

AP Seminar Summer Assignment: *Outliers*

Your summer reading assignment has four components:

1. Reading/annotating the text
2. Application of Diction
3. Argumentative Essay
4. Socratic Discussion

You will be reading the nonfiction text, *Outliers* by Malcolm Gladwell

(Available at local booksellers (i.e. Barnes and Noble, Amazon), as well as the public and school libraries.)

****What is an outlier?:** Outlier is a scientific term to describe things or phenomena that lie outside normal experience. In the summer, in Paris, we expect most days to be somewhere between warm and very hot. But imagine if you had a day in the middle of August where the temperature fell below freezing. That day would be outlier. And while we have a very good understanding of why summer days in Paris are warm or hot, we know a good deal less about why a summer day in Paris might be freezing cold. In this book I'm interested in people who are outliers--in men and women who, for one reason or another, are so accomplished and so extraordinary and so outside of ordinary experience that they are as puzzling to the rest of us as a cold day in August.

-Malcolm Gladwell

THE ASSIGNMENT:

Do a close reading of the text. A close reading means to keep a pencil or pen in your hand as you read and make notes in the margins, underline confusing and/or favorite passages, highlight interesting information, and comment on significant language. You will receive a grade for annotating every chapter. Use Post-It notes if you'd prefer not to write in the book (especially if it's a library book!) Thorough annotations are expected, and they will be checked the second day of class!! Annotations can be written in the book, on Post-It Notes stuck on pages, or on separate paper labeled with page numbers that correspond to the book.

1. Read and annotate the text. As you read, concentrate on Gladwell's unique definition of success. Notice how he uniquely defines and presents this abstract concept through his creative chapter titles, research, personal stories, and observations. You'll be surprised about how much you will learn from this original perspective on success.

2. Use the attached questions to guide you through the entire novel and be prepared to discuss each question in a Socratic forum. You will need to come to the seminar on the second day of class with your answers typed out for the questions for discussion. Your responses must be original, meaning in your own words.

3. Top 20 Vocabulary Words (This will be due the second day of class.)--Select twenty examples of interesting diction from the text. For each word: a. Write the sentence, complete with page number citation. b. Define the word. Some words have multiple definitions. Be sure to write down the definition that applies to the sentence that you have selected. c. Analyze the use of this word in the context of the text. Why was that specific word chosen over its near synonyms? What effect does that word choice have? d. Use this word in your own sentence.

4. Be prepared to write an argumentative essay Your essay will be used to assess your writing and ability to synthesize reading material. We will write this the first week of class.

If you have questions or concerns with the assignment, please e-mail me at matthew.mcbride@cobbk12.org

Have a good summer.

GUIDED READING QUESTIONS

Introduction

1. What is the Roseto Mystery? What overarching idea is Gladwell establishing in his introduction?

Chapter 1 "The Matthew Effect"

2. Explain the author's viewpoint regarding "The Story of Success". Are personal qualities the sole reason one becomes an outlier?
3. 3. What is the consequence of "prematurely writing people off as failures"?

Chapter Two "The 10,000-Hour Rule":

4. Explain the 10,000-Hour Rule.
5. Consider the following: "Practice isn't the thing you do once you're good. It's the thing you do that makes you good." Explain how this philosophy was at work for Bill Joy, The Beatles, and Bill Gates.

Chapter Three "The Trouble with Geniuses, Part 1":

6. Describe the difference between 'divergence testing' and 'convergence testing'. Is one more significant than the other?
7. Gladwell states that communities and companies in American society "are convinced that those at the very top of the IQ scale have the greatest potential." After reading the chapter, explain why you either agree or disagree with this statement.

Chapter Four "The Trouble with Geniuses, Part 2":

8. Compare and contrast Langan and Oppenheimer.
9. What is the difference between "concerted cultivation" and "accomplishment of natural growth"?

Chapter Five "The Three Lessons of Joe Flom"

10. Explain Gladwell's statement as it relates to Joe Flom: "Buried in that setback was a golden opportunity."
11. 11. Consider the following quote: "Hard work is a prison sentence only if it does not have meaning." Explain how this quote relates to the chapter.

Chapter Six ""Harlan, Kentucky":

12. Describe the "culture of honor" that exists in the Appalachian Mountains.
13. What are the "cultural legacies" as described in this chapter? Why are they significant to understand when dealing with people?

Chapter Seven "The Ethnic Theory of Plane Crashes"

14. Describe the significance of the "willingness to change" as it relates to Korean Air.
15. What is Gladwell explaining about the importance of communication?

Chapter Eight "Rice Paddies and Math Tests":

16. After reading this section of the book, have your opinions changed about math classes and math ability? Explain why or why not.

17. Describe the connection between the "10,000-Hour Rule" and the wet-rice farmers in Asia.

Chapter Nine "Marita's Bargain":

18. Describe the significance of summer vacation as it relates to different groups of students. Why is this significant?

19. Gladwell states "success follows a predictable course." How does this quote apply to Marita? How does this apply to you?

Epilogue "A Jamaican Story":

20. What does Gladwell mean when he states, "The outlier in the end is not an outlier at all."

21. Explain what Gladwell means when he states, "That is the story of my mother's path to success - and it isn't true."