Dear rising sophomore:

The language arts/English teachers at Model Laboratory School have adopted a summer reading program to prepare our students for greater achievement in their courses throughout the year. As you are probably aware, students at each grade level have been assigned appropriate books to read before the fall term. The reading assigned to you will increase your reading vocabulary, comprehension, and analysis.

Students may select one of the following classics to read:

*Catcher In the Rye* by J.D. Salinger
*Invisible Man* by Ralph Ellison
*A Tale of Two Cities* by Charles Dickens
*The Namesake* by Jhumpa Lahiri
*Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen

Finally, sophomores are asked to read a book of their choice genre; the only requisite criteria for this assigned reading is it must be appropriate in nature and must be at least 150 pages in length. If you have any questions please contact me through email. The book may not be one assigned in another English class or one that has been previously read. To document all your assigned reading, please keep a reading journal. You should be able to identify the main characters, discuss their development through the novel’s conflicts, and explain how they contribute to the novel’s themes. In addition, you must compile and define a list of 40 vocabulary words per book that you previously did not know and find particularly interesting; you must be able to manipulate these words with prefix and suffix and incorporate them into your vocabulary. These lists will prepare you for any quiz given on vocabulary from these works.

I am very excited about the benefits of summer reading on student performance. I have tried to give you assignments that will be flexible, beneficial to your intellectual growth, and thought provoking. I hope you enjoy your reading, and I am looking forward to meeting you and discussing your reading experiences in the fall. I can be reached by e-mail. When at all possible, it is preferred that you type these assignments. Please feel free to contact me with questions concerning these assignments. My suggestion is to avoid procrastination. Summer months can fly by very quickly. Have a great summer!

Sincerely,

Mr. Self

Summary of Summer Reading Assignments

I. Classic book of your choosing:

A. Compile vocabulary list with definitions
B. Additional Journal Requisites:
*Chart your developing favor and/or disgust with three different characters throughout the novel
*Favorite parts (3)
*Favorite quotes (5)
*Critical Analysis

C. Use the following thinking prompts to guide at least five journal entries; these entries may take liberties in interpreting the prompts.

In retrospect, the reader often discovers that the first chapter of a novel or the opening scene of a drama introduces some of the major themes of the work. What themes are evident?

An effective literary work does not merely stop or cease; it concludes. In the view of some critics, a work that does not provide the pleasure of significant closure has terminated with an artistic fault. A satisfactory ending is not, however, always conclusive in every sense; significant closure may require the reader to abide with or adjust to ambiguity and uncertainty. Did you achieve/experience proper closure?

A character’s attempt to recapture the past is important in many plays, novels, and poems. Discuss a literary work in which a character views the past with such feelings as reverence, bitterness, or longing.

A recurring theme in literature is the classic war between a passion and responsibility. For instance, a personal cause, a love, a desire for revenge, a determination to redress a wrong, or some other emotion or drive may conflict with moral duty. Did you observe this and to what extent?

A critic has said that one important measure of a superior work of literature is its ability to produce in the reader a healthy confusion of pleasure and disquietude. Expound regarding your novel.

In questioning the value of literary realism, Flannery O’Connor has written, “I am interested in making a good case for distortion because I am coming to believe that it is the only way to make people see.” Does this play out in any way within your novel?

In some works of literature, a character who appears briefly, or does not appear at all, is a significant presence. Was there a character that fits this description in your novel?

In his essay “Walking,” Henry David Thoreau offers the following assessment of literature: “In literature it is only the wild that attracts us. Dullness is but another name for tameness. It is the uncivilized free and wild thinking in Hamlet and The Iliad, in all scriptures and mythologies, not learned in schools, that delights us.” Do you agree and was there good support for this in your reading experience?
Morally ambiguous characters – characters whose behavior discourages readers from identifying them as purely evil or purely good – are at the heart of many works of literature. Did this prove to be true in your novel?

According to critic Northrop Frye, “Tragic heroes are so much the highest points in their human landscape that they seem the inevitable conductors of the power about them, great trees more likely to be struck by lightning than a clump of grass. Conductors may of course be instruments as well as victims of the divisive lightning.” Expound on the applicable nature of this sentiment in regards to your novel.

II. An appropriate book from a genre of your choice:

A. Be prepared to verbally answer questions about your book in the fall in front of your classmates.