

**Summer 2011 Reading and Writing Assignment
for all incoming Freshmen**

1. Read *A Painted House* by John Grisham (V)

Summary by Internet Book List:

“Until that September of 1952, Luke Chandler had never kept a secret or told a single lie. But in the long, hot summer of his seventh year, two groups of migrant workers - and two very dangerous men - came through the Arkansas Delta to work the Chandler cotton farm. And suddenly the mysteries are flooding Luke's world. A brutal murder leaves the town seething in gossip and suspicion. A beautiful young woman ignites forbidden passions. A fatherless baby is born...and someone has begun furtively painting the bare clapboards of the Chandler farmhouse, slowly, painstakingly, bathing the run-down structure in gleaming white. And as young Luke watches the world around him, he unravels secrets that could shatter lives - and change his family and his town forever...”

2. Read one book from the following list. Choose a book you have not read before. The books on this list vary in genre, length, and reading difficulty: choose wisely! Be forewarned that some books include sensitive content that may be offensive to some readers. Consider the codes and get permission from your parents if you have any doubts about the propriety of a book. If you have read all of these books, email rpults@lexingtoncatholic.com to get another option.

Clay's Quilt by Silas House (320 pages) (V)

Summary by Internet Book List:

“This is the story of how Clay [Sizemore], a coal miner in love with his hometown but unsure of his place within it, finds the family he's been seeking. And it's the story of the people who become part of the life he shapes: from his religious Aunt Easter to Uncle Paul, the skilled quilter who teaches Clay that you can make a beautiful thing out of bits and pieces. At the heart of it all is Alma, the fiddler whose song and quiet spirit wend their way into Clay's heart, saving him just as he approaches the brink of despair. Together, they help Clay to fashion a life from what treasured pieces are around him and to see the family that has been right beside him all along.”

A Separate Peace by John Knowles (204 pages) (L)

Summary by Internet Book List:

“Set at a boys' boarding school in New England during the early years of World War II, *A Separate Peace* is a harrowing and luminous parable of the dark side of adolescence. Gene is a lonely, introverted intellectual. Phineas is a handsome, taunting, daredevil athlete. What happens between the two friends one summer, like the war itself, banishes the innocence of these boys and their world.”

Night AND Dawn by Elie Wiesel (126 + 96 pages) (V)

Summary of *Night* by Internet Book List:

“A terrifying account of the Nazi death camp horror that turns a young Jewish boy into an agonized witness to the death of his family...the death of his innocence...and the death of his God. Penetrating and powerful, as personal as *The Diary Of Anne Frank*, *Night* awakens the shocking memory of evil at its absolute and carries with it the unforgettable message that this horror must never be allowed to happen again.”

Summary of *Dawn* by Internet Book List:

“Two men wait through the night in British-controlled Palestine for dawn—and for death. One is a captured English officer. The other is Elisha, a young Israeli freedom fighter whose assignment is to kill the officer in reprisal for Britain's execution of a Jewish prisoner. Elisha's past is the nightmare memory of Nazi death camps. He is the only surviving member of his family. His future is a cherished dream of life in the promised homeland. But at daybreak his present will become the tortured reality of a principled man ordered to commit cold-blooded murder.”

Jane Eyre by Charlotte Brontë (352 pages)

Summary by Internet Book List:

“Orphaned at an early age, Jane Eyre leads a lonely life until she finds work as a governess at Thornfield Hall, where she meets the mysterious Mr. Rochester and sees a ghostly woman who roams the halls by night. This is a story of passionate love, travail and final triumph. The relationship between the heroine and Mr. Rochester is only one episode, albeit the most important, in a detailed fictional autobiography.... In this work the plucky heroine is outwardly of plain appearance, but possesses an indomitable spirit, a sharp wit and great courage. She is forced to battle against the exigencies of a cruel guardian, a harsh employer and a rigid social order which circumscribes her life and position.

The Lovely Bones by Alice Sebold (368 pages) (S)

Summary by Internet Book List:

”In the sweet, untroubled voice of a precocious teenage girl, Susie relates the awful events of her death, and her own adjustment to the strange new place she finds herself. With love, longing, and a growing understanding, Susie watches her family as they cope with their grief--her father embarks on a search for the killer, her sister undertakes a feat of amazing daring, her little brother builds a fort in her honor--and begin the difficult process of healing.”

To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee (336 pages) (L)

Summary by Internet Book List:

“Lawyer Atticus Finch defends the real mockingbird of Harper Lee's classic, Pulitzer Prize-winning novel—a black man charged with the rape of a white woman. Through the eyes of Atticus's children, Scout and Jem Finch, Harper Lee explores with rich humor and unanswering honesty the irrationality of adult attitudes toward race and class in the Deep South of the 1930's.”

The Secret Life of Bees by Sue Monk Kidd (336 pages)

Summary by Internet Book List:

“Set in South Carolina in 1964, *The Secret Life of Bees* tells the story of Lily Owens, whose life has been shaped around the blurred memory of the afternoon her mother was killed. When Lily's fierce-hearted "stand-in mother," Rosaleen, insults three of the town's fiercest racists, Lily decides they should both escape to Tiburon, South Carolina--a town that holds the secret to her mother's past. There they are taken in by an eccentric trio of black beekeeping sisters who introduce Lily to a mesmerizing world of bees, honey, and the Black Madonna who presides over their household.”

L= Strong Language

V= Violent content

S= Sexual content

3. Write a one-page response paper. Both books you read are “coming of age” stories in which the main character changes and grows throughout the story. Which character do you relate to? How are you alike? If you don’t relate to either protagonist, write about how you differ from them? Please follow the conventions for formal writing, although it is appropriate to use first-person pronouns for this assignment. Type your final draft, according to MLA guidelines for paper format, and bring the paper with you to your first day of class.