



9th Grade Summer Reading – English I

Required Grade Level Books:

Mayer, Jack. *Life in a Jar: The Irena Sendler Project*. (Creative Nonfiction)

During World War II, Irena Sendler, a Polish Catholic social worker, organized a rescue network of fellow social workers to save 2,500 Jewish children from certain death in the Warsaw ghetto. Incredibly, after the war her heroism, like that of many others, was suppressed by communist Poland and remained virtually unknown for 60 years. Unknown, that is, until three high school girls from a rural school district in southeast Kansas stumbled upon a tantalizing reference to Sendler's rescues, which they fashioned into a history project, a play they called *Life in a Jar*. Their innocent drama was first seen in Kansas, then the Midwest, then New York, Los Angeles, Montreal, and finally Poland, where they elevated Irena Sendler to a national hero, championing her legacy of tolerance and respect for all people. (Summary from the back of the book)

Khorram, Adib. *Darius the Great is Not Okay*

Darius Kellner speaks better Klingon than Farsi, and he knows more about Hobbit social cues than Persian ones. He's a Fractional Persian--half, his mom's side--and his first-ever trip to Iran is about to change his life.

Darius has never really fit in at home, and he's sure things are going to be the same in Iran. His clinical depression doesn't exactly help matters, and trying to explain his medication to his grandparents only makes things harder. Then Darius meets Sohrab, the boy next door, and everything changes. Soon, they're spending their days together, playing soccer, eating faloodeh, and talking for hours on a secret rooftop overlooking the city's skyline. Sohrab calls him Darioush--the original Farsi version of his name--and Darius has never felt more like himself than he does now that he's Darioush to Sohrab.

By turns hilarious and heartbreaking, Adib Khorram's brilliant debut is for anyone who's felt not good enough--then met a friend who makes them feel so much better than okay. (Summary from the book cover.)

Dear Members of the Class of 2025,

Welcome to English I! We are looking forward to working with you, and the first thing that we will be working on will be summer reading. The notes below will give you some tips about completing the assigned texts.

I. Marking Your Text – Read with pen or pencil in hand. Try to read approximately 20 pages in a

sitting, as this will be comparable to your homework assignments in the coming school year.

1. **What???** - Mark passages that you need to ask about.
2. **Wow!!!** - Mark passages that strike you as meaningful, important, or that you just really like. Make a note of the ideas or emotions that these passages evoke.
3. **Words** – Be sure to look up the new words that you need to understand in order to fully appreciate what you are reading.
4. **Windows and Mirrors** – Make note of what you are reading that is *familiar* and that you can *relate* to (Mirrors) and what you are reading that provides a *new view* of the world and someone’s way of life (Windows).

II. Note-taking Tips – You may decide where you would like to take your notes. You may wish to try some combination of the following:

- At the beginning or end of each chapter – Summarize key ideas. These notes will help to jog your memory in the fall.
- In the margin
- On tops of pages (They’re easier to find at the top.)
- On sticky notes
- On a separate piece of paper or document
- In a journal

III. Making Connections– Look for **connections** between texts. Consider common themes such as taking risks, discovering identity, facing prejudice, summoning inner strength, learning about differences, communicating with others, forming friendships, discovering and preserving history, carrying on traditions, and striving for excellence.

IV. Assignments - When we return to school in the fall, you will be doing some writing based on the summer reading texts. You will also take a quiz, but only after we have discussed the books together in class.

Enjoy the stories, the characters, and the “movie in your mind.”