

## Honors English 9

# Summer Assignment 2026-2027

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*We will be checking our 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.***

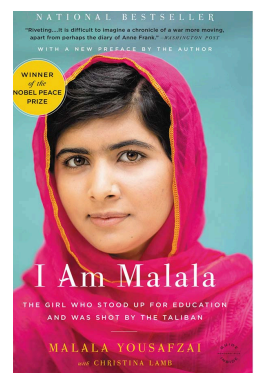
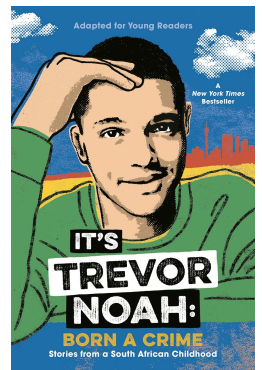
## Assignment #1: Read & Annotate

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

## 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's no minimum or maximum length for quotations or analysis. Most of you will be tempted to go online and search for meaningful quotes, however, this will result in students having similar responses as one another. It's highly suggested that instead of taking a shortcut, you use your own mind and practice independent thinking.

### 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 and effectively
  - 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:** Digital copies of your dialectical journals will be submitted into google classroom by midnight on August 9th. See page 6 of this document for further details.

## Sample Dialectical Journal Entries

Your dialectical journals should follow the format below. 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. **Do not send editing requests for this document.**

The document is in MLA formatting. Fill in the spaces with your personal information. Below are sample dialectical journal entries from previous students.

Make sure to use your Village email address.

Meaningful Quote	Summary	Analysis
<p>“That, and so many other smaller incidents in my life, made me realize that language, even more than color, defines who you are to people” (Noah 54).</p>	<p>When Trevor was caught by kids who were trying to steal from him, he spoke their language and suddenly they did not harm him. They had judged him by his race, but after they realized Trevor was the same kind as them, they saw the similarity. After this incident, Trevor explains that his true identity shines through the way he speaks and the language he uses, instead of his appearance.</p>	<p>In apartheid society, the most common way to judge people was by their race. The small incidents refer to Trevor being mistaken because of his skin color until he speaks their language and suddenly they are both the same people from the same culture. Through these incidents Trevor has realized that language more effectively connects him to society rather than judging him by his skin color, revealing how the society works. Furthermore, the incident illustrates the quick trust and connection between Trevor and the kids. It made him realize that they both were the same. He understands that language is important when interacting with people and while he cannot change the way he looks, he can develop his language skills to fit in with other people.</p>
<p>“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>
<p>“The media needs interviews. They want to interview a small girl, but the girls are scared, and even if they’re not, their parents won’t allow it. I have a father who isn’t scared, who stands by me. He said, “You are a child and it’s your right to speak”” (Yousafzai 141).</p>	<p>The media needs interviews to know what’s going on in certain parts of the country. They look for girls to interview, but they are too scared to be interviewed because of what might happen to them after. Moreover, even if the girls do want to do the interview, the parents won’t let them because they, too, are scared of what might happen to them. Malala is an exception, however, she is willing to take the interview and her father supports her.</p>	<p>Many villages have been threatened by the Taliban rule and interviewers are desperate to know the current situation. While most kids and parents do not speak up because of fear, Malala wants to speak up for herself. Continuously, her father is supportive of speaking against the Taliban and he believes that she has the right to speak up. Her father’s message illustrates his love towards her and the true right of women and their freedom to speak up, which is most likely to be denied by others. He provides something that the community does not.</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

- ❖ **Annotated Books:** Due on the first day of school.
- ❖ **Dialectical Journals:** Both dialectical journals are due in Google Classroom by midnight on Sunday, *August 9th*. Late submissions will receive a 10% daily deduction off of the score that you earn. All students must enroll in the Google Classroom created specifically for your summer work. You must enroll using your Village email address.
  - Class name: Honors English 9 - Summer 2026
  - Link to class: click [HERE](#)
  - Class code: 5mfvt6uf
- ❖ Students who are new to VCS and enroll 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

