

## **9th Grade Summer Reading**

Welcome incoming 9th Graders! My name is Alex Perkins, and I will be your English teacher this year. During the summer, you will be required to read *Born a Crime* by Trevor Noah. Please read the book, complete the assignment, and submit your written response to my email ([aperkins@crms.org](mailto:aperkins@crms.org)) by the first day of classes. You will also need to bring the book with you on the first day of class; this will be a book that will remain part of our conversations during the beginning of the school year.

### **Brief Description of *Born a Crime*:**

“*Born a Crime* is the story of a mischievous young boy who grows into a restless young man as he struggles to find himself in a world where he was never supposed to exist. It is also the story of that young man’s relationship with his fearless, rebellious, and fervently religious mother—his teammate, a woman determined to save her son from the cycle of poverty, violence, and abuse that would ultimately threaten her own life.” (from Bookshop.org)

### **Some important things to think about as you approach this assignment:**

1. Give yourself enough time to relax and enjoy this book. Everyone is coming into this class with a different relationship to reading and that is a wonderful thing. Do your best to have a positive experience with this story and try not to get stressed out about the assignment. We will explore this book together as a class.
2. Audio versions of this book are available at most libraries and can be purchased. This is a wonderful resource to help develop reading skills, just be sure you are reading as you listen.
3. Experiment with underlining! Underline important sentences. It is a skill we will be developing throughout the school year, and this is a great place to start. Many of you are already comfortable with this, and this will help you understand and reference important parts of the book.

4. Be very careful when using online resources. It is acceptable to use online resources to help your understanding of a book, but be sure any ideas you express about the story represent your own thinking.

### **Part I: Read and underline**

- Underline short sections that give us important information about the main characters or develop important ideas within the story
- Underline short sections about events in the story that seem important to the plot
- Underline short sections of the book that are concerned with some of the following big ideas that the novel explores:

Racism

Family relationships

Coming of age

Language

Any other ideas you notice

Courage

Standing up for one's beliefs

Stereotypes

Identity

### **Part II: Written response**

Select five short quotations from the book, briefly explain what is happening at that point in the story, and then explain why this quote is important. I recommend finding sections that relate to the topics listed above. These responses should be roughly three to five sentences long (not including the quotation). Please use examples from the beginning, middle, and end of the story, and be sure to include the page where the quotation appears. Please submit this to my email before the first day of class.

Here is an example:

*“Language brings with it an identity and a culture, or at least the perception of it. A shared language says ‘We’re the same.’ A language barrier says ‘We’re different.’ The architects of apartheid understood this. Part of the effort to divide black people was to make sure we were separated not just physically but by language as well” (Noah, 49).*

*In this section of the book, Trevor explains how his ability to speak in many native South African languages allows him to be a “chameleon”, adapting to different social settings in order to find belonging or change other people’s perception of his race. Because Trevor is mixed race, which was illegal and uncommon at the time, he struggled to find his place in various settings. He was treated differently than his black cousins at home and was unsure who he should try to befriend at school since friend groups seemed to be based on race. By following his mother’s lead to become fluent in various languages, he could convince others of his black-ness, despite the color of his skin.*

Have a great summer and enjoy this book! Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or would like some clarification about this assignment.

You will get a completion grade for this assignment based on the following:

- You have an underlined copy of the book with you throughout the first week of school
- You submitted your written response on time, and it meets the above requirements

I look forward to meeting you all soon!

Alex Perkins

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