



HERRON
HIGH SCHOOL

One Book. One School. One Summer.
Herron High School - 2011 English Department Summer Reading
The Color of Water by James McBride

Due for all Grade Levels: The first day of class, the week of August 16th

One Book.

This summer, the entire Herron community, including students, faculty, staff, and administration will be reading the same book, an acclaimed non-fiction memoir titled *The Color of Water* by James McBride. Subtitled "A Black Man's Tribute to His White Mother," it is praised as a modern classic that "evokes a childhood trek across the great racial divide with the kind of power and grace that touches and uplifts all hearts." We are excited for the rich conversations and class activities that will result from the shared experience of reading this remarkable text.

Students in advanced level English courses may be required to read additional texts or complete supplement assignments; this information is available on the subsequent pages of this document.

Why summer reading?

High schools with high academic expectations encourage and promote year-round learning and the reinforcement and strengthening of reading and writing skills by providing summer reading selections. As a classical, liberal arts high school that is preparing students for entrance into college, Herron High School recognizes the value in and importance of summer reading as a means of not only improving reading and writing skills, but also as a way of helping to prepare students for standardized assessments such as the SAT, ACT, ISTEP/ECA, and AP exams.

What do I do?

Students are provided a basic reading guide to assist their note-taking during reading. We encourage students to keep notes in a journal or notebook while they read; you will be able to use these notes on an assessment over the book in the fall.

How do I obtain a book?

Students have been provided a copy of *The Color of Water* in the last week of the 2010-2011 school year. Any other book required for summer reading can be obtained at the library, a book store such as Half-Priced Books, or through an online book seller such as www.amazon.com. Students may be asked to bring the books to class in the first weeks of school for discussion as activities.

Why these selections?

Herron High School's English department is dedicated to following the Art History Timeline through literature. During the four years students spend at Herron, they will explore classic texts from many cultures through the ages. Additionally, the English curriculum includes modern texts that connect to classic themes and are examples of "great" contemporary literature.

Originality and Plagiarism

All work is expected to be original and the student's own. Students who rely on information from online sources such as www.sparknotes.com or who are found to have used content from internet or other outside sources without giving credit to those sources risk failure on the assignment and additional disciplinary consequences.

Questions?

Contact your instructor or call (317) 232-0010 if you have any questions about summer reading.

English 9: kdorsey@herronhighschool.org; kbasile@herronhighschool.org; kisgar@herronhighschool.org

English 10: kcarver@herronhighschool.org; ashaw@herronhighschool.org; kisgar@herronhighschool.org

English 11: kbasile@herronhighschool.org; ashaw@herronhighschool.org

English12: dpappas@herronhighschool.org

Additional Summer Reading Requirements for Advanced-Level Courses

**9th Grade Honors English: kbasile@herronhighschool.org

Any student who is interested in taking English 9 for honors credit should complete the following assignment by the first day of school as part of your application. Students will be placed in Honors in the first weeks of school.

- Write a 300 – 500 word personal essay response to *The Color of Water*. Analyze a theme or literary element that you find interesting. Organize your essay in paragraphs, and try to avoid summarizing the text.
- Type and print your essay if at all possible.

**10th Grade Pre-Advanced Placement (PreAP): kisgar@herronhighschool.org

By the start of school on August 16, 2011, the following books should be read. There will be separate in-class assignments on each book, so be sure to be prepared. You are encouraged to take notes on each book. Hand-written notes will be allowed during testing on books. Computer generated notes will not be allowed unless necessary due to disability.

All Students:

***The Color of Water* - James McBride**

And EITHER

***Life of Pi* - Yann Martel**

OR

***Red Badge of Courage* - Stephen Baldwin**

**11th Grade Advanced Placement Language and Composition (APLAC): kcarver@herronhighschool.org

By the start of school on August 16, 2011, the following books should be read. There will be separate assignments on each book, so be sure to be prepared.

***The Color of Water* - James McBride**

You will have a test over *The Color of Water* on the first day of class, be ready!

***Frankenstein* - Mary Shelley**

***Grendel* -John Gardner**

Complete a 300-word blog posting for each of these books due date Friday, August 12th at midnight. There will be several topics for each book to guide your posting. Once all blogs are posted on the 12th, log back in and write a 100-word reply to a posting by a fellow classmate. In your reply you should only write about your thoughts on the topic upon which they wrote--agreeing or disagreeing with their argument. All replies are due by August 16th, 9am, when classes begin at Herron. Blogging instructions available at the APLAC website, www.myhaikuclass.com/kcarver/english11aplanguge

**12th Grade Advanced Placement Literature and Composition: kdorsey@herronhighschool.org

By the start of school on August 16, 2011, the following books should be read. In a college-level literature course, it is helpful if you take detailed reading notes or use post-its or highlighting/underlining and margin notes to annotate important sections of the text in preparation for classroom discussion.

***The Color of Water* by James McBride**

***The Great Gatsby* by F.Scott Fitzgerald**

***A Doll's House* (sometimes titled *A Doll House*) by Henrik Ibsen (a play)**

AP LIT Response Paper

After a careful reading of all three texts, students will write a response paper that meets the following guidelines.

- Write a 400-600 word essay that explores a common theme or element within all texts. Choose a topic that interests you and that you'd like the class to talk about in the fall.
- Analyze the unique and specific ways your topic influences the meanings of the works as a whole. Your paper may focus on one or more elements of literary style and technique, storytelling elements such as plot construction, conflict and resolution, the role of setting, character development, symbolism, etc.
- Use quotations from all three texts in your paper.
- Focus your paper on analysis, not summary. Assume that your audience has read the novels.
- Follow standard MLA format, including in-text citation for quotations.
(<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/557/01/> is a great reference on MLA)
- Please type and print your paper. The paper is due on the first day of class in August.

Name: _____ PD _____

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***The Color of Water* Reading Guide**

The following questions will help guide your reading and prepare you for class discussion and assessment in the fall. You are encouraged to keep reading notes in a journal or notebook; you will be able to use these notes on tests in the fall. You will NOT be able to use notes from any outside source on school assessments.

1. *Dead*

Ruth says, "Rachel Shilsky is dead as far as I'm concerned. She had to die in order for me, the rest of me, to live" (2). What does she mean?

2. *The Bicycle*

How does McBride perceive his mother when he is a young boy?

3. *Kosher*

Describe Ruth's family life when she was a child. How did she react to this lifestyle?

4. *Black Power*

McBride describes the effect black power has on his neighborhood, and he suggests his appreciation for aspects of it, but he has fears for his mother in relation to this movement. Why is he afraid for his mother?

5. *The Old Testament*

How would you characterize the life Ruth has with her family in Suffolk?

6. *The New Testament*

When McBride asks his mother about the color of God, she says "God is the color of water. Water doesn't have a color" (51). What does this mean? How does it guide Ruth's life?

7. *Sam*

What experience does Ruth have with the KKK?

8. *Brothers and Sisters*

Describe the relationship between McBride and his siblings.

9. *Shul*

What is the difference between the "Jewish school" and the "white school"?

10. *School*

In this chapter, McBride describes himself and suggests, "Yet I myself had no idea who I was" (91). Why doesn't he know who he is?

11. *Boys*

With whom does Ruth first fall in love? How would the people of Suffolk have reacted to this relationship with Peter if they had discovered it?

12. *Daddy*

How does McBride feel about his stepfather? What is his stepfather like?

13. New York

What happens in New York when Ruth goes there?

14. Chicken Man

How does McBride react to his stepfather's death?

15. Graduation

Describe Ruth's graduation from high school and her feelings about leaving Suffolk.

16. Driving

How does Ruth feel about driving? What distinction is there between Rachel and Ruth in terms of driving?

17. Lost in Harlem

What role does Andrew McBride (Dennis) play in Ruth's life?

18. Lost in Delaware

How is Wilmington different from New York, and how does that influence McBride's family?

19. The Promise

Describe Dennis' family.

20. Old Man Shilsky

What did McBride and his friends think would happen to racism when they graduated from college? What really happened?

21. A Bird Who Flies

Describe Ruth's departure from Suffolk.

22. A Jew Discovered

Who is Aubrey Rubenstein, and what does McBride learn from him?

23. Dennis

What effect does Dennis have on Ruth's life?

24. New Brown

Describe the 40th-anniversary gala of the New Brown Memorial Baptist Church.

25. Finding Ruthie

Describing the variety of people in his family, McBride says his mother "created her own nation" (277). What does he mean?

Epilogue

Who is David Lee Preston, and what role does he play in McBride's life?

Afterword

What does McBride say about love?