

**Senior English Summer Reading 2017**  
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The two summer reading books for Senior English are *Tuesdays with Morrie*, a novel by Mitch Albom, and *The Metamorphosis*, a novella by Franz Kafka. A novella is a short novel which is a fictional prose narrative that is longer and more complex than a short story.

You will read both books this summer and complete the assignments listed below. When we get back to school, we will discuss the books, present projects, and complete a group activity. There will be a test on each novel as well as an in class essay for both.

Both books share a common theme.

**CHALLENGE:** Can you name a common theme for both of the summer readings?

### **1. *Tuesdays with Morrie* – Mitch Albom**

Maybe it was a grandparent, teacher, or friend. Someone older, patient and wise, who understood you when you were young and searching, helped you see the world as a more profound place, gave you sound advice to help you make your way through it.

For Mitch Albom, that person was Morrie Schwartz, his college professor from nearly 20 years ago.

Maybe, like Mitch, you lost track of this mentor as you made your way, and the insights faded, and the world seemed colder. Wouldn't you like to see that person again, ask the bigger questions that still haunt you, receive wisdom for your busy life today the way you once did when you were younger?

Mitch Albom had that second chance. He rediscovered Morrie in the last months of the older man's life. Knowing he was dying, Morrie visited with Mitch in his study every Tuesday, just as they used to back in college. Their rekindled relationship turned into one final "class": lessons in how to live.

If you watch ESPN, you may know Mitch Albom. In addition to being an internationally renowned and best-selling author, journalist, screenwriter, playwright, radio and television broadcaster and musician, Mitch Albom appears regularly on *ESPN Sports Reporters* and *SportsCenter*.

(<http://mitchalbom.com/d/books/3856/tuesdays-morrie>)

#### **Assignment 1**

**Part 1:** Read the novel.

**Part 2:** After you finish, choose one of the following topics and write a one-paragraph response for each. You will write a total of one paragraph for this part of the assignment. Make sure your paragraph contains: 1) a **topic sentence** (the main idea of the paragraph and your opinion of the topic), 2)

**supporting details** (this should consist of at least three supporting detail sentences and at least three sentences that elaborate those details), and 3) **a closing sentence**. **The entire paragraph should be at least 8 sentences long**. See the attached Paragraph Writing Rubric to clarify expectations. Remember choose only one and not all of the following:

- Write a paragraph about a favorite teacher you have had and tell what made him/her special.
- If you knew you had only a year to live and that toward the end you would be greatly incapacitated, how would you spend that year, month-by-month? What would you do the same? What would you do differently?
- If you were to have a living funeral for yourself as Morrie did, what would it be like?
- Mitch's hero from childhood was his uncle. Who was your childhood hero and why?
- Would you rather die suddenly or, like Morrie, have a long time to prepare for it? Explain.
- When Mitch asked Morrie what he would come back as if reincarnated, Morrie replied, "A gazelle." What would you come back as if it were possible?
- Morrie's choice for his tombstone was "A Teacher To The Last". Explain what you would choose for yourself and why?

**Part 3:** As you approach your senior year in high school, you will be considering potential areas of interest for college and career.

Choose one activity from the following list. After you choose your area of interest, research the topic and put together an oral report that includes a visual presentation. Your presentation should use some type of technology such as PowerPoint, animation software, video, audio, podcast...Be creative! If you want, you may include demonstrations or skits with your project. **Each presentation should be 3-5 minutes long, so make sure you have researched enough information!** Cite your sources in writing. See the Multimedia Project: *Tuesdays with Morrie* Research Presentation rubric for expectations.

#### *Anthropology*

- Choose another culture, past or present, and research how they view death.

#### *Art*

- Create a picture or a sculpture depicting a scene from your "perfect day." Be prepared to describe it, explain the medium that you used, and present it to the class.

#### *Biology*

- What happens to the body during the progression of a terminal disease such as ALS?

#### *Child Development*

- Imagine that a child you know has a grandparent with ALS or some other terminal disease. How would you explain it to the child? How would you suggest the child act around the grandparent?

#### *Computer Information Science*

- Find at least two websites on ALS. Evaluate the information and compare and contrast the way it is presented on each.

#### *Dance*

- Morrie loved to dance the lindy and the tango. Research these dances. Demonstrate one or both if you want, or teach the dances to the class and have them do it.

#### *History*

- Research one or more famous teachers from another time, such as Annie Sullivan or Socrates.

### *Mathematics*

- Find some of the colleges and universities in the Boston area and make graphs comparing them as to student/faculty ratio, undergraduate/graduate ratio, tuition and fees, percentage of applicants accepted, etc. Evaluate the schools based on your findings.

### *Music (choose only one)*

- Morrie liked to do the lindy to Jimi Hendrix. Research Jimi Hendrix and the lindy (you can demonstrate the lindy if you want and/or teach it to the class).
- Choose two pieces of music to share with the class, one that evokes Morrie's momentary self-pity upon awakening and the other his feeling lucky to be alive. Explain their significance.

### *Health Care (choose only one)*

- What can health professionals do to help terminally ill patients preserve their dignity? Do you believe this is possible?
- Create a timeline for the usual progression of ALS.
- Investigate ALS and find out what current research being done about the disease.

### *Philosophy (choose only one)*

- One year during the Vietnam War, Morrie gave all his male students A's to help them keep their student deferments. Do you think that this was this right or wrong?
- Morrie said, "Everyone knows they're going to die, but nobody believes it. If we did, we would do things differently." What would you do differently?
- Morrie quoted the poet W.H. Auden, "Love each other or perish." What do you think the poet meant?
- Imagine that you have the chance to write your own obituary. What would you like it to say? What changes can you make in your life to achieve that?

### *Physical Education/Health (choose only one)*

- Research the value of massage in the care of the terminally ill.
- Research Lou Gehrig.
- Research the professional sports teams in Detroit (football, basketball, baseball, and hockey).
- Mitch's senior honors thesis was about how football has become almost a religion in America. Try your hand at the same topic.

### *Physics*

- Stephen Hawking, physicist, also suffers from ALS. Research Hawking and his struggle with ALS.

### *Psychology (choose only one)*

- Morrie would have agreed with the Barbra Streisand song, "People who need people are the luckiest people in the world." Do you agree? Why?
- Dr. Norman Cousins believed that a patient's attitude determined to a great extent whether he would survive a devastating illness. Who was Dr. Cousins and how was he viewed by the medical community?
- Morrie said that we are brainwashed about materialism. Do you agree? Why or why not?
- Morrie said, "People are only mean when they are threatened, and that's what our culture does. That's what our economy does." Do you agree? Find examples to support your opinion.

### *Sociology (choose only one)*

- Does our society value older people? Why or why not? Compare our society with another country as to how we treat our elders.
- What qualities do older people have that transcend the age barrier?

### Foreign Language

- In writing or orally, tell about a favorite teacher you have had and why he/she was special.

### Travel and Tourism

- What would be Mitch's options (airlines, times, fares) today in going from Detroit to Boston and back again?

## 2. *The Metamorphosis* – Franz Kafka

This novella is available in various formats including audio books, paperback books, and also on free websites including:

<https://records.viu.ca/~johnstoi/stories/kafka-e.htm>  
<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/5200/5200-h/5200-h.htm>

“As Gregor Samsa awoke one morning from uneasy dreams he found himself transformed in his bed into a gigantic insect. He was laying on his hard, as it were armor-plated, back and when he lifted his head a little he could see his domelike brown belly divided into stiff arched segments on top of which the bed quilt could hardly keep in position and was about to slide off completely. His numerous legs, which were pitifully thin compared to the rest of his bulk, waved helplessly before his eyes.”

This is the bizarre yet humorous opening of Kafka’s *The Metamorphosis*. (Congratulations! You have just started your summer reading!)

It is the story of a young man who, transformed overnight into a giant beetle-like insect, becomes an object of disgrace to his family, an outsider in his own home, a quintessentially alienated man. A harrowing – though absurd and comic – reflection on the feelings of inadequacy, guilt, and isolation, *The Metamorphosis* is one of the most widely-read and influential works of 20<sup>th</sup> century fiction.

([http://www.goodreads.com/book/show/485894.The\\_Metamorphosis](http://www.goodreads.com/book/show/485894.The_Metamorphosis))

As we will be studying world literature in Senior English, a great way to start your summer reading is with Franz Kafka (1883-1924), one of the most influential fiction writers of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. He was a novelist and short story writer whose works, only after his death, became regarded as one of the major achievements of 20<sup>th</sup> century literature.

Kafka was born to middle class German-speaking Jewish parents in Prague, Bohemia, now part of the Czech Republic, in what was then the Austro-Hungarian Empire. His work – novels *The Trial* (1925), *The Castle* (1926) and *Amerika* (1927), as well as *The Metamorphosis* (1915) and *In the Penal Colony* (1914) – is now collectively considered to be among the most original work in modern Western literature. Much of his writing was unfinished at the time of his death but was published posthumously.

(<http://www.amazon.com>)

## Assignment 2

**Part 1:** Read *The Metamorphosis*.

**Part 2:** As you read, keep a Graffiti Journal. The journal can be completed by hand or using images from the internet or other sources.

Your journal will have three sections containing two pages for each of the following:

A. Section 1 Images of Fiction: Two pages of graffiti – drawings, shapes, symbols, and colors that help you remember and identify the elements of fiction - plot, character, setting, point of view, style, tone, and language, theme, and symbolism, allegory, and image.

B. Section 2 Images of Your Thoughts: Two pages of words and phrases that come to your mind while you read the novella. These words should be things you think of when you are reading about plot, character, setting, point of view, style, tone, and language, theme, and symbolism, allegory, and image.

C. Section 3 Direct Quotations: Two pages of direct quotations from the novella that stand out to you and reveal your thoughts on the setting, characters, plot structure, point of view, themes, and symbols developed in the story.

Please see the attached Graffiti Journal Rubric for guidance and expectations.

When we return to school, you will use your journal to complete a group Graffiti Wall project. Each group will be assigned a section of the book to complete a visual and prepare an oral presentation.