

## English II Honors Summer Reading 2020

Congratulations on your acceptance into the English II-Honors program! Use this summer to relax and energize yourself before your sophomore year.

We've created a few assignments to help us determine the reading and writing skills that you already have and those that we will need to continue to develop over the course of the next school year. We will complete these assignments soon after school commences in September. These texts will also be used throughout the year for additional assignments and tasks associated with our units of study. In preparation for those tasks, please read all of the books listed below prior to the opening of school.

### READ:

1. *The Crucible* -Arthur Miller
2. *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*- Frederick Douglass
3. *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* - Mark Twain

Please be aware that some of these texts, while important works of literature, contain disturbing and inflammatory language, which should be understood in the context of their time period. You are expected to use these novels and their resources as they are intended: with respect and humility in the interest of understanding.

### WRITE:

Keep an informal Reading Log for each of the pieces. Include notes that go beyond plot summary and character lists. Focus on how the author develops meaning in the work, including their purpose, key themes, and dynamic characterization. If you are unsure of how to structure this, we've provided a model below. Your reading logs will be a valuable resource for you once the course work begins in September.

As you read, have a conversation with the author. More than simply read these works, you'll want to study them; as you're reading, ask yourself, *What are these authors trying to say, and how are they saying it?*

### IN ADDITION:

Be prepared to be formally (quizzes, reading logs, forums, essays) and informally (class discussions) assessed upon returning to school according to your individual teacher's designs. Your reading logs will be an integral way to prepare for these assessments!

Happy reading and enjoy the summer,

The English II Honors Teachers

**Sample Student Reading Log**  
 from *An Absolutely Remarkable Thing* by Hank Green

Criteria	Textual Evidence	Response
Characterization	<p>“More than worried, honestly, I think deep down I was terrified. At some point that night, I glimpsed my most probable future. That one day, the most interesting and important thing about me would be a thing that I did a long time ago. That I would go on with my life doing boring UX design and people would say, ‘Oh! You were April May!’ to me at parties and job interviews, as if I was once something but not anymore” (Green 71).</p> <p>“This hit me pretty hard. I mean, not that there was a subreddit, just the realization that I was behind. I had been ahead of the game for so long. The fact that the world knew things that I hadn’t figured out . . . that I should have figured out!” (Green 139-140).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● After gaining tremendous fame from her involvement with the Carls, April’s greatest fear is that her fame will one day disappear. Before the Carls appeared, April was deeply unsatisfied with her everyday, average life and job. Now that she has experienced the glamorous life and euphoria associated with fame, April’s previously ordinary life becomes even more unattractive.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ April is reluctant to lose her newfound power and devoted fans and is terrified of once again becoming an ordinary person who means nothing to the majority of people. This motivates her to continue to maintain her social media presence despite the negative impacts of fame on her personal health.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Her explicit mention of her own fear in this text also opens a door to one of her important inner conflicts. At the beginning of the book, April regards herself as a nobody and has no interest in gaining fame. With the discovery of Carls, she is shot up to the top and has a steady source of income as well as a lot of following. Internally she fights to try and understand what exactly fame is like and how she should be handling it. This is seen through her mention of being “ahead of the game” followed by her sadness when she “was behind.”</li> </ul>
Author’s Purpose	<p>“The power of the whole thing flooded into me...It was candy, Christmas morning, and a first kiss all rolled into one” (Green 78).</p> <p>“I’ve had the opportunity to do more thinking about fame than most people, but fame isn’t some monolithic thing; it isn’t the same for the local weatherman as it is for Angelina Jolie. So let’s talk a little about April May’s theory of tiered fame” (121).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Green uses a metaphor to illustrate the appeal of fame and power to April. Candy, Christmas morning, and a first kiss all stir positive feelings in individuals. Candy has a sweet, delicious taste. Christmas morning promises presents and joy. A first kiss imbues a person with an affectionate desire that feels fresh, new, and exciting.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Since power is related to items that create happiness in this metaphor, Green communicates that April’s newfound fame extends her enjoyment of life. April is thus compelled to increase her power and fame in order to experience more of these positive emotions and feel greater happiness.</li> <li>○ Additionally, since the items being compared to power only provide short-term joy, this may imply that the happiness April experiences because of her fame will not last forever.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Throughout, Green focuses on the various aspects of fame through the thoughts of April. He talks about the pros and cons of fame and the way it makes a person feel motivated, but isolated from others.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Due to his extensive focus on April’s experiences, it is safe to assume that Hank’s purpose in writing the book is to explain his own perceptions of fame to the reader. He further elaborates on the trials and tribulations of fame in the life of an individual. Perhaps, he is using April to explore his own experiences as an author.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

**Sample Student Reading Log**  
 from *An Absolutely Remarkable Thing* by Hank Green

<p>Theme</p>	<p>“Becoming involved with something like this . . . it’s going to completely take over. People will hate you for no reason, or for bad reasons, or even for good reasons. People are torn apart by fame, and this is far beyond what most of them deal with. You’re talking about yourself like you’re a tool, but you’re a person too. And an evolving one. This will affect your life forever” (Green 78-79).</p> <p>“I wasn’t even interacting, I wasn’t learning about my audience, I was just watching it grow” (Green 105).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● One prevalent theme in this novel is that the attention of many is ultimately less valuable than the relationships individuals have with the few people closest to them.           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ While April may now have millions of fans who send her positive messages and demonstrate unwavering support for her, they only appear to her as words and numbers on a screen. The great number of fans and the detached nature of communication via social media make it impossible for April to form a lasting, meaningful relationship with her followers.</li> <li>○ The level of April’s fans’ admiration for her can only be truthfully conveyed through the overall number of likes, comments, and follows. Therefore, these metrics become April’s method of determining her popularity, and they are what attract her to social media and prompt her to continue pursuing greater power.</li> <li>○ Since April’s interaction with her fans is reduced to a “brand” typing messages to a seemingly inhuman collective, her sense of self-worth is reduced to numbers. Over time, this would ultimately translate to a sense of numbness and a disconnection from reality for April.</li> <li>○ This indicates that admiration and love from a few close friends and family members, who view April as a human being with emotions and a personality and demonstrate their regard for her through tangible acts of affection, would be more valuable to April than attention from social media users.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Another prevalent theme in this novel is that humans have a greater capacity for good than for evil. As April states earlier in the novel, while the attack on the Carls murdered hundreds of innocent people and injured thousands more, it was committed by only a few individuals. These few people represented the darkest, vilest parts of humanity but did not represent the entire human race.           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ April’s comment about being proud of being a human references the many people standing outside of her apartment in support of the Carls and the victims of the terrorist attacks. These people are risking their lives to stand together in a demonstration against hate and in support of April’s message despite the possibility of future attacks.</li> <li>○ This display of strength, solidarity, friendship, and hope represents humanity’s capacity for immense good. Since the individuals who participate in this demonstration outnumber the individuals who committed the terrorist attacks, they are a much more accurate representation of the human race as a whole. Hence, April is proud to be a member of a race that conquers evil through a greater capacity for goodness.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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**Additional Thoughts or Questions**

- Why did Hank Green choose a controversial topic to explain the working of fame and modern-day popularity?
- April’s character seems somewhat careless. When the lawyer asks her to lie, she chooses to do so without a second thought. She does not seem to really care about what people think about her. It causes readers not to root for her.
- Is April’s impulsivity supposed to represent us as readers? She seems to hold grudges like a lot of high schoolers do, which makes readers sympathize with her, despite her actions, a bit more. It’s conflicting.
- What did Hank Green try to symbolize when he introduced the concept of the Dream to the reader?