



ST. FRANCIS HIGH SCHOOL
THE SCHOOL OF THOUGHT

2010 SUMMER READING ASSIGNMENT

- All students should read the All-School Summer-Reading book, *Middle Passage* by Charles Johnson, and at least one other book from the appropriate “Student’s Choice” book list below.
 - Complete the following writing assignment in response to the All-School book, *Middle Passage*.
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NOTE: This reading (and writing) assignment is a change from the assignment you may have gotten during Exam Week. Upon consideration, we felt this novel – *Middle Passage*, as below – was a better choice than the earlier all-school book, *Little Bee*. Students who have already purchased *Little Bee* and would like to read it should feel free to do that, and consider it their second summer-reading book.

Materials you need:

- the all-school summer-reading book, Charles Johnson’s *Middle Passage* – available in paperback, either at a bookstore or via an on-line bookseller like Amazon, where used copies sell at low prices
- a new “sketchbook” – a fresh, lined notebook of the kind sold in drugstores and grocery stores and usually having a black-and-white marbled cover. (You can get any color you want.) This will be your English journal for 2010-11. *Please use the journal, writing by hand, instead of typing and printing your responses, unless you have an accommodation that would exempt you from this requirement.*

Important general directions:

- Reading the all-school summer book is important. Everyone in the faculty, everyone on the staff, and all four grades of students read this book.
- The book will be the topic of discussions inside and outside class from the first day of the new school year in August; your sketchbook writing will be your first English grade.
- Represent yourself well as a student and thinker by reading and writing wholeheartedly. Start soon enough to do your best job. Don’t save this project until the last minute.
- Be sure to bring both *Middle Passage* and your new sketchbook with your written responses to class *on the first day of school. It will be late if you don’t, and thus the best you could expect for a grade is 69.*

- In addition to *Middle Passage*, you will read one book from the lists of recommended books attached to these directions. (As above, if you have *Little Bee* and want to read it, do so, and your summer-reading requirement will be fulfilled by *Little Bee* and *Middle Passage*.)
- You do not have to write sketchbook entries for the book from the lists of recommended books. But your English teacher will give you a brief “reading-record card” to fill out during the first days of school, and there you can candidly and informally record your responses to the listed book(s) and get English credit.

Reading *Middle Passage*:

The book, a novel, a little more than 200 pages long, is described by Amazon in this way: *It is 1830. Rutherford Calhoun, a newly freed slave and irrepressible rogue, is desperate to escape unscrupulous bill collectors and an impending marriage to a priggish schoolteacher. He jumps aboard the first boat leaving New Orleans, the Republic, a slave ship en route to collect members of a legendary African tribe, the Allmuseri. Thus begins a daring voyage of horror and self-discovery. Peopled with vivid and unforgettable characters, nimble in its interplay of comedy and serious ideas, this dazzling modern classic is a perfect blend of the picaresque tale, historical romance, sea yarn, slave narrative, and philosophical novel.”*

The novel is probably unlike anything you have read before; it will require and reward your attention. It also features a challenging vocabulary.

You should mark new words in the margin, looking them up as necessary. (You will return to these margin notes for the first sketchbook assignment, which is a vocabulary-building one. See below.)

Read actively: where you read something you have a response to – whatever it is – make a margin note in your book. This will help you write about the book, for one, but it’s also what active readers do. Your English teacher will appreciate this physical evidence of careful reading.

Writing about *Middle Passage*: vocabulary and reading log

- Use your sketchbook to enter 12 new words you encountered in this novel. Copy the original sentence, with the page number; then look up and copy a definition you think best fits the use of the word in the sentence. Then write an original sentence of your own using the word.
- Use your sketchbook to record your responses to the novel as you read. Stop reading and write a response when you’ve read to page 43; again at page 100; again at page 141; and finally at the end of the book, at page 209.
- You should write at least a couple of sketchbook pages at each of these four moments. You should have at least eight pages of response in all.
- In the four written responses, you may take any approach you like other than just summarizing. (Do not summarize!) You could evaluate the novel – discuss its strengths and weaknesses; you could report on what the book makes you feel, or makes you curious about, or makes you want to know more about; you could compare the novel to something else you have read, whether fiction or non-fiction,

or to something you have seen, in your experience, in film, or on television; you could ask questions about what you're reading; you could comment on its methods and style; you can note what you don't understand. You may mix and match, taking any and all of these approaches.

- But whatever you do . . . be specific. **Really explain yourself, even if you are writing about something in the novel you don't understand.** Stick on a point for long enough that you discover a little more about what you're thinking and communicate with your reader. Remember that you are speaking to someone as you write.
- Refer specifically to the words of the novel to investigate why you are thinking and feeling whatever you are thinking and feeling. Tie your responses to moments or sentences in the novel. **Quote from the novel.** Use the text to make your points and to identify precisely what you are responding to. Don't stay general, way up above the pages, not referencing phrases, lines or even paragraphs of the novel. **For each of the four sketchbook entries, quote at least three pieces of text. (They may be short pieces, even just phrases, and should not be so long that you use them just to fill out the two-page requirement for each entry: if you quote a paragraph, write your own two pages in addition to that.)**
- To review your assignment: you need written entries at four intervals in the novel, at least two pages each. Be sure to quote, as above. You will also have the 12 new words, the sentences they appeared in and the page number, a good definition, and your own sentence using each word.
- Do not type these entries. They should be handwritten in your sketchbook. They need to be honest and specific, and they need to follow the directions above, but they are not a test!



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“STUDENT’S CHOICE” SUMMER READING LIST

- All students should read the All-School Summer-Reading book, *Middle Passage* by Charles Johnson, and at least one other book from the appropriate list below.
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For Incoming 9th and 10th Graders

Sci-Fi, Fantasy, and Historical Fiction

Flatland – Edwin Abbot

A Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy – Douglas Adams

Watership Down – Richard Adams

2001 – Arthur C. Clarke

Sphere – Michael Crichton

Out of the Silent Planet – C.S. Lewis

Perelandra – C.S. Lewis

1984 – George Orwell

His Dark Material (trilogy, including *The Golden Compass*, *The Subtle Knife*, and *The Amber Spyglass*) – Philip Pullman

The Bull from the Sea – Mary Renault

The King Must Die – Mary Renault

The Hobbit – J.R.R. Tolkien

The Lord of the Rings – J.R.R. Tolkien

Kristen Lavransdatter – Sigrid Undset

The Sirens of Titan – Kurt Vonnegut

Cat’s Cradle – Kurt Vonnegut

The Once and Future King – T.H. White

The Mists of Avalon – Marian Bradley Zimmer

Fiction

The House of the Spirits – Isabel Allende

Little Big Man – Thomas Berger

Heading West – Doris Betts

My Antonia – Willa Cather

Oscar and Lucinda – Peter Carey

Breath, Eyes, Memory – Edwidge Danticat

Oliver Twist – Charles Dickens

The Mistress of Spices – Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni

Jim the Boy – Tony Earley

A Lesson Before Dying – Ernest J. Gaines

Storming Heaven – Denise Giardina

Charms for the Easy Life – Kaye Gibbons
Memoirs of a Geisha – Arthur Golden
I Never Promised You a Rose Garden – Joanne Greenberg
Eva's Man – Gayle Jones
One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest – Ken Kesey
Annie John – Jamaica Kincaid
Animal Dreams – Barbara Kingsolver
The Heart is a Lonely Hunter – Carson McCullers
Who Will Run the Frog Hospital? – Lorrie Moore
The Bluest Eye – Toni Morrison
Bailey's Café – Gloria Naylor
Franny and Zooey – J.D. Salinger
Nine Stories (short stories) – J.D. Salinger
Saving Grace – Lee Smith
The Grapes of Wrath – John Steinbeck
Of Mice and Men – John Steinbeck
The Joy Luck Club – Amy Tan
The Kitchen God's Wife – Amy Tan
Fools Crow – James Welch

Fiction by Kentucky Authors with Kentucky Settings

The Dollmaker – Harriet Arnow
Nathan Coulter – Wendell Berry
Jayber Crow – Wendell Berry
Passing Through – Leon Driskell
Scissors, Paper, Rock – Fenton Johnson
Feather Crowns – Bobbie Ann Mason
In Country – Bobbie Ann Mason
Shiloh and Other Stories (short stories) – Bobbie Ann Mason
The Natural Man – Ed McClanahan
Divine Right's Trip – Gurney Norman
Kinfolks – Gurney Norman
The Good Brother – Chris Offut
The Same River Twice – Christ Offut
River of Earth – James Still
Come and Go, Molly Snow – Mary Ann Taylor-Hall

Memoir and Nonfiction

Go Ask Alice – anonymous
Don't Let's Go to the Dogs Tonight – Alexandra Fuller
Hole in My Life – Jack Gantos
Clear Springs: A Family Story – Bobbie Ann Mason
Guts: The True Stories Behind The Hatchet and Brian Books – Gary Paulsen
Black Boy – Richard Wright

For Incoming Juniors and Seniors

Fiction

The House of the Spirits – Isabel Allende
Bastard Out of Carolina – Dorothy Allison
Behind the Scenes at the Museum – Kate Atkinson
Emma – Jane Austen
Sense and Sensibility – Jane Austen
Corelli's Mandolin – Louis de Bernieres
Wuthering Heights – Emily Bronte
Street Games (short stories) – Rosellen Brown
Possession – A.S. Byatt
Invisible Cities – Italo Calvino
In Sunlight, in a Beautiful Garden – Kathleen Cambor
The True History of the Kelly Gang – Peter Carey
The Song of the Lark – Willa Cather
Werewolves in Their Youth (stories) – Michael Chabon
Among the Missing (stories) – Don Chaon
Woman Hollering Creek – Sandra Cisneros
Heart of Darkness – Joseph Conrad
Coal Miner's Holiday – Kiki Delancey
The Red Tent – Anita Diamant
Drown (stories) – Junot Diaz
Nicholas Nickleby – Charles Dickens
Flying Home (stories) – Ralph Ellison
Invisible Man – Ralph Ellison
Love Medicine – Louise Erdrich
Madame Bovary – Gustave Flaubert
A Passage to India – E. M. Forster
A Room with a View – E.M. Forster
Cold Mountain – Charles Frazier
Saints and Villains – Denise Giardina
Dead Souls – Nikolai Gogol
The Tin Drum – Gunther Grass
The Mayor of Casterbridge – Thomas Hardy
Tess of the d'Urbervilles – Thomas Hardy
Do the Windows Open? (stories) – Julie Hecht
Catch 22 – Joseph Heller
The Sun Also Rises – Ernest Hemingway
Siddhartha – Hermann Hesse
The Remains of the Day – Kazuo Ishiguro
Heat and Dust – Ruth Praver Jhabvala
The Autobiography of a Colored Man – James Weldon Johnson
Dubliners – James Joyce
On the Road – Jack Kerouac
The Secret of Bees – Sue Kidd
Interpreter of Maladies (stories) – Jhumpa Lahiri
The Assistant – Bernard Malamud
The Natural – Bernard Malamud
One Hundred Years of Solitude – Gabriel Garcia Marquez
All the Pretty Horses – Cormac McCarthy

Lonesome Dove – Larry McMurtry
Birds of America (stories) – Lorrie Moore
Self-Help (stories) – Lorrie Moore
Foxfire – Joyce Carol Oates
Going After Cacciato – Tim O'Brien
The Shipping News – E. Annie Proulx
Housekeeping – Marilyn Robinson
Midnight's Children – Salman Rushdie
Hula – Lisa Shea
The Stone Diaries – Carol Shields
Dog Soldiers – Robert Stone
Damascus Gate – Robert Stone
The Death of Vishnu – Manil Sura
Vanity Fair – William Makepeace Thackeray
Dinner at the Homesick Restaurant – Anne Tyler
Brideshead Revisited – Evelyn Waugh
All the King's Men – Robert Penn Warren
The Quick and the Dead – Joy Williams
Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit – Jeanette Winterson
Native Son – Richard Wright
Germinal – Emile Zola

Memoir

A Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius – Dave Eggers
The Stardust Lounge: Stories from a Boy's Adolescence – Deborah Digges
China Men – Maxine Hong Kingston
The Woman Warrior – Maxine Hong Kingston
Ghost Light – Frank Rich
Lucky – Alice Sebold

Plays

Proof – David Auburn
Boy Gets Girl – Rebecca Gilman
Spinning Into Butter – Rebecca Gilman
Hedda Gabler – Henrik Ibsen
The Crucible – Arthur Miller
The Death of a Salesman – Arthur Miller
A Long Day's Journey into Night – Eugene O'Neil
Arcadia – Tom Stoppard
Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead – Tom Stoppard
The Importance of Being Ernest – Oscar Wilde
The Glass Menagerie – Tennessee Williams

Nonfiction – Mathematics & Science

Pi in the Sky – John Barrow
Complications: A Surgeon's Notes – Atul Gawande
The Panda's Thumb – Steven Jay Gould
A Brief History of Time – Stephen Hawking
The Nothing That Is – Robert Kaplan
The Structure of Scientific Revolutions – Thomas Kuhn

E: The Story of a Number – Eli Maor
Innumeracy – John Allen Paulos
Prisoner's Dilemma – William Poundstone
Uncle Tungsten – Oliver Sacks
Cosmos – Carl Sagan
Mortal Lessons: Notes on the Art of Surgery – Richard Selzer
Does God Play Dice? – Ian Stewart
The Double Helix – James Watson

Nonfiction – Nature/Environment

Silent Spring – Rachel Carson
Refuge: An Unnatural History of Family and Place – Terry Tempest Williams
Changes in the Land – William Cronon
Deep Ecology – Bill Duvall
American Exodus – James Gregory
The Legacy of Conquest – Patricia Limerick
Radical Ecology – Carolyn Merchant
The Omnivore's Dilemma – Michael Pollan
Food Revolution – John Robbins
Deeper Shades of Green – James Schwab
Nature's Numbers – Ian Stewart
Rivers of Empire – Donald Worster

Nonfiction – Politics/Culture

Smoke and Mirrors: War on Drugs and the Politics of Failure – Dan Baum
The Corner: A Year in the Life of an Inner-city Neighborhood – David Simon and Edward Burns
The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down – Anne Fadiman
Intimate Matters – John D'Emilio and Estelle Freedman
The Affluent Society – John Kenneth Galbraith
The Interpretations of Cultures – Clifford Geertz
Daughters of the Shtetl – Susan Glenn
The Ecology of Commerce – Paul Hawken
Adapting to Abundance – Andrew Heinze

Nonfiction – U.S. History/Culture

Twenty Years at Hull House – Jane Addams
More Work for Mother – Ruth Cowan
From the American System to Mass Production – David Hounshell
Amusing the Million – Lawrence Kassin
Common Sense – Thomas Paine
The Artificial River: The Erie Canal – Carol Sheriff
Democracy in America – Alexis de Toqueville
The Search for Order – Robert Weibe