

Name: _____

Date Due: First Day of School

Freshman English- Summer Reading Assignment

A Separate Peace by John Knowles

Liberty Charter High School

Mrs. Hannah Berry

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For the 2018-2019 school year summer reading, students will read the novel *A Separate Peace* by John Knowles. THE SCHOOL WILL NOT PROVIDE THE NOVEL. Background for this novel is attached on pages 3-4. It is highly recommended to get your own copy of the book. It can be found at local libraries, bookstores, and through online resources (some options are listed below):

*PDF: <https://www.bydewey.com/Peace.pdf>

*Audio version to read along with:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I5GkBI22sII>

*El Cajon Public Library
201 E. Douglas
El Cajon, CA 92020

*Lemon Grove Branch Library
3001 School Ln.
Lemon Grove, CA 91945

Students are expected to read the novel and:

1. **ANNOTATE** as they read (see attached handout on pg. 5 to help you, write in book or on sticky notes every few pages and bring book to school entire **first week** for a grade) **due Aug. 27th**
2. take a **TEST** on **August 27th** in class (multiple choice and matching)
3. complete a timed **ESSAY** on **August 28th** in class

All of the assignments for this novel will serve as the first grades in gradebook. Late work will be given ½ credit. If you are absent for any of the 3 due dates you have one day to make up the work with the teacher and turn in for full credit. As a general policy, any time work will be turned in late due to absences, communication via email with the teacher is expected prior to the next in person contact. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Mrs. Berry at hannah.berry@lfcinc.org.

You need to take notes/annotations to prepare for the test and essay. Feel free to look up unknown words and ideas as you read in the dictionary or online to better understand the novel. **You will be allowed to use your book and notes/annotations during the test and the essay.** They should help you remember important and specific details of the book and find quotes or concrete details to support your argument in the essay. The test asks specific questions about the order of events as well as inferences you can draw about the characters and their character traits. There will not be enough time to complete the test or essay if you are skimming for answers, so come prepared.

These are not specific prompts, but you should annotate for the following big ideas as you read:

A Separate Peace Essay ideas to consider:

- Is knowledge and truth freeing or is it better to live in denial?
- Is it possible to stay naive or at some point to people need to grow up and face the truth?
- Is reality truth or how we perceive reality more important?

- Can we stay innocent forever? Is it better to be “in the know” or should some things be kept from us as they can be too painful?
- What is a true friend?
- If you knew something that would hurt your closest friend, would you keep it from them or is honesty always the best policy? Are there exceptions?
- What makes a good friend and when is it time to move on from certain friendships or relationships?
- How can ignorance bring people down individually and as a society?
- Is ignorance truly bliss or is it better to know the truth, even if it hurts?

Timed Essay Requirements (in-class Aug. 28th). You will need your book and annotations to help find concrete details or quotes to support your answers.

Your essay will be evaluated on the following:

I. Content/ Organization

A. Introduction

- You will need an introduction that clearly introduces the topic and novel in a creative, specific way.
- Your **thesis** sentence will be the last sentence of the introduction. It needs to answer the question you have chosen, address what the paper is about, and **answer the larger question of “so what?” This is your argument.**

B. Body – Minimum of 2 body paragraphs

- The body of the essay should prove your thesis.
- **You will use a minimum of three quotations with citation from *A Separate Peace* to support the thesis.**
- Each quotation should have a proper lead, followed by explanation and analysis.
- Quotations will be analyzed and linked back to the thesis. Connections will be made.

C. Conclusion

- Your conclusion will tie all the ideas in the essay together.
- Your Restated Thesis should be the first sentence in your conclusion.

II. Word Choice/ Fluency/ Conventions

- Proper attention to spelling, grammar, and punctuation will be evident.
- Run-on sentences and fragments will be avoided.
- Quotations will be properly cited in the essay.

3. Your essay will be between two and three pages. Your essay will be hand-written unless otherwise specified.

Here is important Background information about the novel to help guide your understanding:

Author Background Information

- Born in 1926 in Fairmont, West Virginia
- Attended public school until age 15, when he left for Phillips Exeter Academy, an elite prep school for boys in New Hampshire
- Experiences at Exeter inspired *A Separate Peace* and *Peace Breaks Out*
- Graduated early from Exeter in Aug. 1947 because of his participation in the summer Anticipatory Program, a special wartime term, like Devon's Summer Session, meant to prepare boys for military service
- Graduated from Yale University in 1949 with a Bachelor of Arts in English
- Occasionally wrote theater reviews for the newspaper
- Wrote a novel that was never published
- Wrote short story "Phineas," published in *Cosmopolitan* in 1956
- Short story "Phineas" contains the story that was the basis for *A Separate Peace*
- Knowles's agent sent the manuscript for *A Separate Peace* to American publishers, but they all rejected it.
- More than 9 million copies have been sold
- Published 10 other books since 1960, including *Peace Breaks Out* (1981), a sequel to *A Separate Peace*.

Historical Context

- World War II Began on September 1, 1939, when the German army invaded Poland
- After occupying Poland, the Germans moved west, occupying the countries of Denmark, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Belgium, Norway, and France.
- By June 1940, only Great Britain held out against Hitler, and Italy joined the Axis powers.
- America became involved in WWII in Dec. 1941, when Japan attacked military bases at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.
- *A Separate Peace* is written through an extended flashback that begins in the summer of 1942
- 15 million American men joined the military during WWII
- All young men 18 and older who stood taller than 5 ft tall and weighed 105 lbs or more were accepted into the military to serve in World War II.
- 2/3 (10 million) of the men serving were drafted. Most of those were sent to the infantry, where they saw the worst of the war, and endured the highest casualty rate.
- 5 million enlisted and could choose the branch of service they would join.
- The boys in the novel in Devon School, mostly choose enlistment in relatively prestigious (and safer) training programs in preference to the draft.
- Maginot Lines: This French line of defense was constructed along the country's border with Germany during the 1930s and named after Minister of War André Maginot. It primarily extended from La Ferté to the Rhine River, though sections also stretched along the Rhine and the Italian frontier. The main fortifications on the northeast frontier included 22 large underground fortresses and 36 smaller fortresses, as well as blockhouses, bunkers and rail lines. Despite its strength and elaborate design, the line was unable to prevent an invasion by German troops who entered France via Belgium in May 1940.
- War ended in Europe on May 7, 1945, when Germany surrendered.
- Japanese forces did not surrender until atomic bombs were dropped on the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.
- Japan surrendered on Aug. 15, 1945

Setting: The work is set at Devon, a private boarding school in New Hampshire on the Atlantic Coast during World War II. Two rivers run through the school's campus, one is the Devon River (fresh water) and the other is the Naguamsett River (salt water, swamp like consistency). Some of the work's action revolves around a predominate oak tree overhanging a creek.

Background Information: The novel begins with the main characters, Gene and Finny, at Devon for a summer session. The school hopes that this session will allow the students to receive a diploma before they are drafted on their eighteenth birthday. Gene and Finny are roommates and friends at the school. Finny is a natural athlete who also acts as a leader for the other boys in the school; devising games like Blitzball, and organizing the Winter Carnival. However, Gene is more academically oriented in his interests and is jealous of Finny's natural ability in sports, a quality he lacks in academics.

Major Characters:

Gene Forester – Narrator - This character is the protagonist whose envy of Finny eventually leads to his untimely demise. He is also suspicious of Finny's motivations since his cynical attitude causes him to think that no individual could be as completely pure as Finny. So, he projects his own devious nature on other people.

Phineas – Finny -He is a nonconformist who fails to acknowledge school regulations and tradition. This behavior is illustrated in his consistent lateness to dinner, wearing the school tie as a belt, wearing a pink shirt, and organizing the Super Suicide Society of the Summer Session.

Brinker Hadley – Yellow Peril -This character is an elitist student leader that is concerned about losing his power to Finny's popularity.

Edward Lepellier – Leper - He is an isolationist that was ridiculed by his classmates. He is important in the events of the novel since he was present when Finny "fell" from the oak tree. Leper surprises his classmates by choosing to enlist in the paratroopers after watching an army recruiter video, although he later deserts the army and returns to his Vermont home suffering insanity.

Plot Summary: The novel begins with Gene revisiting Devon several years after graduating to reflect on the incidents that occurred during the summer session. The first incident that Gene recounts indicates his dislike of Finny's attitude toward authority is when they attend a tea. Finny wears the school's tie as a belt and dresses in a pink shirt. Gene remarks that Finny is the only person who could "get away" with such an outfit. Later in the novel, Finny creates the Super Suicide Society of the Summer Session and places Gene and himself as the leaders. In addition he conceives of the idea that he and Gene should jump from the tree at once. This is a very dangerous action because they must jump outward to land in the water or else they hit the ground. During the first jump, Gene loses his balance and Finny grabs his arm to steady him without thinking. During another jump, Gene jounces the limb and Finny reaches out to him for help; yet Gene allows him to fall, causing him to break his leg. Gene begins to feel guilty for his actions and realizes his own jealousy of Finny. Finny refuses to acknowledge the fact that Gene pushed him out of the tree, because it conflicts with his idea of everybody being innately good. Yet, at the end of the novel Finny begins to accept the truth after being questioned by Brinker.

Key Issues:

1. Gene is jealous of Finny's natural athletic ability and fluid walk, but believes he compensates for this lack of ability by excelling in academics. Gene leads himself to believe that Finny is attempting to sabotage his academic success with nights at the beach, and the Super Suicide Society. Yet the reader learns later that Finny thought Gene possessed a natural academic ability when he told him to study and not come the Super Suicide Society meeting. This incident further annoys Gene since he realizes he is lacking in a way Finny is not.
2. Another issue involves Finny's denial of the events surrounding his accident. He refuses to believe that Gene caused him to fall from the tree. However, when Brinker begins to question Finny about that day he runs from the room instead of acknowledging the truth. Another manifestation of this denial of reality is Finny's inability to admit that the war exists. Instead, Finny claims it is a fabrication of fat old men to stop the young people from enjoying themselves. This provides a convenient excuse since he cannot participate in the conflict. He refuses to accept the loss of his athletic ability by forcing Gene to train for the 1944 Olympics.
3. Gene's insecurity is one of the key factors in the development of the novel. He doubts his own abilities, and believes that Finny is attempting to destroy his academic success. Yet the reader learns that it is actually Gene's paranoia over his own lack of talent that leads to his distrust of Finny, and eventually to taking the opportunity to destroy Finny's unique nature.

English 9 Annotation Scoring Guide

Annotation is an essential part of reading. As you read, please be sure to annotate for basic elements of story: characters, setting, conflict & theme. In addition, please annotate the text noting literary devices, new and challenging vocabulary, connections to your own life and the real world or other texts, as well as keeping brief summaries of the text so that you can easily reference major events and turning points throughout the story.

You will be allowed to use these annotations during the in class test and essay, so the more you do, the better! You will bring your book with you the first week of school and show annotations throughout entire book for a grade. If you show them late, it will be ½ credit. After 1 week, annotations will not be accepted. If you use a library book, plan ahead to make sure you still have access to the same book during the first week of school and use sticky notes to add annotations.

Superior	Adequate/Meets Standards	Needs Improvement
Comments show one understands/comprehends the important things in the text, including plot, characters, setting, conflicts, theme, etc.	Shows understanding of plot/facts-lacks details	Comments reveal no understanding of what is happening in the book
Notes and annotations demonstrate deep thinking about the text through questions and responses to the text	Has a few “deep thinking” questions and comments, is reflective, but not in-depth	Surface level comments only
Connects text to feelings and experiences, other texts, film, music, historical or current news events	Some connections of text to life experience, but little connection to other texts and ideas	Few connections to the text
Comments on literary devices or how the author does something; names the devices and/or describes impact of devices on reader	Recognizes literary devices but doesn't name them or talk about impact of devices	No comments on literary devices or author's craft
Vocabulary: Figures out key words/determine meaning of unknown words	Notes new words, doesn't define them or aim to determine meaning	Little attention to new words
Summaries: 2-3 word summaries makes it easy to find important events, characters or turning points	Occasional summaries	No marking of key events, characters or other important elements