

Eleanor Roosevelt High School 12th Grade Summer Assignment 2011
English Evolutions

Dear 12th Grade Student:

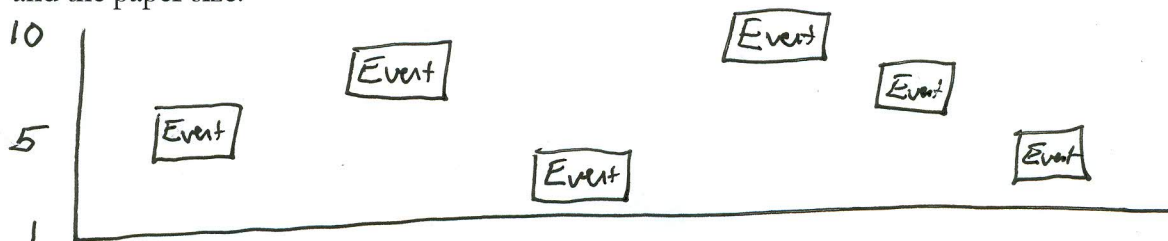
Since the 9th grade you have been studying the heroic journey which describes the human experience. Implicit in this study is your awareness of your own transformation. Now that you are on the cusp of the formal transition from high school to the world beyond, it is an ideal time to contemplate how individual consciousness and sense of the world evolve. As you read the three assigned summer books, *White Noise* by Don DeLillo, *Nickel and Dimed* by Barbara Ehrenreich, and **one book of your choice from the attached list**, think about your own educational and spiritual journey. Also, consider how class issues can define and determine this journey.

The assignment— DUE THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL Be prepared with 5-7 pages of notes from your summer reading in preparation for an in-class essay that you will write during the first week of school. Your notes should be in the following format:

1. Create separate timelines for one main character in each: *White Noise*, *Nickel and Dimed* and the memoir that you chose. Each timeline will follow the character through pivotal and key moments of experience. You are tracking each character's transformation of consciousness through peak moments in the texts. Briefly explain the importance of the event cited through consideration of: the character's acknowledgement of its importance; how he/she came to that understanding and to what extent prior events helped prepare the character for this particular moment.

In preparation for your timeline, assign **number values, 1-10**, to each event based on its importance in the individual's life. Remember, important events may include: firsts, lasts, bests, worsts, changes and achievements. You will have to wait until you've completed the book to do this prioritizing. Then neatly make a line chart on 8.5x11 paper. Put events on a horizontal axis and your **value numbers** on a vertical axis. This will graphically demonstrate "the flow" of the character's experience. While plotting these key moments, think about what shapes individual choice and action. What internal factors (memory, personality, knowledge) and external factors (class, culture, historical events) help to create "the self?"

You can be creative in your presentation while maintaining the basic format of the two axes and the paper size.



2. You will create a fourth timeline, one that tracks the pivotal experiences of your own life. What important events have led you to where you are today? Follow the same format as above.

3. In your notes, discuss in what ways the timelines link together. Where do you and the characters have similar realizations? What have you learned about the nature of human growth from these readings? How does class affect this process?

Enjoy your reading, and have a great summer!



