

English I Summer Assignment 2009

Welcome Freshman! I am thrilled that you will soon be a part of ISA's class of 2013. Regardless of your previous feelings about English, I can promise you that you will begin to look at English and the world differently through your experiences in English I at ISA. And so, the adventure begins...

Step 1: The book you will read for your summer assignment is The House on Mango Street by Sandra Cisneros. This is a critically acclaimed, groundbreaking text by an outspoken, talented Latina author who just happens to live in San Antonio. The book is based on Cisneros' experiences growing up in Chicago. The structure is unique, and probably quite different from other books you have read. Cisneros uses a series of **vignettes**, or **short literary sketches**, to tell the story of her protagonist, Esperanza Cordero. For the first step of your summer assignment you will need to find a copy of this book (try the library, Half-Price Books, Barnes and Noble, Borders, Amazon.com, or look around for a former ninth grader who would be willing to part with his or her copy).

Some things to think about as you read:

- Not all books follow the traditional beginning, middle, and end plot structure that you may be used to. As you read, think about the structure of the book. What is Cisneros doing? Did she have a reason for organizing the book the way she did?
- These reading strategies can help information stick in your brain:
 - ✓ Draw pictures as you read
 - ✓ Take notes
 - ✓ Re-read passages you don't understand
 - ✓ Underline, circle, or highlight things that are important or things you don't understand



- You don't have to like something to appreciate it. As you read you may discover that you love all parts of this book from the topic to the style to the language. You may also decide that you don't like the book. Either opinion is fine. Either way, though, as you read, your job is to try to understand what is happening in the book, and then try to find aspects of the book that you can appreciate.

Step 2: Once you have finished reading the book you will need to complete the assignments listed on the next page. You may complete them in any order, and you must have all of them with you on the first day of school.

If you are the kind of person who needs help with deadlines, here is a **suggested** plan for this summer assignment!

Finish reading the book by June 30	Write your response before July 4	Email Mrs. Smith your letter by July 9	Re-read part of the book and write your vignette by July 17	Create your visual image by August 1 Now, celebrate that you didn't wait until the last minute!
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Assignment #1: Letter to Me (Try to email this to me by July 9!)

In order for me to get to know you better, please write a letter telling about yourself. I am excited to learn more about you, so please include as many details as possible. The letter should be at least one page long and should include these things:

- information about who you are
- what you are passionate about
- a goal you have for your future
- what you expect from me, yourself, and this course this year.

If you have access to email, please send this letter before school starts. My email address is lsmith3@neisd.net. If you have a picture of yourself to include in the email, I can get a head start on learning which face goes with which name, so I won't have to call you "hey you" for the first 2 weeks!

If you don't have access to an email account (either yours or someone else's), please bring the letter on the first day of school along with the rest of your assignments.

Assignment #2: The Visual Image

Create a visual image to illustrate some aspect of The House on Mango Street. You might choose to create a drawing of an important event in one of the vignettes (pronounced VIN-yets). Or you might choose to create a character web that shows the relationship of the characters to each other. Or you might choose to create a painting that illustrates an overarching theme of the book. Any material or medium that you would like to work with is fine, from pencil and paper to paint to yarn. Any aspect of the book will work, as well, from character relationships to plot to themes.

Assignment #3: The Personal Reflection

This is your personal response to The House on Mango Street. Using between 250 and 500 words describe **how you felt** about the book. Remember, it is perfectly fine not to like something we study in class, but you must be able to describe why you did or did not like it. The personal reflection is your chance to comment on any and all aspects of the book. Tell me what you thought and how it made you feel. Remember, this is about your *feelings and impressions*; **it should not be a summary of the plot**.

Here are *some* things you can think about if you aren't sure how to begin this assignment:

- What did you like (or not like) about the book?
- Did you like the way the story was structured? (vignettes that are loosely connected instead of chapters that follow a timeline) Why or why not?
- How did you relate to the characters and the events that happened to them?
- What did you most appreciate about the author's style?
- What (if anything) annoyed you about the book?

Assignment # 4: Your Vignette

The final portion of the summer assignment is for you to create your own, original vignette. Keep in mind some of Cisneros' topics (including identity, poverty, family, adolescence, and friendship). Think about using one of her vignettes as your model. Before you begin writing, re-read a few of Cisneros' vignettes in order to internalize her style. Read a vignette out loud a time or two so that you pick up on the rhythmic qualities of her style. Your piece should be between 250 and 500 words. The goal of this piece is to mimic Cisneros' style while painting a unique picture of who you are and what you value. This is your chance to exercise your creativity.



Make sure to put your name and the date on each of your assignments.

Format: Please type your assignments if possible. If you do not have access to a computer or word processor, then you may print your assignments neatly.

How will you be graded? All of these assignments will be graded according to the following rubric:

House on Mango Street Summer Assignment Rubric			
	EXCEPTIONAL	SATISFACTORY	UNACCEPTABLE
Work Quality	Student followed the assignment directions specifically and created a complete, organized, neat, error-free final product.	Student for the most part followed assignment directions and created a final product that contained all required components and was generally organized, neat and error-free.	Student failed to follow assignment directions and/or turned in an incomplete, disorganized, or error-filled final product.
Depth of Thought	Student went beyond the surface level of the assignment and attempted to make deep connections. Student went beyond the bare minimum and demonstrated creative, analytical thinking.	Student attempted to go beyond the minimum expectation and attempted creative, analytical thinking.	Student failed to demonstrate even a basic level of intellectual effort. Work demonstrates a lack of thought, in particular a lack of creative or analytical thought.

Please attempt to do exceptional work on all of these assignments.

You must bring all four of these assignments to class on the first day of school. (If you sent your letter by email in the summer, please print my reply to your letter and turn that in.) They will count toward your grade for the first nine-weeks. If you own your own copy of the book you should also bring it to class with you on the first day.

If you need help at any point over the summer, please feel free to email or call me. My cell phone number is 210-273-8586 and my email address is lsmith3@neisd.net.

Again, welcome to English I at ISA. I look forward to meeting you on the first day of school and receiving your email this summer!

Sincerely,

Laurie Smith