



# Senior Honors Class

## Summer Reading, 2020-21

### Poplar Campus

Dear Future Seniors Honors Class and Parents of The City School,

I hope you have a wonderful and restful summer break. Included in this letter is your summer reading assignment for the upcoming 2020-2021 school year. The purpose of this assignment is to keep your mind sharp, prepare you for the upcoming school year, and to be a source of enjoyment for you! When we allow them to, books have the power to transport us to other worlds, worlds which satisfy our desire to be entertained and teach us truths about the world God has given us.

### **Assignment #1**

Read *The Great Gatsby*, F. Scott Fitzgerald's excellent novel of America in the 1920s, what Fitzgerald called The Jazz Age. The full text is available as a PDF or on Project Gutenberg's website; Googling *The Great Gatsby* PDF will lead you to where you want to go. Of course, you can order a print version used; I recommend the print version, though on-line is an option too. We'll talk about the ending specifically in class as it is one of the best endings to a novel you can read.

In this novel, the main characters -- Nick, Jay Gatsby, Tom Buchanan, Daisy Buchanan, and Myrtle Wilson -- can be understood to represent different groups of people, or in the case of Daisy, a particular thing everyone needs, in the United States in the 20s. When you are finished reading the text, please write at least 2 paragraphs for each character surmising what group you think each character represents. Think broadly, and as you read, pay attention to how the characters are described and what they say. This will be due on the first day of school.

### **Assignment #2**

Read *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature*, by Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, the Kenyan author whose short novel *Weep Not, Child* we will this year read. *Decolonising the Mind* is Ngũgĩ's non-fiction defense of his decision to not use English in any of his writings. Miraculously, it is available in full-text at this URL:

<https://www.uibk.ac.at/anglistik/staff/davis/decolonising-the-mind.pdf> You may also order the print version if you wish; again this is the most recommended. Honestly, I haven't read this yet, so I'm not sure what to expect, but I expect it will challenge us, myself specifically as a high school English teacher. As you read, take notes to be turned in on the first day of school.

### **Assignment #3**

Choose one of the following authors from the modern era, and do two things: find out what they believed about people in their era, and what might have caused them to believe in those ways. This is meant to be research, but discovering what they believed about others will probably mean some conjecture on your part, so the assignment is not purely formal. Do list your sources though.

- Gwendolyn Brooks, American poet who began writing in the 40s. Her poetry impacted the work of many writers who followed her.
- Ralph Ellison, well-known author of *Flying Home* and *Invisible Man*.
- James Joyce, Irish author of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, *Dubliners*, and the incomparable *Finnegan's Wake*. We'll read his *Portrait* in class this year.
- Chinua Achebe, well-regarded Nigerian author of *A Man of the People* and *Things Fall Apart*. Went on to be a college professor.
- Virginia Woolf, writer and essayist and feminist from England. Her *Room of One's Own* will be read later this year.
- Pablo Neruda, Chilean poet who wrote *The Heights of Macchu Picchu*, amongst many other works and was a Chilean diplomat.

Be prepared, on the first day of school, to give an 8 minute or more presentation on your findings about your author. Quoting some of their work would be a good idea. Do your best, and be detailed in your work. The format of your presentation is up to you – it can be just lecture, a Powerpoint type of presentation, or a poster board. Just be prepared.

Feel free to contact me over the summer if need be; [rlindberg@cityschool.org](mailto:rlindberg@cityschool.org) is the place to go.