

Summer Reading English 2 Honors

Choose two of the following books for your summer reading.

Writing assignments listed at end of list.

Alice, I think by Susan Juby

Alice is an alienated teen possessed of a biting sarcasm in Juby's frequently hilarious novel. Providing the perfect air of intelligence tinged with teen angst, this novel serves as Alice's journal about her various travails with an undercurrent of energy. Alice, who feels like a true misfit, has been home-schooled for years and will soon enter a public high school. She suffers at the hands of bullies, feels awkward around boys and longs to create a special "look" for herself, just like most kids her age. Her ever-present family is a source of love and comfort as well as embarrassment. But what makes this tale unusual is Alice's ability to see her everyday dramas in the context of a bigger picture of her life.

Funny in Farsi by Firzoozeh Dumas

This lighthearted memoir chronicles the author's move from Iran to America in 1971 at age seven, the antics of her extended family and her eventual marriage to a Frenchman. The best parts will make readers laugh out loud, as when she arrives in Newport Beach, Calif., "a place where one's tan is a legitimate topic of conversation." Dumas's first book remains a warm, witty and sometimes poignant look at cross-cultural misunderstanding and family life. Immigrants from anywhere are likely to identify with her chronicle of adapting to America.

Hole in My Life by Jack Gantos

-A memoir of the 15 months the author spent as a young man in federal prison for drug smuggling. He eventually went to college with hopes of becoming a writer. "*A riveting autobiographical account of his teen years*" (*Publishers Weekly*).

Keeper by Mal Peet

-“Framed as an interview between a South American sports reporter and the world’s best soccer goalkeeper, the now 30-year-old “El Gato” relates how he developed his skills, achieved great fame, and won the coveted World Cup” (*Booklist, August 2005*). A story of poverty and isolation with themes surrounding coming-of-age and strong family ties.

King of the Mild Frontier: An Ill-Advised Autobiography by Chris Crutcher

-A funny, yet heart-breaking autobiography, Crutcher shares stories of his childhood and adolescence growing up in Idaho. From high school athletics, to difficult relationships with family, his candidness and insight appeal to young adults everywhere.

Knights of the Hill Country by Tim Tharp

- “In his senior year, high school star linebacker Hampton Greene finally begins to think for himself and discovers that he might be interested in more than just football” (*Titlewave.com*).

The Noah Confessions by Barbara Hall

For her 16th birthday, Linnie expects a car, which is what every girl at her Los Angeles private school gets for that birthday. Instead, she receives something puzzling, though of much greater importance: a charm bracelet that belonged to her deceased mother. The teen begins to read about her family's past and learns why she never met her grandparents. This novel will grab readers' attention with the promise of mysterious revelations by Linnie's mother, who was a victim of crimes not her own. A solid story, told from three different points of view, which teaches about self-examination and the ability to move away from the past.

A Northern Light by Jennifer Donnelly

It's 1906 and 16-year-old Mattie Gokey is at a crossroads in her life. She's escaped the overwhelming responsibilities of helping to run her father's broken down farm in exchange for a paid summer job as a serving girl at a fancy hotel in the Adirondacks. At the hotel, Mattie gets caught up in the disappearance of a young couple who had gone out together in a rowboat. Grace Brown's story is a true one (it's the same story told in Theodore Dreiser's *An American Tragedy* and in the film adaptation, *A Place in the Sun*), and author Jennifer Donnelly masterfully interweaves the real-life story with Mattie's, making her seem even more real.

The Pact by Jodi Picoult

-In this contemporary tale of love and friendship, Jodi Picoult brings to life a familiar world, and in a single terrifying moment awakens every parent's worse fear: We think we know our children... but do we ever really know them at all?

—Synopsis from <http://www.jodipicoult.com/the-pact.html>

Due September 11, 2009: Students must read **TWO** books from the list and write one of the following essays analyzing **BOTH** novels.

1. **What elements of the writer's style** in each novel appealed to you (for example: humor, logical presentation of ideas, mood, dialogue, character development, sensory details)? Be sure to provide specific details from both novels to support your ideas.
2. Many characters gain readers' **sympathy because they are realistic people like those in current society**. Argue for or against this thesis by relating individuals of today to the main characters from both of your readings.
3. The quest of personal ambition and discontent with present conditions is common in works of literature. Characters strive for what is beyond their reach while blind to the good that is within their grasp. Explain how this is true for one of the characters from each of the readings.
4. Elements of conflict and setting are essential to all stories.
Identify the main conflict that provides the focal point for both novels. Using specific events and details, explain how the conflict and setting for both books contribute to and help establish the major theme(s).
5. Select one character from each book. Decide if he/she is a one dimensional (flat) or a three dimensional (round) character. Give reasons, examples and incidents to prove your thesis for both novels.

Questions regarding the summer assignment should be emailed to Ms. Gilbert at cgilbert@bhpsnj.org or Ms. Toporek at stoporek@bhpsnj.org no later than June 17, 2009.