

Shawnee Mission West Language Arts
ELA2 Honors – Jump-Start Reading Fall 2020

“Jump-Start Reading” allows students to get a head start on our first novel study when we return to school in August. Students are not required to read or work over the summer, but many choose to do so to get ahead and/or lighten their workload at the start of a new year.

There will not be any summative assessment of the reading until after the second week of school (Aug. 31). However, discussion and activities may begin as soon as the first day.

If you have any questions about the novel or about Jump-Start Reading, please contact the instructor:

Mrs. Kathleen Miller * Rm 128 * kathleenmiller@smsd.org

Our Jump-Start Reading this year is an interesting, fun, and relevant novel. Enjoy reading the book! You’ll be asked to collect some information as you read. Also, we’ll discuss other related topics in class to deepen your understanding and practice important reading skills. Finally, we’ll use the novel to learn more about different aspects of literature, plus reference it as an anchor text as we discuss our own stories!

Our novel:	Henriquez, Cristina. <i>The Book of Unknown Americans</i> . New York: Vintage Books, 2014. Print.
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Where to get a copy: **Online book sellers** have new and used copies for sale, both hardback and paperback. And, the book is available in **electronic format** from sources such as Kindle, as well as available on Audible and audio CD. If you are unable to get an online or physical copy of the book to read this summer, I will have books available for checkout once school starts in the fall. It is a quick read, so you should be able to read it by August 31. There will not be any summative assessment of the reading until then.

What it’s about: (synopsis from <http://www.amazon.com>) “A boy and a girl who fall in love. Two families whose hopes collide with destiny. An extraordinary novel that offers a resonant new definition of what it means to be American. Arturo and Alma Rivera have lived their whole lives in Mexico. One day, their beautiful fifteen-year-old daughter, Maribel, sustains a terrible injury, one that casts doubt on whether she’ll ever be the same. And so, leaving all they have behind, the Riveras come to America with a single dream: that in this country of great opportunity and resources, Maribel can get better. When Mayor Toro, whose family is from Panama, sees Maribel in a Dollar Tree store, it is love at first sight. It’s also the beginning of a friendship between the Rivera and Toro families, whose web of guilt and love and responsibility is at this novel’s core. Woven into their stories are the testimonials of men and women who have come to the United States from all over Latin America. Their journeys and their voices will inspire you, surprise you, and break your heart.”

Reading task #1: After you read the novel (or as you read – *much easier!*), create an annotated list of **the characters you meet**. This list should include physical, emotional, and mental traits of the characters, as well as personal reactions to them. If no physical description is given, or if it’s incomplete, how do you picture this character? Who would you cast to portray them in a movie version of the novel? Reactions could include, “This person reminds me of... (relative, acquaintance, character from literature, movies, TV, etc.)

This list may be written in a notebook, typed and printed, or typed on a Google document to be electronically submitted to your Honors English Google Classroom after classes begin in August. You will be given a code in August to upload your Google document. This **character list with descriptions** will be due after the first two full weeks of school on Monday, August 31, 2020.

Reading task #2: After you read the novel (or as you read – *much easier!*), create a list of possible topics for further research. The list will be used for in-class activities and projects. (Examples: *racial profiling, immigration laws, traumatic brain injuries, etc.*)

Don't limit your topics to subjects specifically in the book. If a topic is connected or related, include it on your list.

The expectation is **10 entries**. Not only should these span the entire book (not all from the first chapter), but they should be **considered** by the student In other words, imagine that you selected one of these for a research project. What would be **the guiding questions** that you'd use to find information? (Examples: *How is the racial profiling in this novel similar to and/or different from racial profiling in the US today? Are immigration laws the same or different in 2020 as they were when the characters in this novel immigrated to America? What side effects do traumatic brain injuries cause?*)

This list may also be written in a notebook, typed and printed, or typed on a Google document to be electronically submitted to your Honors English Google Classroom after classes begin in August. You will be given a code in August to upload your Google document. This **topic list with guiding questions** will be due after the first two full weeks of school on Monday, August 31, 2020.

Reading task #3: Be on the lookout for the following items as you read the novel. They'll be used in class discussion, writing, and other activities. Please **annotate in your book** (if you have your own personal, physical copy) **OR take notes** on them (this will make them much more useful and easier to recall):

- character motivation
- cause and effect – how one character does something (or an event occurs), and how a character reacts ... how one event creates a situation that causes something else to occur
- literary element: nonchronological order storytelling
- shifting narrators/points of view
- suspense/foreshadowing
- themes
- **Big questions: How does each character's story help broaden your understanding of the immigrant experience? What is the American Dream, and how does it relate to each of the characters you meet?**

Whether you choose to read over the summer, or wait until school starts, I hope that you have a great summer break and come ready to have a fantastic year in ELA2H!

Mrs. Miller