

College Writing Outside Reading Requirement—Nonfiction

The English Department at Canyon del Oro requires each student to read 500 pages in at least two books each semester beyond the reading assigned in class. I know that more reading makes students better writers as well as readers, but I also hope to encourage you to read for **pleasure**. This nine weeks, we will focus on nonfiction: history, memoirs, biography, philosophy, etc. It just needs to be nonfiction.

Step 1, pick several books from the following lists or other sources you find. Remember that this is *your* choice; I do not recommend each book for every individual, so skim the book before you commit to reading it because content varies widely. You may wish to consult your parents in making an appropriate choice. If the book you choose is less than 250 pages, you may select another from the same author or in the same genre. You must choose a book written for adults (no children's or young adult's choices) and it cannot be on lower level lists or have previously been reviewed by someone in your class. You should also avoid books which lack unity, like cookbooks or advice books. Consult http://www.amphi.com/schools/cdo/library/read_list.html to see the 12th grade list and the reading lists from earlier grades. See me if you are unsure about your selections in any way—

Curled Up (with a book):

<http://www.curledup.com/nonfict.htm>

The Pima County Public Library:

<http://www.booksite.com/taxis/scripts/bookletter/showfab.html?sid=6482&qlname=NLB>
[NFH](#)

Modern Library:

<http://www.randomhouse.com/modernlibrary/100bestnonfiction.html>

In addition, several of the booklists from the first 9 weeks include nonfiction.

Step 2 Select at least two books you would be interested in reading and reviewing; each person must select a different book, and we will draw for order in class. Someone might pick your first choice before you can get to it. Use the [“What do I Read Next?”](#) database (you need a Pima County Library Card), [Amazon](#) or Library Thing to research your possible selections before you commit to them; *don't pick a book if you don't know what you are getting into first!*

Step 3 Read! Read! Read!!

Step 4 Prepare your oral review. Your review should cover at least 250 pages. If you select a work shorter than that, you may report on more than one work. You must report on at least one complete work.

Follow the guidelines for the reading review as follows:

Format for Reading Review

- Hand Mr. Smythe a copy of your *complete* script **before** your presentation.
- 2-3 ½ minutes: Practice! Over or under by more than 30 seconds loses a full grade. You must have a copy of the book to show us.
- Tell us the title and author of the work(s) and where you got it. Be sure to mention availability at the CDO library and the Pima County Public Library.
- Provide a brief synopsis of the plot. (Note: this should NOT take the majority of your time. Your purpose is to offer the class an evaluation of the work, not to give a lengthy plot summary. Remember not to give away the good parts.)
- Categorize its genre: mystery, romance, etc. Make sure to distinguish fiction from nonfiction.
- Describe what you enjoyed (or disliked) about the book. Would you recommend this to a friend? Would you choose another work by this author? Focus on the elements (plot, characterization, description, language, etc.) that impacted you the most. You can do this throughout the work. Provide some examples: if you think the description is really good, read one to us and tell us what you think is particularly good about it. *This evaluation is the heart of the presentation.*
- Make sure to include enough detail that you convince us that you actually read the book.
- Comment on who is an appropriate audience or what sorts of people might enjoy (or dislike) the book. Indicate whether any content might offend some people: profanity, sex or violence (if graphic or glorified), sensitive issues like religion or racism, etc.
- If you choose a book that has a film version available, you must comment on differences between them to convince us that you read rather than just watched. See me if you aren't sure if there is a film available.
- You should express EMOTION about what you read: love it or hate it, or parts of it.
- Presentations are worth 50 points. Points may be deducted for not including required content, too much plot summary, "dead" presentation style, fewer than 250 pages or generally not including proof that you actually read the book. Prepare to be orally challenged if you're not convincing.
- If you miss your scheduled presentation date, you will need to come in on your own time during tutoring at 2:29.

Step 4 On or before your presentation due date, submit the script for your review to turnitin. Failure to do so will result in the loss of **half of your points**. Your presentation may not be word-for-word from your script, but what you say must follow what you wrote closely.