

McKinley Technology High School

Pre-AP English II Summer Reading Assignment

Welcome to Pre-AP English II! This class focuses on preparing you for college-level courses. We explore a wide variety of fiction and non-fiction texts throughout the school year. Enjoy your summer, and we look forward to seeing you prepared and ready to engage critically in the course next school year.

Materials:

The students are expected to do the summer assignment. The assignment is available on the school website, including an electronic copy of the reading.

Read the following text:

Richardson, Bryan. *Just Mercy*. Spiegel and Graw, 2014. (ISBN# 978-0-8129-9452-0) (Fiction)

Pick up a copy of the book at the *DC Library* or secure one from a local bookstore or *Amazon*. I recommend *Amazon* for used copies. **Strongly recommended: purchase your copy. Note that an eBook is also available on the McKinley Tech school website or <https://bit.ly/PreAPJustMercy>**

Requirements

- Complete all reading and annotations on time.
- Work must be of acceptable quality.

Part I (1): Read the Book

Read Bryan Stevenson's *Just Mercy*. As you read, pay close attention to how Stevenson uses narrative strategies—such as detailed settings, personal stories, legal cases, dialogue, and reflections on justice—to convey his point of view and illuminate the lived experiences of individuals and communities impacted by the criminal justice system.

Part II (2): Annotate the Book- Complete THREE Annotation Tasks Per Chapter

Read *Just Mercy* carefully and take detailed notes for each chapter in preparation for the in-class assessment when you return to school. As you read:

- 1)** Take notes chapter by chapter, not just by major sections or case groupings.
- 2) Select three annotation tasks and** record important events, key details, legal developments, and any questions that help you understand what is happening in each chapter.
- 3)** Pay attention to key individuals, conflicts, themes, and shifts in Stevenson's narrative as he moves between personal stories, legal cases, and reflections on justice.
- 4)** Your notes should help you track how Stevenson develops ideas such as mass incarceration, racial injustice, poverty, the criminalization of youth, mercy, and the struggle for dignity within the justice system.

Use the Pre-AP English Annotation Template to write quick notes as you read. Capture the main idea, one key piece of evidence, important vocabulary, and your own reaction. Keep your notes short but clear so you can use them later in class for discussions and assignments. Make sure each annotation helps you understand the text and connect it to what we're learning. Use the annotation for every chapter. Click [here](#) to download it. **Make sure to type your annotations** clearly so they are easy to read and useful for class discussions and assignments.

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Part III (3): Due Dates

You must complete reading and annotating *Just Mercy* by **August 28, 2026**. Your annotations and chapter notes will help prepare you for the in-class assessment. There will be an in-class assessment based on your reading no later than **September 11, 2026**. Be sure your notes are thorough, organized, and ready to support your understanding of the novel.

Part IV (4): Evaluation:

Your first major assessment (worth 20 points and placed in the Practice and Application category, which counts for 50% of your overall grade) will now be an in-class, three-paragraph, timed analytical writing response based on your reading of *Just Mercy*.

Part V (5): Necessary Materials

Necessary Materials:	
1) 3-Ring 2 Inch Binder dedicated for the course 2) Dividers 3) Paper 4) Sticky Notes	5) Blue, Black, and Green Pens 6) Orange, Pink, and Yellow Highlighters 7) DCPS One Drive Account

When do I need these materials? Please have the required materials by **August 30th, 2026**.

Arrange the 3-ring binder in 5 sections: (1) Warm-Ups, (2) Class Notes, (3) Composition, (4) Assignments/Rubrics, and (5) Other Materials (syllabus, Contract, Graded Papers).

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Category	4 Points (Strong)	3 Points (Good)	2 Points (Developing)	1 Point (Beginning)	0 Points
Key Words & Vocabulary Identify and define a minimum of ten Unfamiliar words.	Define 5 unfamiliar words clearly; show how word choice shapes meaning.	Define most unfamiliar words correctly.	definitions partly correct.	weak or missing definitions.	No keywords identified.
Main Idea Clearly identify the main idea of each section and support it with evidence.	Clearly identify the main idea of each section and support it with evidence.	Identifies the main ideas; some evidence is included.	Some ideas were identified, but not clear or supported.	Minimal attempt; ideas vague.	No main ideas identified.
Questions & Thinking Asks two questions, one prediction, one inference, and one meaningful reaction.	Ask thoughtful questions; strong predictions/inferences; meaningful reactions.	Good questions; some analysis and inferences.	Basic questions; limited thinking	Minimal questions; surface-level reactions.	No questions or reactions.
Connections: To Self To Text To World	Make meaningful connections that deepen understanding.	Clear and relevant connections.	Some weak or unclear connections.	Minimal attempt.	No connections.
Summary: Use active, strong verbs, and the present tense.	Write four clear sentences per chapter capturing the main meaning.	The summary is clear and accurate.	The summary is incomplete, unclear, or too long.	Minimal attempt; unclear.	No summaries written.