

**XAVIER COLLEGE PREPARATORY HIGH SCHOOL  
SUMMER READING**



Dear Incoming Freshman,

We hope that this letter finds you well and at the beginning of a restful summer. While starting high school at Xavier may still seem a long way off, you should know that many people have already begun preparing for you to walk onto campus in August. Classes are being formed, lockers are being reorganized, and you have your first homework assignment.

**This summer, you will be required to read two books.** It is our hope that these books will give you a few things to think about before you arrive on campus. The books have been selected for their interest level and readability as well as for their challenging, compelling content. In short, you should expect to think, but these should be fun to read.

In August, you will be expected to complete **two assessments** on these books. 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. Please read the assignment below; you will find information there to help focus your attention while you read.

**Required Books:**

- ***The Stranger in the Lifeboat*** by Mitch Albom

A ship explodes. Ten passengers are adrift at sea. After 3 days, they find another survivor out on the ocean. The passengers thank God for finding this survivor. The survivor then says he is God. What is going on here??? A year later, a few thousand miles away, the raft with the survivors washes ashore a beach. No one on board. What happened on the raft? A story about struggle and the possible paths we take to navigate it.

- ***The Alchemist*** by Paulo Coelho

This story, dazzling in its powerful simplicity and inspiring wisdom, is about an Andalusian shepherd boy named Santiago who travels from his homeland in Spain to the Egyptian desert in search of a treasure buried in the Pyramids. What starts out as a journey to find worldly goods, turns into a discovery of the treasures found within and the importance of listening to our hearts.

**Assignment:**

Xavier, like other Jesuit high schools, describes its graduating students with five characteristics called the Graduate at Graduation, or the “Grad at Grad.” After four years at a Jesuit school, this is what we hope you, our students, will look like. Before you begin this assignment, **you should familiarize yourself with the way Jesuit high schools describe the graduate at graduation.**

<https://www.xavierprep.org/about/grad-to-grad.cfm>

Your task is to analyze each of the books you read for characterization and plot, as well as to locate the “Grad at Grad” qualities that appear in each book. Your job, the first couple of weeks of school, is to prove that you have read the text AND that you understand the “Grad at Grad” by writing and discussing how these qualities come through in BOTH books. Bear in mind that the authors you are reading may not present the same image of the qualities as the “Grad at Grad” document envisions. You will be asked to describe how you see this text in relation to the “Grad at Grad,” then to defend your opinions with clear reasoning and concrete evidence.