like gifts from the gods (a heavy dose of Colette, thanks to my mother). But these were tiny islets upon the great, heaving ocean of my ignorance.

So, that day, the day of my illiteracy epiphany, I came home from the Strand and sat shamefaced on my mattress staring unhappily at "Penguin Island," which I had started and put down in confused boredom several times. Then I remembered a bag in the closet with stuff my ex-boyfriend had left behind, including a paperback copy of "Our Mutual Friend," his favorite novel. A few days later I emerged from that exquisite book and cursed myself for wasting so much of my life doing things other than what God in all his wisdom clearly meant for me to do for the rest of my life: read Dickens.

This was a defining moment; it was my discovery of the English language. It could never have happened if I had not been blessedly illiterate.

Imagine the satisfaction, the exhilaration when, not long after, I stood as a newlywed surveying my husband's bookcase. It reached from one wall to the other, from floor to ceiling. It had been culled and collected by a person of know-ledge and taste, a product of Columbia's core curriculum, and . . . it was arranged alphabetically. I started at the upper left hand corner (Jane Austen! J. R. Ackerley!) and worked my way to the lower right (Waugh! Wodehouse! Woolf!). I got to read "Huckleberry Finn" for the first time when I was 35 years old. And when I eventually moved on to a different partner, there waiting for me was a new bookcase full of other books. I read "My Antonia" for the first time last month. That is a kind of grace.

If Dostoyevsky had not overwhelmed me at such a young age, and I had read "Huckleberry Finn" at 14, would I have reread it at 35? Maybe, but it wouldn't have been the same transcendent experience as discovering it as an adult. And maybe I never would have gone back to it: it took me decades to recover from "The Old Man and the Sea" and try Hemingway again. On the other hand, I did just recently reread "Buff: A Collie," and was stunned at how good the prose is. Italo Calvino, in "Why Read the Classics?," said that a work read at a young age and forgotten "leaves its seed in us." If that's true, and I think it

must be, then I thank you, Albert Payson Terhune, and I suppose I must thank you once again, too . . . Dostoyevsky. And, oh all right — even though just the sight of your name reminds me of a time when I thought it was O.K. to walk around Manhattan barefoot, I guess the day has come to give “The Idiot” another shot.

SCHINE, CATHLEEN. "Essay - I Was a Teenage Illiterate - NYTimes.com." The New York Times - Breaking News, World News & Multimedia. N.p., 28 Feb. 2010. Web. 4 June 2013. <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/02/28/books/review/Schine-t.html?_r=0>.

From - *If on a winter's night a traveler* - Italo Calvino

You are about to begin reading Italo Calvino's new novel, *If on a winter's night a traveler*. Relax. Concentrate. Dispel every other thought. Let the world around you fade. Best to close the door; the TV is always on in the next room. Tell the others right away, "No, I don't want to watch TV!" Raise your voice--they won't hear you otherwise--"I'm reading! I don't want to be disturbed!" Maybe they haven't heard you, with all that racket; speak louder, yell: "I'm beginning to read Italo Calvino's new novel!" Or if you prefer, don't say anything; just hope they'll leave you alone.

Find the most comfortable position: seated, stretched out, curled up, or lying flat. Flat on your back, on your side, on your stomach. In an easy chair, on the sofa, in the rocker, the deck chair, on the hassock. In the hammock, if you have a hammock. On top of your bed, of course, or in the bed. You can even stand on your hands, head down, in the yoga position. With the book upside down, naturally.

Of course, the ideal position for reading is something you can never find. In the old days they used to read standing up, at a lectern. People were accustomed to standing on their feet, without moving. They rested like that when they were tired of horseback riding. Nobody ever thought of reading on horseback; and yet now, the idea of sitting in the saddle, the book propped against the horse's mane, or maybe tied to the horse's ear with a special harness, seems attractive to you. With your feet in the stirrups, you should feel quite comfortable for reading; having your feet up is the first condition for enjoying a read.

Well, what are you waiting for? Stretch your legs, go ahead and put your feet on a cushion. on two cushions, on the arms of the sofa, on the wings of the chair, on the coffee table, on the desk, on the piano, on the globe. Take your shoes off first. If you want to , put your feet up; if not, put them back. Now don't stand there with your shoes in one hand and the book in the other.

Adjust the light so you won't strain your eyes. Do it now, because once you're absorbed in reading there will b no budging you. Make sure the page isn't in shadow, a clotting of black letters on a gray background, uniform as a pack of mice; but be careful that the light cast on it isn't too strong, doesn't glare on the cruel white of the paper, gnawing at the shadows of the letters as in a southern noonday. Try to foresee now everything that might make you interrupt your reading. Cigarettes within reach, if you smoke, and the ashtray. Anything else? Do you have to pee? All right, you know best.

It's not that you expect anything in particular from this particular book. You're the sort of person who, on principle, no longer expects anything of anything. There are plenty, younger than you or less young, who live in the expectation of extraordinary experiences: from books, from people, from journeys, from events, from what tomorrow has in store. but not you. you know that the best you can expect is to avoid the worst. This is the conclusion you have reached, in your personal life and also in general matters, even international affairs. What about books? Well, precisely because you have denied it in every other field, you believe you may still grant yourself legitimately this youthful pleasure of expectation in a carefully circumscribed area like the field of books, where you can be lucky or unlucky, but the risk of disappointment isn't serious.

So, then, you noticed in a newspaper that *If on a winter's night a traveler* had appeared, the new book by Italo Calvino, who hadn't published for several years. You went to the bookshop and bought the volume. Good for you.

In the shop window you have promptly identified the cover with the title you were looking for. Following this visual trail, you have forced your way through the shop pas the thick barricade of Books You Haven't Read, which were frowning at you from the tables and shelves, trying to cow you. But you know you must never allow yourself to be awed, that among them there extend for acres and acres the Books You Needn't Read, the Books Made For Purposes Other Than Reading, Books Read Even Before You Open Them Since They Belong To The Category Of Books Read Before Being Written. And thus you pass the outer girdle of ramparts, but then you are attacked by the infantry of the Books That If You Had More Than One Life You Would Certainly Also Read But Unfortunately Your Days Are Numbered. With a rapid maneuver you bypass them and move into the phalanxes of the Books You Mean To Read But There Are Others You Must Read First, the Books Too Expensive Now And You'll Wait Till They're Remaindered, the Books ditto When They Come Out In Paperback, Books You Can Borrow From Somebody, Books That Everybody's Read So It's As If You Had Read Them, Too. Eluding these assaults, you come up beneath the towers of the fortress, where other troops are holding out:

the Books You've Been Planning To Read For Ages,

the Books You've Been Hunting For Years Without Success,

the Books Dealing With Something You're Working On At The Moment,

the Books You Want To Own So They'll Be Handy Just In Case,

the Books You Could Put Aside Maybe To Read This Summer,

the Books You Need To Go With Other Books On Your Shelves,

the Books That Fill You With Sudden, Inexplicable Curiosity, Not Easily Justified.

Now you have been able to reduce the countless embattled troops to an array that is, to be sure, very large but still calculable in a finite number; but this relative relief is then undermined by the ambush of the Books Read Long Ago Which It's Now Time To Reread and the Books You've Always Pretended To Have Read And Now It's Time To Sit Down And Really Read Them.

With a zigzag dash you shake them off and leap straight into the citadel of the New Books Whose Author Or Subject Appeals To You. Even inside this stronghold you can make some breaches in the ranks of the

defenders, dividing them into New Books By Authors Or On Subjects Not New (for you or in general) and New Books By Authors Or On Subjects Completely Unknown (at least to you), and defining the attraction they have for you on the basis of your desires and needs for the new and the not new (for the new you seek in the not new and for the not new you seek in the new).

All this simply means that, having rapidly glanced over the titles of the volumes displayed in the bookshop, you have turned toward a stack of If on a winter's night a traveler fresh off the press, you have grasped a copy, and you have carried it to the cashier so that your right to own it can be established.

You cast another bewildered look at the books around you (or, rather: it was the books that looked at you, with the bewildered gaze of dogs who, from their cages in the city pound, see a former companion go off on the leash of his master, come to rescue him), and out you went.

You derive a special pleasure from a just-published book, and it isn't only a book you are taking with you but its novelty as well, which could also be merely that of an object fresh from the factory, the youthful bloom of new books, which lasts until the dust jacked begins to yellow, until a veil of smog settles on the top edge, until the binding becomes dog-eared, in the rapid autumn of libraries.

No, you hope always to encounter true newness, which having been new once, will continue to be so. Having read the freshly published book, you will take possession of this newness at the first moment, without having to pursue it, to chase it. Will it happen this time? You never can tell. Let's see how it begins.

Perhaps you started leafing through the book already in the shop. Or were you unable to, because it was wrapped in its cocoon of cellophane? Now you are on the bus, standing in the crowd, hanging from a strap by your arm, and you begin undoing the package with your free hand, making movements something like a monkey, a monkey who wants to peel a banana and at the same time cling to the bough. Watch out, you're elbowing your neighbors; apologize, at least.

Or perhaps the bookseller didn't wrap the volume; he gave it to you in a bag. This simplifies matters. You are at the wheel of your car, waiting at a traffic light, you take the book out of the bag, rip off the transparent wrapping, start reading the first lines. A storm of honking breaks over you; the light is green, you're blocking traffic.

You are at your desk, you have set the book among your business papers as if by chance; at a certain moment you shift a file and you find the book before your eyes, you open it absently, you rest your elbows on the desk, you rest your temples against your hands, curled into fists, you seem to be concentrating on an examination of the papers and instead you are exploring the first pages of the novel. Gradually you settle back in the chair, you raise the book to the level of your nose, you tilt the chair, poised on its rear legs, you pull out a side drawer of the desk to prop your feet on it; the position of the during reading is of maximum importance, you stretch your legs out on the top of the desk, on the files to be expedited.

But doesn't this seem to show a lack of respect? Of respect, that is, not for your job (nobody claims to pass judgment on your professional capacities: we assume that your duties are a normal element in the system of unproductive activities that occupies suck a large part of the national and international economy), but for the book. Worse still if you belong--willingly or unwillingly--to the number of those for whom working means

really working, performing, whether deliberately or without premeditation, something necessary or at least not useless for others as well as for oneself; then the book you have brought with you to your place of employment like a kind of amulet or talisman exposes you to intermittent temptations, a few seconds at a time subtracted from the principal object of your attention, whether it is the perforations of electronic cards, the burners of a kitchen stove, the controls of a bulldozer, a patient stretched out on the operating table with his guts exposed.

In other words, it's better for you to restrain your impatience and wait to open the book at home. Now. Yes, you are in your room, calm; you open the book to page one, no, to the last page, first you want to see how long it is. It's not too long, fortunately. Long novels written today are perhaps a contradiction: the dimension of time has been shattered, we cannot love or think except in fragments of time each of which goes off along its own trajectory and immediately disappears. We can rediscover the continuity of time only in the novels of that period when time no longer seemed stopped and did not yet seem to have exploded, a period that lasted no more than a hundred years.

You turn the book over in your hands, you scan the sentences on the back of the jacket, generic phrases that don't say a great deal. So much the better, there is no message that indiscreetly outshouts the message that the book itself must communicate directly, that you must extract from the book, however much or little it may be. Of course, this circling of the book, too, this reading around it before reading inside it, is a part of the pleasure in a new book, but like all preliminary pleasures, it has its optimal duration if you want it to serve as a thrust toward the more substantial pleasure of the consummation of the act, namely the reading of the book.

So here you are now, ready to attack the first lines of the first page. you prepare to recognize the unmistakable tone of the author. No. you don't recognize it at all. But now that you think about it, who ever said this author had an unmistakable tone? On the contrary, he is known as an author who changes greatly from one book to the next. And in these very changes you recognize him as himself.

Here, however, he seems to have absolutely no connection with all the rest he has written, at least as far as you can recall. Are you disappointed? Let's see. Perhaps at first you feel a bit lost, as when a person appears who, from the name, you identified with a certain face, and you try to make the features you are seeing tally with those you had in mind, and it won't work. but then you go on and you realize that the book is readable nevertheless, independently of what you expected of the author, it's the book in itself that arouses your curiosity; in fact, on sober reflection, you prefer it this way, confronting something and not quite knowing yet what it is.

Calvino, Italo. "If on a winter's night a traveler." *If on a winter's night a traveler*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1981. 10 - 24. Print.