

Dear Prospective Advanced English Student:

Are you ready to read on a deeper level, to delve into characters and their conflicts and experience literature in ways you've never imagined? If your answer is an enthusiastic Yes, then read on!

Thus far, most of the reading you have been doing has been done on the surface level. Sure, you know who the protagonist and the antagonist are, you know what the basic plot is, and you're familiar with the characters' internal and external conflicts. But starting in 9<sup>th</sup> grade, the first year of high school that colleges will be looking at, you will be experiencing books on a whole new level, and you'll be introduced to the idea that *literature is an art form*.

In order to prepare you for 9<sup>th</sup> grade Advanced Language Arts—and to prepare you for all future Advanced English classes—you will be required to do summer reading. In 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> grade, you will be required to read four novels the summer before each class. In 9<sup>th</sup> grade you will only be required to read two:

<i>The House on Mango Street</i>	Sandra Cisneros	(ISBN: 0-679-73477-5)
<i>Of Mice and Men</i>	John Steinbeck	(ISBN: 0-140-17739-6)

You will not only be reading about the conflicts the various protagonists face and the truths they discover about themselves, but you will also be examining the relationships between central characters, exploring the development of various themes, and interpreting motifs and symbols.

In a couple of years, you will be required to buy books for Advanced Placement classes. To prepare you for that investment, you are strongly encouraged to ***purchase your own book and to mark it up***—underline or highlight your favorite words or phrases, write questions in the margins or on post-it notes, and circle or box in sentences that relate to the aforementioned literary terms. ***You will be required to hand in two assignments on the first day of classes—one for each book***; they are attached. As you are working on these assignments over the summer, please email me with any questions you may have: [hughest@readingsd.org](mailto:hughest@readingsd.org).

Also, it is highly recommended that you ***keep a journal of your reading***, and write down your reflections and reactions to the characters and the events. The notes and the journal are intended to help you discuss the books effectively in class and will aid you in writing about the novels as the class continues. ***You will be taking a test on these two books in the very beginning of the school year***—probably during the first week of school—so make sure you have all of them read during summer break.

And one final note: Please be aware that reading the SparkNotes or CliffsNotes of these novels will help you, but they are not a substitute and should not be looked at as such. They offer little in the way of helping you grasp the subtleties, insights, and nuances that only you—the reader—can gain by engaging fully with these insightful books. You will most likely fail the tests and assignments for the books if you don't read them and solely rely on these study guides.

Please enjoy your summer, enjoy these books, and come prepared for the first year of your high school career!

Sincerely,

Mr. Hughes  
English Department Chair – The Citadel

***The House on Mango Street* – Sandra Cisneros**  
**Summer Reading Assignment**

*The House on Mango Street* is the story of a young teenager, Esperanza Cordero, who dreams of owning her own house someday. She wants to move away from her house on Mango Street, which is in the ghetto, and live on a bucolic hilltop so she can be closer to the stars.

The novel takes place during one year of her life. She recounts this year in small vignettes—short, vivid chapters that provide the reader with a brief glimpse into her life, similar to diary or journal entries. With each event she narrates, she starts to learn about the world around her and she matures through the conflicts she faces. She begins the novel a little girl with big dreams and ends the novel a young woman mature enough to realize these dreams.

Your assignment is designed to help you understand symbolism, conflict, and the maturation process. For each chapter, you will have to identify just one of these elements. On a separate sheet of paper, draw a chart similar to the one below.

Chapter Title	Symbol and its Meaning	OR	What Esperanza Learns
“The House on Mango Street”	Symbol: The house symbolizes the Cordero family’s poverty		
“Hairs”	Symbol: Hair represents the individual personality of each family member		
“Boys and Girls”	What Esperanza learns: She learns that boys and girls act one way in public and a different way in private		

Notice that for each chapter you only have to ***choose one***: A symbol and its meaning ***or*** what Esperanza learns. You do not have to do both, though you certainly may—and it will benefit you if you do. You must have a column in your chart for all 46 chapters of the book (***including the first three chapters, and your answers must be different than the example above***), so you will need more than one sheet of paper to complete this assignment. It is due on the first day of class. It is worth 100 points.

If you have any questions about this assignment, please email me at [hughest@readingsd.org](mailto:hughest@readingsd.org).

***Of Mice and Men* – John Steinbeck**  
**Summer Reading Assignment**

*Of Mice and Men* is the story of George and Lennie. They are migrant workers in Southern California during the Great Depression, a time in American history where jobs and money were difficult to find. George is Lennie's best friend and caretaker, but he is bossy and impatient. Lennie is a big, strong man but is dim-witted and mentally challenged.

George and Lennie are on the run looking for a new job because of what happened at their last job, and George is anxious to make sure that never happens again. When conflict breaks out due to Lennie's childlike innocence, George is unable to control the situation, and tragedy strikes.

This timeless classic is about loyalty, friendship, and the American Dream. Your assignment is designed to assist you in understanding the big ideas Steinbeck presents throughout the book. On a separate sheet of paper, answer the following questions as thoroughly as possible. You must provide quotations from the book to prove each response. Here is an example:

Question: What animals is Lennie compared to in the beginning of the book and what does this say about his character?

Answer: Lennie is compared to a horse, bear, and dog. On page 2 Steinbeck writes, "...the way a bear drags his paws." On the next page Steinbeck says, "...snorting into the water like a horse." Finally, on page 9 Steinbeck states, "Slowly, like a terrier who doesn't want to bring a ball to its master, Lennie approached..." Steinbeck uses these comparisons to suggest that Lennie is unintelligent, much like animals are not as intelligent as human beings. Also, all these animals reveal a little something about his character: A horse is trained and used by people to do work for them, a bear is big and powerful and potentially ferocious, and a dog is loyal to its master and will obey its master's commands. All of these are traits that Lennie shows throughout the book.

Notice the response is about a **paragraph in length** and is supported by **quotations from the novel**. **All of your answers are to follow this model** if you want full credit on the assignment. It is due on the first day of class. It is worth 100 points.

If you have any questions about this assignment, please email me at [hughest@readingsd.org](mailto:hughest@readingsd.org).

1. How is the death of animals used as foreshadowing in this novel?
2. In your opinion, what is the American Dream? What are the dreams of the following characters: George, Lennie, Crooks, Curley's wife? Do any of these dreams match what you wrote for the American Dream? How or why not?
3. Why does Curley's wife not have a name in this book? Why does Crooks not have a real name in this book? (Hint: Think about the time period and how women and African Americans were (mis)treated back then.)
4. After finishing the book, is George a faithful friend to Lennie? Why or why not?
5. Whose fault is it that certain animals and people die in this book? (Hint: Think of the title of the book and read the poem from which the title refers.)

## Parental Notification Form

In addition to reading the assigned books and completing the accompanied assignments, you will be required to sign the form below. Your parent's and/or guardian's signature and contact information is required as well. **If this form is not filled out and returned to Mr. Hughes in Room 4036 by 4/29/16, you will be removed from Advanced 9<sup>th</sup> grade Language Arts and will be placed in an Honors section.** If you have any questions or concerns, please see Mr. Hughes in Room 4036 or email [hughest@readingsd.org](mailto:hughest@readingsd.org).

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I understand that my son/daughter is required to read two novels over the summer and complete the accompanying assignments. I understand that this assignment is to be done in a notebook dedicated only to Language Arts and will be collected within the first week of the school year. Additionally, I understand that my son/daughter will be given a test on these two books within the first week of school. Finally, I understand that this form and this work is a course requirement and failure to hand it in on the due dates will result in my son's/daughter's removal from the class.

**Due date for this form: 4/29/16**

**Due date for the summer reading assignment: First week of the school year**

Parent Name (printed) \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Phone \_\_\_\_\_

I, the student, have read over the summer reading letter and understand the course requirements. I understand that the summer assignments will be collected within the first week of school and that I will be given a test on these books during this time as well. Furthermore, I know that this form, the reading, and the assignments are course requirements and failure to complete them will result in my removal from the class.

Student Name (printed) \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_