

English III Honors Summer Reading and Writing Assignment  
June 1, 2018

Dear Honors III Student:

You are reading this letter because you selected the Honors III for your English course for 2018-2019. We are delighted to be your teachers of some of the great works of American literature. This will be a rigorous and challenging course.

With this letter, you have been issued the textbook anthology *Responding to Literature*, also known as the Big Yellow Book, or "BYB" for short.

The adage "use it or lose it" is as true of human brains as it is of human musculature. Therefore, to keep your mind as sound as your body<sup>1</sup>, this summer you will read and ponder the following selections. You may complete the assigned reading in any order you wish:

1. Selections and literary terminology from the course anthology, McDougal, Littell's *Responding to Literature* (aka "BYB"). Please refer to the attachment in the packet attached for a list of these selections and terms, and suggestions about how to read them constructively. There will be a comprehensive test on this material the first week of school. Take careful notes, own these terms, stories, and eras, and be prepared.
2. *The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck. This book will be the subject of several days of in-class, full period discussions, a comprehensive test, and an in-class essay early in the first quarter. The requirements for this novel are described in the handout "Honors English 3 Summer Assignments."

**You will be assigned to read all of John Steinbeck's 450 page novel, *The Grapes of Wrath* in the first two weeks of school.**

If you are a slow reader, **we strongly suggest you read the novel over the summer, and then REREAD the pages as they are assigned in the first two**

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<sup>1</sup> *Mens sana in corpore sano* ("a sound mind in a sound body") is attributed to the Roman writer Juvenal, whose works were much enjoyed by America's founding citizens, especially Thomas Jefferson. In fact, all of the American authors we will read were well-versed in the classics (both Greek and Roman) and of course, Shakespeare.

**weeks.** There will also be other projects assigned in the first fortnight of school in addition to this reading. *The Grapes of Wrath* is a classic of American literature that all Americans (especially Californians) should read at least once. **Use the attached questions to guide your reading.**

If you leave your summer reading until August, we promise you will not enjoy it. We recommend that you **not** do this. If you purchase new or used copies of books (which we **do** recommend, especially used books), annotate and highlight them, take notes, and use post-its as you read. Talk to the text. For this summer assignment, as well as for the novels we read during the school year, we do not mind if you use Spark Notes or Cliff's Notes to help you understand what you have already read. **We do mind (very much) if you attempt to substitute these study guides for reading the literature itself, or pass off the ideas as your own in papers or in class discussions.** You should be aware that attempting to pass off others' work as your own is cheating – specifically in this case, plagiarism - and is not tolerated anywhere at Las Lomas, especially in our classrooms.

Honors English 3 is based upon active student participation, and thus, **regular attendance** is required for you to succeed. Even if your absences are excused, you may need to do extra work to make up for missed class discussion. Final examinations, in-class discussions and essays, group and individual presentations, and reading, along with written homework are required to complete this course.

Together, we will make this course an exhilarating exploration of literature that is as fresh and wide open as this great nation. We want to teach you the truth of Emerson's<sup>2</sup> aphorism that "Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm." So, let us undertake our great work. See you in August.

English III Honors Teachers for 2018-2019

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<sup>2</sup> Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882) is an American essayist and Transcendentalist. We will be studying some of his writings in our class. An aphorism is a brief statement, usually one sentence long, that expresses a truth about life.