



## WATKINS MILL HIGH SCHOOL

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### SUMMER READING, A.P. ENGLISH 12

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**Congratulations** to the stalwarts hiking up the trail into A.P. English 12. The journey should be pleasurable and edifying.

Certainly you have misgivings. After all, that huge mountain you see is College Admissions, and at this point, you don't know where, or how, or maybe even why, you'll be going. Look at this summer-reading experience as the leisurely trek up that hill, so that you'll know mid-way what the summit will be, and can enjoy the sights the rest of the way.

1. Sometime by late July, email me a copy of your 'best' essay that you wrote last year. You do not need to change anything in it. *At the end of the essay, in a different font, explain what you liked best about the essay, and what you feel you could have done to better it. Itemize both conceptual matter, and stylistics.*
2. Upon your return in late August, bring with you a re-written draft of an essay you have written for your college admissions. Obviously, to have done so, you must begin the 'search' this summer. Ideally, you will have narrowed down your choices, perhaps visited some schools, and definitely started filling out the applications. Go to the schools' web sites to find the past or present essay topics. Or, find the 'Common Application' questions shared by over 100 colleges and universities. *You really should not come back to school in August without having plunged deeply into this admissions process.* E-mail me during the summer if you have questions.
3. When school starts, be ready to show your knowledge about **some literature** [just keep reading]. Note:
  - Your arrival back to school should correspond to turning in several studyguides. [read on...]
  - The first week of the year will be a reading quiz, on texts cited below; during Week 3, another quiz.
  - The first two weeks we will work on the College essay, including revising your essay and covering other writing rudiments, applying some of those concepts to one of the summer readings in an in-class essay
  - The third week of the year, I'll cover literature concepts that apply to all the summer readings. All you'll have to do is listen, jot notes, and enjoy. [*Don't throw away Ms Salatto's infamous LIST*]
  - The fourth week, we'll hit vocabulary and language fairly heavily [precursor to the SAT!]

#### The literature:

For the first marking period, we will be discussing two war novels, and Barbara Kingsolver's massive novel *The Poisonwood Bible*. During summer, you need to finish either one of those two elements [both war novels, or PB] and do the work indicated below. By the end of Week Three, you need to be finished the other element.

[keep reading, please]

**For all three of the novels:** annotate; highlight; keep copious vocabulary lists. The vocab lists will be collected and graded periodically [homework grade] and will be used for Vocab tests; the annotated texts will be collected and given a grade as well.

**For the war novels:** compile a list of quoted details that focus on how the writer depicts the realities of war [often its harshness or brutality; sometimes the governmental/bureaucratic incompetencies] and war's effects on the characters. Consider this ontological question especially: does war turn man into a brute, reducing him to a sub-human state—or do its conditions expose man for what he really is, under the 'disguise' of civilization?

I am not going to give you a 'prescribed' list of the war novels you 'have' to choose from; there is a veritable plethora. **Do** select novels of suitable length. Popular and highly readable titles include Joseph Heller's *Catch-22*; Tim O'Brien's *The Things They Carried*; Stephen Crane's *Red Badge of Courage*; Ernest Hemingway's *A Farewell To Arms*. If you're not sure of the suitability of a selection, email me.

**For Poisonwood:** pace yourself; give yourself time to savor this magnificent book. You will notice five different first-person narrative voices—all the major women in the novel. You will need to have quotations for each representing their attitudes, character traits, etc. Be sure to include page numbers.

At any point, if you have any questions for me—ways to make your summer activity more interesting and enjoyable—please email me. I look forward to your companionship in 75 days.

Mr. Sampselle