**AP English Language (Juniors)/English 161-162 - Summer Assignment for 2017-2018**

This course is primarily a writing course. However, without an excellent capacity to read, you will not be able to write to the standards of the class. To prepare for the class, you must read, comprehend, and analyze the following works. Please note that the due dates for readings and assignments are staggered throughout September.

**The wise student would plan ahead and complete the readings and assignments during the glorious months of summer so as not to be overwhelmed during the notoriously challenging month of September.**

Do not use study aids such as Sparknotes, etc. The purpose of an AP and/or college course is to teach YOU to read, analyze, and write, not to read the explanations and analysis of others. Train your brain.

If you have questions, contact me at [pgraves@vermilionschools.org](mailto:pgraves@vermilionschools.org) or 419 433-0914.

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And now for the assignment…

John Steinbeck’s *Travels with Charley: In Search of America*

In the opening essay of Steinbeck’s *America and the Americans* written after *Travels with Charley*, he writes the following:

We built America and the process made us Americans- a new breed, rooted in all races, stained and tinted with all colors, a seeming ethnic anarchy. Then in a little, little time, we became more alike than we are different- a new society; not great, but fitted by our very faults for greatness, E Pluribus Unum (out of many, one).

Ultimately, this is Steinbeck’s assessment of Americans in *Travels with Charley* as well. In his trip “In Search of America” has he succeeded? Has he been able to discover the American character?

Take notes from all sections of the book that respond to these questions. Expect to write on the topic in September. **Reading and thorough notes (include page numbers) are due on Tuesday, September 5.**

Turn over for more….

Tennessee Williams’ *The Glass Menagerie*

This is a classic example of 20th century American drama. **Read it carefully and write a 2-3 page essay in MLA format responding to the following prompt:**

“And, after all, our surroundings influence our lives and characters as much as fate, destiny or any supernatural agency.” Pauline Hopkins, *Contending Forces*

In *The Glass Menagerie* how do cultural, physical, or geographical surroundings shape psychological or moral traits in a character? Write a well-organized essay in which you analyze how surroundings affect this character and illuminate the meaning of the work as a whole.

**Due on Tuesday, September 12. The essay will be submitted to turnitin.com on the due date. Additionally**, **expect a test on this play on Tuesday, September 12.**

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Steven Millhauser’s *Martin Dressler: The Tale of an American Dreamer*

You will find attached to this page a guide, which includes a number of items to look for in the novel. When you encounter one of those items, **highlight** the area in the book, **record** the page number on the sheet, and **explain** the significance of the item on that particular page.

For instance, the Brooklyn Bridge is one of the repeated motifs in the book. When the bridge appears in the book, highlight it and note the page number. Now, attempt to figure out why the bridge appears on that page. What does it mean within the context of the novel or to the character?

**The book is complex.** After finishing it for the first time, you will need to go back through to understand the novel completely. We will spend time discussing it, and I expect you to participate. **Novel reading and guide are due on Tuesday, September 26.**

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**A final note: If you do not complete the majority of this assignment during the summer, plan to change your schedule during the add/drop period at the beginning of the school year.**