

Summer 2009 Writing Assignment for AP English 11

Based on your reading of *When I Was Puerto Rican* by Esmeralda Santiago, *Mao's Last Dancer* by Li Cunxin, and *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain, complete the following writing assignment:

Introduction

Before you read and as you read, think about your identity (as a son, daughter, black, white, Latino, Asian, Catholic, Protestant, Jew, Muslim, young adult, athlete, student, artist, male, female, American etc.) and what makes you who you are. How do you define yourself? How do categories like the ones listed define who you are? What influences your identity?

Likewise, even though *Huckleberry Finn* is the only fictional narrative of the three, both *Mao's Last Dancer* and *When I Was Puerto Rican* also present a story. In all three, the main character's identity is one issue that develops as the narrative unfolds.

Assignment:

Your task is to write an essay in which you present some possible understandings about identity that can be gleaned from each book. What common threads can you identify between the books about each character's quest for identity? It will be impossible to address everything, **so you will want to limit yourself to a narrower topic such as the effects of changing homes on identity or identity and ethical choices.** Your own reading of the books and personal interests can determine how you narrow the topic. Think about the literal and symbolic journeys each protagonist takes. What does each author convey about identity? How?

The trick is that you want your essay to be unified rather than three separate essays. Avoid merely summarizing each book. That means finding an angle on the issue of identity from which you can incorporate ideas derived from each work. **Your** thoughts about identity and the formation of it should be central, and the texts should provide materials for the development of your thoughts on the topic you have narrowed.

Objectives

The objective of the assignment is **not** simply to show your knowledge of the plot of each story. Rather, the objectives are to show that a) you can select and discuss details relevant to an issue and b) you can make connections among literary works. In other words, this is an assessment of your thinking and writing in addition to an assessment of your reading.

Standards and Assessment

Your work should be typewritten, double-spaced, and 1000-1500 words. Make sure to put your name, the course name, the date, and an informative title at the top of your paper. Attribute direct citations (quotations) and indirect citations (paraphrases) by putting the author's last name and page number in parentheses.

Your work will be assessed in terms of its development of a thesis, insight into the works, and use of evidence. Additionally, you should demonstrate a mature use of language and mastery of Standard English conventions. **See the rubric on the reverse side.** Your grade on this

assignment will be included as an essay grade for the first quarter. Also, plan to participate in discussion and presentations on these books in the first weeks of class.

DUE August 14, 2008 as an email attachment to mkeane@shschools.com, or by delivering or mailing a printed copy to Ms. Keane, South Hadley High School, 153 Newton Street, South Hadley, MA 01075. **Keep a backup copy for yourself. If you email, please put your name and “Summer Reading” in the subject line.**

Name _____

AP English 11

Assessment for Summer Writing

	advanced	proficient	developing	inadequate
Presents and develops a coherent and thoughtful perspective on the issue of identity.				
Shows insight into the works of literature.				
Provides relevant and sufficient details to support your claims.				
Explains supporting details in relation to the work of literature and the overall development of your essay.				
Use of language (sentence clarity and variety; precise and appropriate vocabulary)				
Demonstrates mastery of Standard English conventions, including citations.				
Typewritten and 1000-1500 words; on time.				

Grade:

Comments:

