



WHITE PLAINS PUBLIC SCHOOLS
WHITE PLAINS HIGH SCHOOL
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Ellen Doherty
Principal

June 2019

Dear Ninth Grade English Honors Student:

We would like to wish you a wonderful, productive summer as you prepare for your first year at White Plains High School. As an incoming English 9 Honors student, you are required to read four books over the summer: *Everything I Never Told You*, by Celeste Ng, *The Distance Between Us: A Memoir* by Reyna Grande (please be sure to read the original version, not the young readers' edition), *The Pearl* by John Steinbeck, and *Siddhartha* by Hermann Hesse. You must also watch Chimamanda Ngozie Adichie's Ted Talk, "The Danger of a Single Story." Please watch this prior to reading *The Distance Between Us: A Memoir*.

You will also have to complete a written response, detailed on the next page. This essay is due on the first day of school.

In September, you will further have to demonstrate and apply your knowledge of the texts by completing a multiple choice test. You will be expected to recall specific details from the texts.

We have high expectations for a successful year ahead, and we look forward to seeing you in the fall!

Sincerely,

Monique Adams
Amy Estersohn
Cheryl Rosenka

Honors Written Summer Assignment

Due September 3, 2019

1. View Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's Ted Talk entitled, "The Danger of a Single Story" (available on YouTube). <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D9Ihs241zeg>

Take notes on the salient aspects of Adichie's talk. You will use these notes for your written commentary of the memoir. Think about the following questions while viewing:

- What is Adichie's central message?
- What does Chimamanda Adichie mean by "the single story"?
- What examples does she use to support her argument?
- What does she say about stereotypes?
- What parts of her speech stand out to you as particularly interesting or powerful?

2. Read *The Distance Between Us* by Reyna Grande.

Write a 2-3 page commentary on the memoir. **Do not simply summarize the Ted Talk and the memoir.** Instead, think about and incorporate the following ideas into your essay:

- Based on what you have read, how does Reyna Grande combat the "single story" of Mexican culture in her memoir?
- Do the characters and events in the memoir defy any stereotypes you may have had regarding Mexican culture? Explain your response.
- What do you believe is the central message of Grande's story? Explain.
- Attempt to connect some aspect of Grande's story to your own life and your own experiences.

There is no required format for your paper; however, it must be organized with an introduction, body paragraph(s), and conclusion. Your essay must be relatively error free, and it must synthesize the ideas presented in both the Ted Talk and the memoir. Your commentary must be 2-3 pages, typed, double-spaced, using 12-point Times New Roman font, and one-inch margins.