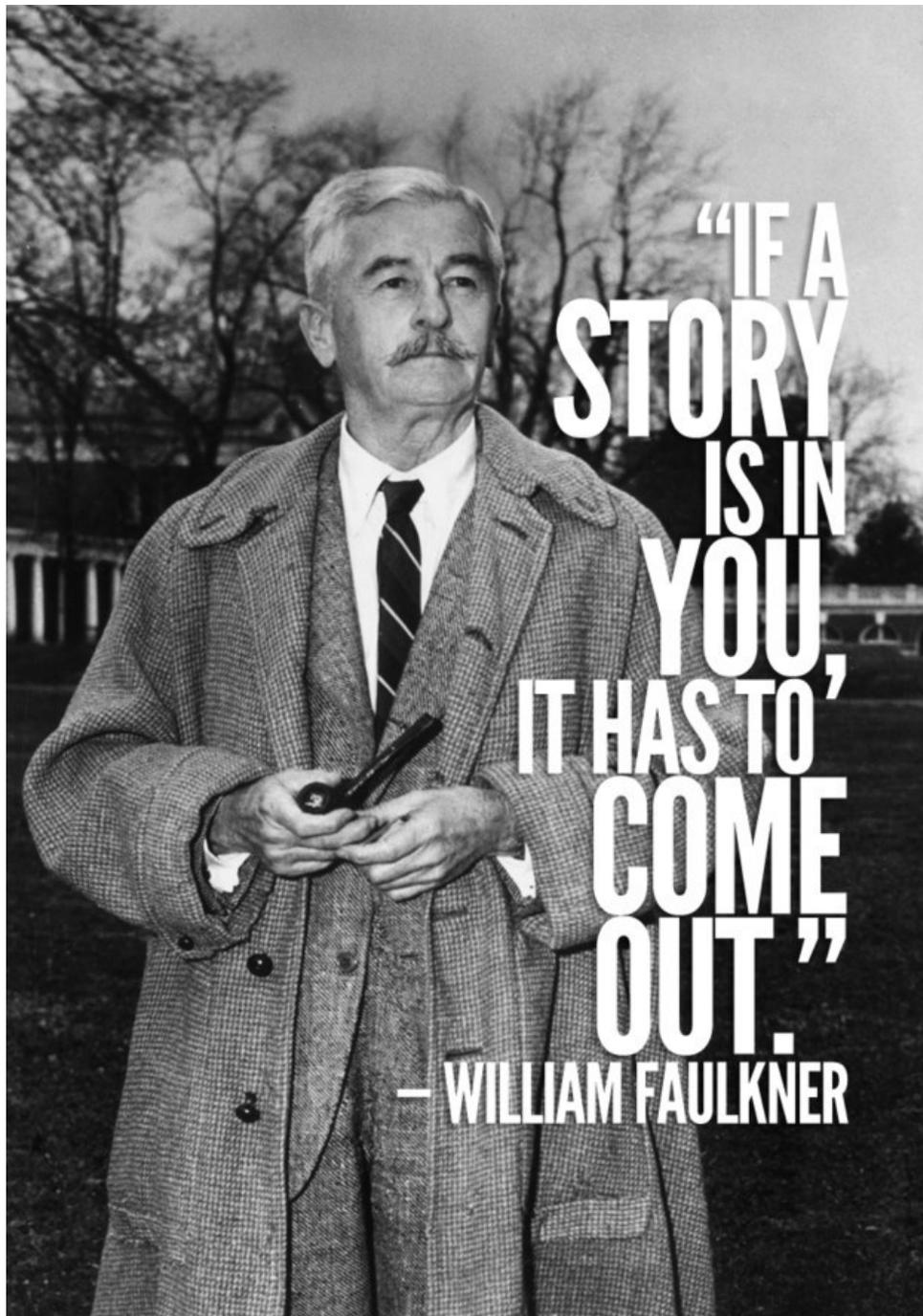


DePaul Cristo Rey High School  
English 1 Summer Reading Project:  
Freshmen, Summer 2017



## General Directions:

This year's summer project for English class is different than others you may have seen before. There are three sections, each of which covers a different **genre** (style or variety) of writing: **memoir**, **persuasive essay**, and **short story**.

For each of these sections of the project, you have two tasks:

- 1) **Read the mentor text**, which is a strong example of high quality writing from this genre. Ask yourself what makes it such a strong example of this genre of writing.
- 2) **Write your own sample** of this genre of writing, following the directions that come after the mentor text. Each writing sample should be between two and five pages written in the composition book provided by DPCR.

High quality writing is usually done over time. What sounds perfectly clear one day might not the next, so revision is always a chance to improve a first (or second...or third...) attempt. The summer is the perfect time for this. Write. Walk away. Read. Write again.

The completed project is due on the first day of class, and will be used in English class this year. Please come to meet us in the fall with your best work, so we're ready to start the year off strong.

Happy writing!

Soon to be your teachers,

Mr. Brennan and Miss Reilly

## Section 1: Memoir

**Mentor text:** "Anticipating the Dream"

*"And we are scatterlings of Africa  
On a journey to the stars  
Far below we leave forever  
Dreams of what we were."  
—Johnny Clegg*

I am sitting with my grandparents in the spectators' section of the echoing auditorium, my baby brother on my lap. I'm not sure what I expected this morning, but thus far it has been an incredibly boring experience. The judge is half an hour late, and to add to that, Graeme, my brother, is tired and fussing, and would evidently much prefer his mother's lap to mine.

Unfortunately for him, my parents and older brother are sitting on the other side of the room with almost 200 others. Thirty-one countries are represented here today.

This is a citizenship ceremony. My parents, my older brother, and I were all born in South Africa. After living in the United States for 13 years, they are finally becoming citizens. I am not yet 18; consequently, I have to wait for my parents to obtain citizenship before I am eligible. All my younger siblings were born here, and are therefore Americans by birth.

Graeme was only momentarily distracted by the book we brought along to amuse him. He is now struggling noisily to climb off my lap. It's time to bring out the secret weapon: candy. I just hope my supply doesn't dwindle too quickly.

In our particular situation, it seems rather odd that the citizenship process works this way. Having lived here since I was two, I have always been more American than anything else. I don't speak Afrikaans, but my parents do (as well as English). I am the one who briefed my mother on American history and government before she took the citizenship test. Not only that, but I am always having to remind my parents that the word is flashlight, not torch, and that here in America we have a tooth fairy, not a mouse, who comes to fetch our teeth. After today, my parents will be Americans, and I will be the unique one, the alien, the only South African remaining in our house. How bureaucratic of the American government to work that way.

The judge has arrived, and now that everyone has stopped talking, Graeme has started to cry. I make a hasty retreat up the slanted aisle to the back of the room. Maybe I can rock him to sleep.

I have often asked my parents why we moved here from our homeland, and from what I've gathered, there are several reasons. Foremost is apartheid, the total segregation of South Africa, whereby whites held all power and blacks were not even allowed to vote. The government established separate buses, bathrooms, even public lawns. My parents, who are by no means radical, were very strongly against apartheid and were arrested for protesting. They were released in the next moment because they were white, while their black friends were hauled off to jail. The atmosphere was growing more volatile every day, and when the building across the street from where my mother worked was bombed, my parents decided that it was no longer safe to stay, especially with two small children. Consequently, my father took advantage of the first opportunity to get a job here in America. It must be incredibly difficult to live in a country that is so immoral, where people are looked down upon simply because their skin happens to be a different shade. How can you pledge allegiance to a government responsible for the obvious evil around you every day? America was segregated at one point also, but at least the government called it "separate but equal." In South Africa, the government did not even attempt to bring about equality. Can anyone take pride in a government like that?

Graeme is finally asleep, drooling on my shoulder, and I can return, victorious, to my seat. The judge has been giving a speech about the privileges and responsibilities that come with being an American citizen. I'm beginning to understand why my parents are so excited about this day. At first I expected nothing of great importance to occur in this ceremony. I imagined we would arrive here, say the Pledge of Allegiance, and my parents would receive a piece of paper declaring them "American citizens." As it turns out, a lot more is involved than the mere title. Today my parents will not only become eligible to vote and serve on jury duty, but they will automatically become part of American history, culture, and society. The United States becomes their country, a land that kindles pride. All of a sudden, they have a duty to serve this country and to be loyal to it above all others. It is a colossal decision for them to make.

South Africa is a beautiful nation. My parents grew up there and have many fond recollections. They remember visiting game preserves and finding lions in the middle of the road. They remember going to school with their friends and tormenting substitute teachers. The different snacks they ate—biltong, Chappie gum, and Bovril—could never be found in the United States. My parents remember getting married in the city of Florida on February 2, 1980. I'm certain it must have been difficult to leave everything, including family, and move to America. Now, at this ceremony, everything is becoming finalized. They will no longer be a part of South Africa, but South Africa will always be a part of them. They have given up the past in anticipation of the future, one filled with hope for greater peace, prosperity, and happiness: the American Dream.

I scan the room, the many different faces of my fellow spectators: grandparents, parents, and children of various races. Anyone can read the pride in their eyes as they watch their loved ones from across the room. I snap to attention. People are rising. This is the moment; they are about to take the oath. Now I have grown just as excited as my parents seemed to be this morning. My mother's smile tells me she is enjoying herself. Right hands raised, the would-be citizens repeat after the judge the words that will change their lives forever. Piles of paperwork and months of waiting are now fulfilled in a few simple words. As the final echoes of the judge's words die out, I hardly hear his congratulations. One fact only is the focus of my thoughts: my parents and another brother are Americans. All my older brothers and my sister are Americans. Soon it will be my turn, and I can hardly wait.

### **Directions for writing your memoir:**

- Create an elaborate, yet concise piece of writing between 2 and 5 pages in length.
- Totally capture a particular memory - not an entire series of events, but a "zoomed in" approach to a particular event.
- Use your sensory details (the 5 senses) to *show* the reader the memory instead of just *telling* about it.
- Give a significance and meaning to the memory chosen. The reader should know why the writer has chosen to write about it.

## **Section 2: Persuasive Essay**

**Mentor text:** "Summer: 15 Days or 2 1/2 Months?"

The final bell rings. It's the last day of school, and summer has finally come! Students don't have to think about school for at least another 2 1/2 months. That is the way it should always be. Schools should continue using the traditional calendar and not a year-round schedule. There are numerous downsides to year-round schooling. It has no positive effects on education, it adds to costs, and it disrupts the long-awaited summer vacation.

Contrary to the well-accepted belief, year-round schooling has no constructive impact on education. Most year-round schedules use the 45-15 method: 45 days of school followed by 15 days off. Because of this, there are many first and last days of school. All those transitions disrupt the learning process. Also, there is no evidence of higher test scores. Due to that, many

schools that change to year-round schedules end up switching back. For example, since 1980, 95 percent of schools that tried the year-round schedule changed back to a traditional calendar. It is obvious that changing to year-round schooling does not help students; therefore, why is the change necessary?

Like any other facility, keeping a school open requires a great deal of money. When a school changes to a year-round schedule, the costs skyrocket. Keeping school open in the middle of summer requires air conditioning, and that adds significantly to the school's expenses. The usual utility bills grow because of the additional open-school time. Finally, teachers must be paid for all the weeks they are working. With all these factors, the cost of keeping schools open becomes immensely high. For example, a high school in Arizona had a cost increase of \$157,000 when they switched to year-round schooling. Some schools may not be able to handle such increases, and other schools that can handle these expenses could be doing better things with the money. Is year-round school really where the money should go?

An important part of a child's life is summertime. With year-round schedules, students would hardly have any time to relax. During the 15-day breaks, they would be thinking about their quick return to school. It would also be difficult to coordinate family vacations with parents' work schedules. Similarly, children would not be able to go to most summer camps. One expert, Dr. Peter Scales, says, "The biggest plus of camp is that camps help young people discover and explore their talents, interests, and values. Most schools don't satisfy all these needs. Kids who have these kinds of [camp] experiences end up being healthier and have fewer problems." Obviously, the summer is crucial to a child's learning and development. Why should this invaluable part of a young person's life be taken away?

It is evident that year-round schooling is not the best option for the school calendar. There is absolutely nothing wrong with the traditional school year. Why change something that works so well? The final bell rings. Let's make sure this bell means that the "real" summer vacation has come.

### **Directions for writing your persuasive essay:**

This piece of writing should be at least **5 paragraphs** long. You can choose whatever topic you'd like, as long as you have something specific you set out to prove. *You have to take a side on whatever issue you choose, so choose something you actually care about.*

A recommended outline for an acceptable 5 paragraph essay is below, with one bullet point for each paragraph. You may choose not to follow this outline exactly, as the mentor text doesn't follow it exactly. *(It does contain these parts, but it does not keep each in its own paragraph.)*

- **Introduction:** This paragraph should briefly introduce the main topic of the paragraph and include a **hook**, which gets the reader's attention. The introduction must include a **thesis**, which has a clear stance on the issue and the main reason(s) for it. This paragraph can be brief.
- **Argument:** In this paragraph, you should take a clear stance on the issue and provide evidence/reasoning as to why you believe it's true. The paragraph should begin with a **topic sentence** stating the main idea, followed by multiple sentences of supporting details and evidence, and ending with a main idea. (E.g.: Xavier is a better school than Dayton because...)
- **Counterargument:** This paragraph explains why some people might disagree with your stance from the argument paragraph. It includes potential evidence that

some people might have for disagreeing with you. The paragraph should begin with a **topic sentence** stating the main idea, followed by multiple sentences of supporting details and evidence, and ending with a main idea. (E.g.: My opponents might think that Dayton is Better than Xavier because...)

- **Rebuttal:** This paragraph responds to the **counterargument** by showing what errors exist in your opponents' reasoning. The paragraph should begin with a **topic sentence stating** the main idea, followed by multiple sentences of supporting details and evidence, and ending with a main idea. (E.g.: The reason people who believe Dayton is a better university than Xavier are wrong is...)
- **Conclusion:** This paragraph restates the **thesis**, which is the writer's one sentence reply to the question at hand. It also reminds the reader of the importance of the issue being discussed.

## Section 3: Short Story

### Mentor text: "Thank you, Ma'm" by Langston Hughes

She was a large woman with a large purse that had everything in it but a hammer and nails. It had a long strap, and she carried it slung across her shoulder.

It was about 11 o'clock at night, dark and she was walking alone, when a boy ran up behind her and tried to snatch her purse. The strap broke with the sudden single tug the boy gave it from behind. But the boy's weight and the weight of the purse combined caused him to lose his balance. Instead of taking off full blast, the boy fell on his back on the sidewalk, and his legs flew up.

The large woman simply turned around and kicked him right square in his blue-jeaned sitter. Then she reached down and picked the boy up by his shirt front and shook him until his teeth rattled.

After that the woman said, "Pick up my pocketbook, boy, and give it here." She still held him tightly. But she bent down enough to permit him to pick up her purse. Then she said, "Now ain't you ashamed of yourself?"

Firmly gripped by his shirt front, the boy said, "Yes'm."

The woman said, "What did you want to do it for?"

The boy said, "I didn't aim to."

She said, "You lie!"

By that time, two or three people passed, turned to look and some stood watching.

"If I turn you loose, will you run?" asked the woman.

"Yes'm," said the boy.

"Then I won't turn you loose," said the woman. She did not release him.

"Lady, I'm sorry," whispered the boy.

"Uh-hum! Your face is dirty. I got a great mind to wash your face for you. Ain't you got nobody home to tell you to wash your face?"

"No'm," said the boy.

"Then it will get washed this evening," said the large woman, starting up the street, dragging the frightened boy behind her.

He looked about 14 or 15, frail and willow wild, in tennis shoes and blue jeans.

The woman said, "You ought to be my son. I would teach you right from wrong. Least I can do right now is to wash your face. Are you hungry?"

"No'm," said the being dragged boy. "I just want you to turn me loose."

"Was I bothering *you* when I turned that corner?" asked the woman.

"No'm."

"But you put yourself in contact with *me*," said the woman. "If you think that that contact is not going to last a while, you got another thought coming. When I get through with you, sir, you are going to remember Mrs. Luella Bates Washington Jones."

Sweat popped out on the boy's face, and he began to struggle. Mrs. Jones stopped, jerked him around in front of her, put a half nelson about his neck, and continued to drag him up the street.

When she got to her door, she dragged the boy inside, down a hall, and into a large furnished room at the rear of the house. She switched on the light and left the door open.

The boy could hear other roomers laughing and talking in the large house. Some of their doors were open, too, so he knew he and the woman were not alone. The woman still had him by the neck in the middle of her room.

She said, "What is your name?"

"Roger," answered the boy.

"Then, Roger, you go to that sink and wash your face," said the woman. Whereupon she turned him loose—at last. Roger looked at the door—looked at that woman—looked at the door—and *went to the sink*.

"Let the water run until it gets warm," she said. "Here's a clean towel."

"You gonna take me to jail?" asked the boy, bending over the sink.

"Not with that face. I would not take you nowhere," said the woman. "Here I am trying to get home to cook me a bit to eat, and you snatch my pocketbook! Maybe you ain't been to your supper, either, late as it be. Have you?"

"There's nobody home at my house," said the boy.

"Then we'll eat," said the woman. "I believe you're hungry—or been hungry—to try to snatch my pocketbook!"

"I want a pair of blue suede shoes," said the boy.

"Well, you didn't have to snatch my pocketbook to get some suede shoes," said Mrs. Luella Bates Washington Jones. "You could've asked me."

"M'am?"

The water dripping from his face, the boy looked, not knowing what else to do, he dried it again. The boy turned around. The door was open. He would make a dash for it down the hall. He could run, run, *run!*

The woman was sitting on the day bed. After a while she said, "I were young once, and I wanted things I could not get."

There was another long pause. The boy's mouth opened. Then he frowned, not knowing he frowned.

The woman said, "Uh-hum! You thought I was going to say *but*, didn't you? You thought I was going to say, *but I didn't snatch people's pocket-books!* Well, I wasn't going to say that." Pause. Silence. "I have done things, too, which I would not tell you, son—neither tell God, if He didn't already know. Everybody's got something in common. So you sit down while I fix us something to eat. You might run that comb through your hair so you will look presentable."

In another corner of the room behind a screen was a gas plate and an icebox. Mrs. Jones got up and went behind the screen. The woman did not watch the boy to see if he was going to run now. Nor did she watch her purse, which she left behind her on the day bed. But the boy took care to sit on the far side of the room, away from the purse, where he thought she could easily see him out of her eye if she wanted to. He did not trust the woman *not* to trust him. And he did not want to be mistrusted now.

“Do you need somebody to go to the store,” asked the boy, “to get some milk or something?”

“Don’t believe I do,” said the woman, “unless you want sweet milk yourself. I was going to make cocoa out of this canned milk I got here.”

“That will be fine,” said the boy.

She heated some lima beans and ham she had in the icebox, made the cocoa, and set the table. The woman did not ask the boy anything about where he lived, or his folks, or anything else that would embarrass him. Instead, as they ate, she told him about her job in a hotel beauty shop that stayed open late, what the work was like, and how all kinds of women came in and out, blondes, redheads, and Spanish. Then she cut him a half of her 10-cent cake.

“Eat some more, son,” she said.

When they were finished eating, she got up and said, “Now here, take this \$10 and buy yourself some blue suede shoes. And, next time, do not make the mistake of latching onto *my* pocketbook *nor nobody else’s*—because shoes got by devilish ways will burn your feet. I got to get my rest now. But from here on in, son, I hope you will behave yourself.”

She led the way down the hall to the front door and opened it. “Good night! Behave yourself, boy!” she said, looking out into the street as he went down the steps.

The boy wanted to say something other than ‘Thank you, ma’am,’ to Mrs. Luella Bates Washington Jones. But although his lips moved, he couldn’t even say that, as he turned at the foot of the barren stoop and looked up at the large woman in the door. Then she shut the door.

### **Directions for writing your short story:**

Please write a short story 2-5 pages in length, including the following elements of storytelling.

- **Protagonist** – a clear main character, who the story is about.
- **Conflict/Problem** – when “something goes wrong” and forces the main character to be challenged in some way
- **Resolution/Ending** – the results of the conflict, which can be positive or negative, but usually force the protagonist to undergo a change
- **Dialogue** – characters in conversation with one another, which the mentor text uses extensively.

Feel free to use one of the following prompts, though you are not required to use one of them.

### **Prompts:**

1. *You find a lantern that will lead you to whatever you want, but the closer you get, the heavier it becomes.*
2. *A blind man has never known that his best friend is invisible.*
3. *All electronics in the world have gained sentience and are now plotting to overthrow humanity. You are a toaster.*

4. *The sky is an illusion, fabricated by the government. Lucy has been watching the inconsistencies from her homemade telescope for ten years.*
5. *The two halves of the human brain are two different persons. Only one is awake, while the other one sleeps.*
6. *You are Waldo (from the Where's Waldo? series). What's your story? Why are you hiding?*
7. *Humans have discovered how to live forever, allowing them to die when they feel ready to do so. But it is considered bad form to live for too long. You have lingered much longer than is polite and those around you are trying to convince you to die.*
8. *You're a local healer, a good one, and your people love you. But you do not truly heal wounds, merely transfer them... The people of the valley below know you under a different name.*
9. *World Peace has long been achieved, and the first crime in centuries has just been committed.*
10. *You accidentally kill a reclusive millionaire and manage to cover it up, so it's untraceable to you. The next day, however, it's all over the news that the millionaire you killed had left his fortune to whoever killed him. Now, you set out to find a way to prove it was you.*