

Hello English 1XL students!

Welcome to Jesuit. I look forward to meeting you this fall and to an excellent and challenging year ahead. To prepare for English 1XL, please complete **all** of the following summer reading assignments. Please note that you must have physical copies (not e-books) of each book we study in English 1XL:

1. Read *Brown Girl Dreaming* (ISBN 978-0-14-751582-7) by Jacqueline Woodson. You will see that the memoir is divided into 5 sections (I. i am born, II. the stories of south carolina run like rivers, III. followed the sky's mirrored constellation to freedom, IV. deep in my heart, I do believe, V. ready to change the world). Choose three poems, each from a different section, that speak to you. Think about how these poems are connected. They might share a theme, a particular motif, a structure, a poetic device such as simile, metaphor, analogy, etc., a point of view, or something else.

Then, in approximately 400 words, describe the connection the three poems share and make an argument about how that connection influences the way a reader understands the poems.

2. Read *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* (ISBN 978-0-316-01369-7) by Sherman Alexie. **As you read, annotate (mark up) the book**, noting the ways that Junior/Arnold interacts with the other characters in the book. Despite his differences with them, how does Junior/Arnold find connection and community? What traits does Junior/Arnold value in others? What traits push him away?

3. **Answer one of the two following essay prompts in approximately 600 words.**

Choice 1: In the novel, Arnold/Junior is torn between two lives: the reservation life he knows and the outside world he thinks he might want to be a part of. His friends at home call him “an apple” because he is “red on the outside and white on the inside” (132), and he seems to believe there is some mismatch between how he looks and how he is expected to act.

Using the drawing of Arnold/Junior with a line down the middle of his body and labeled with “Indian” and “White” characteristics as a model, think about two or more identities make up who you are. Then, in a well-developed essay, explain the differences between the identities and explain how these identities synchronize or clash. How do these identities affect decision making, such as deciding what is right and what is wrong?

-OR-

Choice 2: After reading the chapter “How to Fight Off Monsters,” identify the “unofficial and unwritten rules” that Arnold/Junior follows both at home and at school. Think about what unwritten rules you are expected to follow in your life.

Then, write a well-developed essay outlining the rules that Arnold/Junior faces and comparing them to the rules in your own life.

Each of these assignments is due at the beginning of the second day of class. Your work should be typed and formatted according to the [Jesuit Style Guide \(linked here\)](#) with a proper heading, margin size, double-spacing, and proofreading for spelling and grammar. You may submit both responses in a single document or in separate documents, whichever you prefer. Do not expect to use class time for writing or printing; everything needs to be completed outside of class.

I will ask a lot of you in English 1XL. You will learn to read more deeply, to consider not just a text’s plot or characters but its construction, message, and effectiveness. You will be called upon to contribute to class every day through discussion, writing, reflection, and community-building, and you can expect to grow tremendously as a thinker and writer. As your companion and guide, I will encourage you, challenge you, support you, and help you reflect, but this journey is yours.

Enjoy your summers, and I’ll see you in August!

-JG

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