

Summer Reading Assignment  
11<sup>th</sup> Grade College Prep American Literature

Why do we have a summer reading assignment?

The key to being a great reader is to read extensively, and the key to being a great writer is exposure to great writing. Reading is not something we want you to do just during the school year; life-long learners are also life-long readers. Research clearly shows that students who do not read over the summer can lose up to three months of reading progress, and that loss has a cumulative, long-term effect. Further, summer provides time to enjoy uninterrupted reading and allows students to digest ideas prior to discussing and interpreting ideas in class.

The Novel

*Solo by Kwame Alexander*

The Assignment

Read and Annotate the novel- you must have a minimum of one annotation per page of the book.

How will I be graded on this assignment?

-Your novel will be checked for annotation, but the bigger assessment will be your contributions to discussion and other activities in class. Annotating the text will help you reference big ideas and significant moments more effectively and efficiently. (During discussion, reference to specific passages or quotations is required in order to support your ideas)

When is the assignment due?

The novel and annotations and open ended questions should be completed by the first day of school. There will be additional class assignments that connect to *Solo* and your annotations.

**Annotating Text**

As you are reading, you should also annotate the text in your book. Annotating the text is a powerful strategy to comprehend literature; it will not only help you actively read, it will also aid in your discussion participation and literary analysis skills.

ANNOTATION GUIDE

Inside front cover: Keep a character list with a small space for character summary and page references for key scenes, moments of character development, etc.

Inside back cover: Make note of your thoughts about themes, allusions, imagery, motifs, key scenes, etc. List page numbers/references as you read.

Chapter titles: What do the chapter titles mean in regards to the content following them? Do they help you as the reader gain insight? What would you title the chapter if you could?

Underline: As you read, underline or highlight anything that strikes you as memorable or significant. When you mark something in the text, you should also write something in the margin to remind yourself why you marked it in the first place.

What makes a moment significant?

That's up to you as a reader/interpreter/thinker. If you are stuck, consider moments that:

- reveal a truth about a character, the theme of the novel, or life in general.
- indicate a major change in the character, tone, plot, etc.
- demonstrate the writer's craft (consider major literary devices).
- strike a chord in you or grab your attention, for whatever reason.

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Circle Vocabulary: Circle words that are unfamiliar to you or that strike you as unusual. Look up words that seem essential to an understanding of the meaning or the sense of the author.

Questions: Actively engage the text by writing at least 15 open-ended questions for the book that address the major themes and events. These questions should ask *Why?* or start with the words *Describe*, *Explain*, *Discuss*, *Apply*. Also, any question that pops up in your head as you read, write it in the margins.

**Final Thoughts on Annotation:**

THINK CRITICALLY ABOUT WHAT YOU ARE READING. While the amount of annotation may vary widely from page to page, any **thoughtful notes** you add to a text will help you to read more critically—so, any **thoughtful attempt** to annotate your book will help you to understand the reading.

RECAP:

- You should have annotations inside the front/back cover and for each chapter of the novel, although the amount of annotation will vary. You should have at least one annotation on every page of the book.
- You should come to class on the first day of school with 15 typed open-ended discussion questions based on the themes and major events in the book.