

# Summer Assignment 2025-2026

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*I will be checking my email periodically over summer break.*

## Course Overview

Welcome to Honors English 9! The focus of this class is for students to develop skills in analysis, command of evidence, and critical thinking, among others. This rigorous course requires commitment and self-discipline.

As we begin summer, all of us – parents, students, and teachers – are excited about a well-earned break. However, much hard-earned knowledge, skills, and habits tend to slip away during break unless we take measures to retain them.

One of the most valuable components of your academic success is a sustained pattern of reading, which is why all students entering into Honors English 9 at Village Christian are required to complete a summer reading assignment. All the information you need is included in this packet. Students and parents are encouraged to establish individual reading goals to aid students in their time management. It is not recommended for students to leave the reading until the last minute.

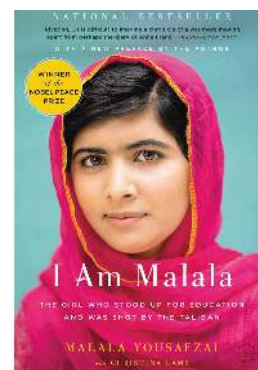
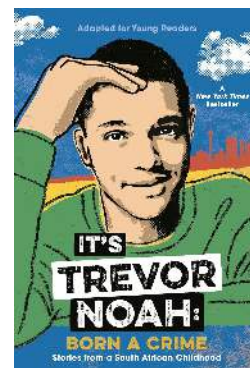
## Assignment #1: Read & Annotate

This class will focus on the theme of identity and the ways in which societal values influence us and our self-worth. In order to prepare to discuss these topics, you will read and annotate the two books pictured on the right:

1. *It's Trevor Noah: Born a Crime: Stories from a South African Childhood (Adapted for Young Readers)* by Trevor Noah – It is imperative that you purchase the **young readers** edition on the right
2. *I am Malala* by Malala Yousafzai – **DO NOT** purchase the young reader's edition, instead, purchase the edition on the right

Be prepared to do an in-depth analysis of the book in the first few weeks of school, including quizzes, an exam, and a writing assignment.

**Due Date:** An annotated copy of each book is due on the first day of school.



## A Guide on Annotating

Annotating is interacting with the book by taking notes in the margins on your thoughts, reactions, and observations; it is ***NOT*** merely underlining and highlighting. I will guide you throughout the year on how to become more proficient in annotating. For this assignment, use the guidelines below to help you. Click [HERE](#) for samples of high-level and insightful annotations. You will use your annotations to help you write analysis for the second part of the assignment, which is a dialectical journal.

### Suggestions for How to Annotate

- ❖ Use abbreviations and symbols
- ❖ Take notes in the margins
  - Identify anything you find interesting
  - Identify anything connected to a theme
  - Summarize key points
  - Infer information (draw conclusions)
  - Ask questions on anything you find confusing
  - Identify literary devices and their effect

### Suggestions for Interpretive Notes & Symbols

- ❖ Underline or highlight key words, phrases, or sentences that are important in order to understanding the book
- ❖ Write questions or comments in the margins
- ❖ Bracket important ideas or passages
- ❖ Use a star or asterisk to emphasize important statements
- ❖ Use ??? for sections or ideas you don't understand
- ❖ Use !!! when you come across something new, interesting or surprising
- ❖ Circle words you don't know
- ❖ A check mark means "I understand"
- ❖ Use capital letters for literary devices such as "I" for imagery, "FL" for figurative language, and so on

### Concepts & Themes to Consider While Reading & Annotating

- ❖ Identity
- ❖ Resilience & Beating the Odds
- ❖ Conformity
- ❖ Societal Values
- ❖ Personal Growth
- ❖ Belonging & Community
- ❖ How many different ways does society define us?
- ❖ What labels does society place on us?
- ❖ What labels do we place on ourselves?
- ❖ How and why do we accept or reject these labels?
- ❖ How does the world around me influence my behavior?

## Assignment #2: Dialectical Journals

Once you are done reading and annotating, you will create two dialectical journals, one for each book. A dialectical journal is a place for you to record and react to important moments in the book. Eventually, you may use your dialectical journals in an essay at the end of the unit.

Select 12 meaningful quotes that adequately draw from the beginning, middle, and end of each book. Choose passages that stand out to you the most, especially passages in which you have particularly insightful annotations. Also, try looking for passages that connect to the concepts and themes listed above.

There is no minimum or maximum length for quotations or analysis. Each person's dialectical journal will look different depending on formatting. See the samples on the following page.

### Columns for Dialectical Journal

- ❖ The first column will be for meaningful quotes (cite author's last name and page #). Make sure the quotes are in chronological order.
- ❖ The second column will be for a brief summary of the passage.
- ❖ The third column will be for analysis of the passage and its significance. Some ideas for how to analyze a quote:
  - Discuss how the quote shows the personality traits of a character
  - Describe a theme/main idea that is revealed by the quote
  - Analyze a literary device and how it's used to add meaning to the story
  - Explain how your passage gives meaning or teaches the reader about the setting (place and time period)
  - Identify a symbol (character, object, place, event, etc.) and explain what you think it represents
  - Look over your annotations as a guide for your analysis

### Notes on Literary Analysis

- ❖ Write in present tense (she says...he is able to...this displays...she is communicating...)
- ❖ Write in third person (avoid "I" "us" "you" "we" "our" etc.)
- ❖ After you've said the author's full name once, refer to him by his last name
- ❖ Avoid merely saying, "this quote shows" over and over again; see the samples below for how to communicate your ideas differently
  - A list of verbs can be found [HERE](#) so that you don't always say "shows"
- ❖ Summarizing and analyzing aren't the same thing
  - Summarizing is a retelling; analysis is reading between the lines, digging deeper, and discussing why the quote you chose is significant

**Due Date:** A printed copy of your dialectical journal is due on the first day of school. After school begins, digital copies will be submitted on various websites to check for plagiarism.

## Sample Dialectical Journal Entries

If you like the format below and want to use it for your own journal, click [THIS LINK](#) and make a copy for yourself, one for each book. Save it in your Google Drive, and title one *Born a Crime* Dialectical Journal and the other *I am Malala* Dialectical Journal. You are also welcome to create your own. The document is in MLA formatting. Fill in the spaces with your personal information.

Below are two sample dialectical journal entries from *Born a Crime*.

Meaningful Quote	Summary	Analysis
<p>1. “Dad was the white chocolate, Mom was the dark chocolate, and I was the milk chocolate. But we were all just chocolate” (Noah 52).</p>	<p>In this quote, Trevor Noah is using an example with chocolate to describe him and his parents' skin colors. Using different kinds of chocolate as a symbol to portray different skin colors, proves Noah's statement that people are all human and equivalent to one another no matter what skin color someone has.</p>	<p>Here, Noah displays how he views people of different races and skin color as the same, but during Apartheid, Noah's beliefs contrast from the majority of people. Minorities had to suffer from discrimination, segregation, and unfair treatments because of what color their skin was. While the majority, the white people, received luxury and a privileged life. It displays that the social prejudices of this time blinded people to viewing others with rationality and partiality.</p>
<p>2. “The only authority my mother recognized was God's. God is love and the Bible is truth—everything else was up for debate” (Noah 91).</p>	<p>This quote describes the Christian household that Noah grows up in. Noah's mother is very religious and takes Noah to church multiple times a week. His mother raises Noah and his siblings with a very religious mentality.</p>	<p>It is clear that Noah's mother has raised him with a God-like mentality. Since their family and many other black families do not have male figures in the house, they look to God for assistance. Throughout his whole life, Noah witnesses his mother going to God for trivial and very serious situations. As Noah grows up, he also develops a religious mentality. He goes to God when he sins, and is reassured by God's presence. His mother teaches Trevor about the goodness of God. This allows Noah to become a very faithful person.</p>

## Dialectical Journal Grading Rubric

Each dialectical journal will be graded as a separate assignment.

Rubric Category	Level A (90-100%)	Level B (80-89%)	Level C (70-79%)	Level D (50-69%)
<b>Selected Quotations &amp; Passages</b>	Meaningful quotations selected. Appropriate attention is paid to seemingly insignificant details.	Good quotations are selected, but some are less meaningful.	Few good quotations and passages selected.	Hardly any good quotations and passages selected.
<b>Interpretation</b>	Thoughtful, mature, and engaging analysis. Avoids cliché and delves into themes.	Intelligent analysis. Discusses themes generally.	Sometimes vague, unsupported analysis. Some plot summary seen.	Basic plot summaries and paraphrases.
<b>Coverage of Text</b>	Dialectical journal thoroughly covers the entire novel.	Journal covers only the most important parts of the text.	Journal covers most parts, but some portions are disregarded.	Huge portions of the novel are disregarded.
<b>Grammar &amp; Mechanics</b>	Contains little to no errors in mechanics, usage, and grammar.	Contains some errors; presents standard knowledge of mechanics, usage, and grammar.	Contains frequent errors; presents limited knowledge of mechanics, usage, and grammar.	Presents an inaccurate knowledge of mechanics, usage, and grammar.
<b>Appearance &amp; Organization</b>	Neat, organized, looks readable and follows all directions.	Neat and readable. Follows most directions.	Some portions are hard to read. Some directions have not been followed.	Unprofessional presentation that is hard to read. Fails to follow directions.

**Total: \_\_\_\_ /20**

## Due Dates & Deadlines

- ❖ **Dialectical Journals:** Printed copies are due on the first day of school. Once school begins, students will submit digital copies online.
- ❖ **Annotated Books:** Due on the first day of school.
- ❖ Students who enroll at VCS after *August 1st* have until the end of the first quarter to complete the summer work without penalty.

## Plagiarism

Plagiarism of any form will not be tolerated. Students suspected of any form of plagiarism (getting information from the Internet or using others' ideas) will be held accountable (i.e. parents, counselors, and administration will be notified). Additionally, students will have a record of plagiarism documented in RenWeb.

This assignment will undergo several avenues of plagiarism checks including Google Classroom, Turnitin.com, and various tools which check for AI manipulation.

### Plagiarism includes:

- ❖ Using someone else's ideas (especially word-for-word)
- ❖ Paraphrasing someone else's ideas into your own words
- ❖ Submitting previous work from another class without permission from previous teacher
- ❖ Neglecting to cite sources
- ❖ Using AI and other tech tools to do the work for you

