

# Honors American Literature “Summer Assignment”

## Autobiography, Memoir, Travel Journal, Autobiographical Essays

Dear HAL student,

Welcome to the summer assignment!

In order to get your brain juices flowing, your assignment is to read at least **one** autobiography, memoir, travel journal, or collection of autobiographical essays from the list which follows this note. (Read only **one** book, not one of each type☺).

These books include works by former Poet Laureates (Maya Angelou), former slaves (Frederick Douglass), national icons (Benjamin Franklin), contemporary philanthropists (Greg Mortenson), survivors (Le Ly Hayslip, Melba Patillo Beals, Jeanette Walls), people who have climbed Mount Everest (Jon Krakauer), and so many more. Research the titles and pick a book that genuinely interests you. One place to start is at a site like Amazon.com where people post reviews of books.

To complete the summer assignment you will also need to finish the two tasks that follow the reading list. The first is analytical writing; the second is creative thinking and doing. Have fun with them both. Both assignments are due on the **first day of class**.

If you have any questions or concerns about the assignment, you can contact me (Ms. Lafferty– HAL teacher representative) over the summer at [klafferty@powayusd.com](mailto:klafferty@powayusd.com).

Ms. Lafferty

Maya Angelou **I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings**

Melba Patillo Beals **Warriors Don't Cry**

Rick Bragg **All Over but the Shoutin'**

Pat Conroy **The Water is Wide**

Annie Dillard **An American Childhood**

Frederick Douglass **Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass An American Slave**

Benjamin Franklin **The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin**

Le Ly Hayslip **When Heaven and Earth Changed Places**

Zora Neal Hurston **Dust Tracks on a Dirt Road**

Barbara Kingsolver **High Tide in Tucson**

Maxine Hong Kingston **The Woman Warrior**

Jon Krakauer **Into the Wild** or **Into Thin Air**

Margaret Mead **Blackberry Winter**

Scott Momaday **The Way to Rainy Mountain**

William Least Heat Moon **Blue Highways: A Journey Into America**

Greg Mortenson **Three Cups of Tea**

Tim O'Brien **The Things They Carried**

Richard Rodriguez **Hunger for Memory**

Sedaris, David **Me Talk Pretty One Day**

Henry David Thoreau **Walden**

Mark Twain **The Autobiography of Mark Twain**

Victor Villasenor **Burro Genius: A Memoir**

Jeannette Walls **The Glass Castle**

Booker T. Washington **Up From Slavery**

Richard Wright **Black Boy**

Malcolm X **The Autobiography of Malcolm X**

## Task One: Analytical Writing

### Writing the Voice Inside Your Head

Choose the **THREE** most powerful moments from your book. Each “moment” could be a paragraph(s), a page, or a chapter. Then, write one journal response on **EACH** of the powerful moments (3 journal responses total).

Compose each journal response in the following format. **REMEMBER: You must do three of these.**

1. Specify the reading section in the header of your response. Example: Pages 23-24 OR Chapter 3
2. For each moment: Write a 1-2 **paragraph** (no more than ½ page) summary of the section you have chosen. Summaries merely restate the section in your own words. Summaries do not add in your own opinion.
3. For each moment: Write a **1-1 ½ page** response that articulates why YOU think this is one of the most powerful moments in the book. You do not have to respond to each bullet point but may wish to consider:
  - Why do you like or dislike this section?
  - What was your emotional, psychological, moral, ethical, physical response?
  - What did you learn?
  - How have you changed (behavior, belief) because you read this? What have you been inspired to do/not do, look for, talk about?
  - making connections to: other text, the world, your life. . .
  - analyzing the author’s style
    - The author’s word choice. Why are they powerful? What do they make you think about?
    - The author’s choice of details. Why these details and not others?
    - The author use of figurative language (similes, metaphors, foreshadowing, personification, allusions, alliteration, point of view, etc).
  - focusing on a character(s) that seem(s) interesting or puzzling
  - focusing on any patterns you discover, either related to a character, an idea, on the writing, or on how these come together.

In general, these should demonstrate your engagement with the book. I am much more interested in your honest and thoughtful responses to what you're reading than I am with you writing standard commentary, i.e. I am looking for how you come to grips with what you're reading.

### Score Guide

#### Outstanding Responses:

May vary in length but go on long enough to reflect and accommodate extended thought. Responses regularly stretch the writer's understanding or pose thoughtful questions for which the writer may have no ready answer. Responses are willing to speculate and show the writer willing and eager to interact with the text. Responses are provocative, spirited, and lively. Shows a growth in understanding and frequently makes connections between ideas and parts of the text. Writer has a strong sense of his or her own voice.

#### Average Responses:

Occasionally lengthy and complex, but other may also be brief to the point of sketchiness. Some responses willing to pose questions, but many do not probe beneath the surface of the text. Entries seem cursory, the result of obligation rather than of interest. Responses sometimes lively and spirited sometimes tired or flat. Overall, these only give inconsistent sense of progress and/or understanding of the process of critical reading.

#### Poor Response:

Responses are irregular, sparse, and fragmentary. Little or no effort to speculate or to reach for more conclusions. Little to no interaction with the text. There is little or no sense of progress in understanding of the process of critical reading. Little or no sense that the writer has thought much beyond the immediate entry.

## Task Two: Creative Project

### Viral Messages

**Overview:** Choose your favorite line from the book you read and turn the message that inspired you into a viral message (a message you share with others and you hope they share with others). Make a photo diary of your process and submit a physical or digital photo journal on the first day of class.

**Viral Message:** A viral message is a concept based on “Viral Marketing”. Viral marketing refers to marketing techniques that use pre-existing social networks (usually network forums such as: text messages, MySpace, Facebook, YouTube, e-mail) to produce a **self-replicating viral process of spreading a message**, analogous to the spreading of pathological and computer viruses. Viral messaging is a phenomenon that facilitates and encourages people to pass along a message voluntarily. For example, think of how a new slang phrase seems to come out of nowhere. Someone started using it and others caught onto it and began using it, too. Other examples are Internet videos that all of a sudden get a million hits over the span of a few days, or an e-mail joke that everyone forwards.

#### Instructions - What do you do?

- First, choose the most inspiring message from the book. Pick an idea or phrase that really struck you as you read the book.
- Next, reproduce it as a viral message. You may need to paraphrase or edit it.
- Then, decide how you will start the message. Think of how you can best get it to spread. The best messages are the ones that will inspire others to share with friends and family.
- Finally, as you send out your message begin documenting its spread. You can do this through photos, screen shots, video, written entries, etc. (see directions for this below)

**Here are some ideas on how to spread your message. Remember you are trying to SPREAD the message, so saying/sending/writing the message once will not be effective.**

Conventional: mass text messages, YouTube video, MySpace message board, Facebook status, chain letter.

Unconventional: chalk quotes, posters, buttons, bumper stickers, postcards, banners, a traveling journal. . .(Keri Smith has many ideas: <http://www.kerismith.com/funstuff/guerilla.htm>).

#### PHOTO JOURNAL:

- As you do this, keep a photo journal of your journey. You could document (take pictures of yourself) doing some or all of the following: reading, constructing your message, distributing your message, and others seeing or spreading your message. You will also want to include a copy of the message itself. This may be in print or digital form (like a CD or an e-mailed PowerPoint sent to [klafferty@powayusd.com](mailto:klafferty@powayusd.com)).
- Next to each photo, use a brief caption to explain what you were doing and thinking. Make the journal as pretty or ugly as you want. Let the format be a metaphor for the project itself.
- For the last entry, tell me about this experience. Did you like it or not? What did you expect? Not expect? Was your viral message really viral? How did people react?

#### CAUTION, CAUTION, CAUTION!!!!

This assignment is school work. All messages must be inspiring NOT vulgar or sexually explicit or violent or harassing in any way. Do not do anything that would violate Westview’s codes of behavior!

ALSO IMPORTANT for your well-being and freedom: Do not break any civic, moral, or ethical laws when distributing your message. Let me be explicit: do not mark anything permanently with spray paint, paint, or stickers on public or private property. And, be environmentally conscious – don’t litter.