



Dear “Honors English” Sophomores,

I hope that this letter finds you well and anticipating the end of a rewarding year. I hope that you will have many good experiences and make many good decisions before we get to see you again in August. One of those decisions that we would like to “help” you with is the decision to remain engaged in some kind of academic activity this summer. While the summer is certainly time to be away from school proper, I hope that it is not a time to stop thinking and stop growing.

For summer reading:

1) You will read two books. The required work will be part of the overall theme of the year. You will have a series of assessments in the first weeks that covers these books, as well referencing the work throughout the year. These books have been selected for interest level and readability as well as for challenging, compelling content in association with American Literature and our school identity.

2) You will be expected to complete two assessments when returning to school in August. One assessment will be a test, while the second assessment will be an in-class essay. Please carefully read and annotate both books in preparation.

Required Books:

- *The Art of Racing in the Rain* by Garth Stein
- *The Other Wes Moore* by Wes Moore

Themes to examine and consider in the books:

The Art of Racing in the Rain What does it mean to experience unconditional love? How does love manifest itself in various forms? What lessons can humanity learn from man’s best friend? This fictional story’s metaphors and symbols will be foundations for thematic approaches during the school year. Rhetorical strategies such as diction, figurative language and narration will also be examined.

The Other Wes Moore Two men from Baltimore share the same name. One is a Rhodes Scholar and combat veteran, while the other is serving a life sentence for murder. Their childhoods and environments were similar, so why did one Wes Moore become a productive member of society while the other Wes Moore become a convicted felon? This work of non-fiction, told from the perspectives of two compelling narratives, examines the effects of influences and choices. It also underlines the premise that more than just a name is shared in humanity’s identify.

I look forward to working with you during this upcoming school year. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions.

Peace,

Mr. Kevin Byrne
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