

May 2009



English  
Department

Dear English II Honors Student:

It is a pleasure to welcome you to what I believe will be an exciting and stimulating course in World Literature, providing an array of unique educational approaches that promise to be challenging and provocative.

I have selected both *The Power of One* by Bryce Courtenay and *Life of Pi* by Yann Martel for your summer reading as introductions to perspectives and experiences within World Literature. You will take a test on these readings during the first week of school and will explore these novels throughout the school year. In preparation for the discussions and writing assignments that will accompany an analysis of these novels, please close read the texts, keeping in mind the following:

- Born in Spain and raised in Costa Rica, France, Mexico, and Canada, Yann Martel creates a truly global experience in his bestselling novel *Life of Pi*. The story of a young East Indian boy named Pi, this book will take you where few works of fiction have ventured – to a lifeboat where the boy joins a hyena, an orangutan, a zebra, and a Bengal tiger. And even though this novel is a work of fantasy, it is a book about the power of the imagination, storytelling, and faith. ISBN# 0-15-602732-1
- Born in South Africa, Bryce Courtenay says he “grew up among farm folk and the African people.” After going to boarding school, learning to box, wandering the bush with a drunk German music teacher, initiating a weekend school for Blacks at his high school, and being banned from his own country, he moved to Australia, where he eventually wrote *The Power of One*, with events based on his own life. *The Power of One*, according to *The New York Times*, “has everything: suspense, the exotic, violence; mysticism, psychology and magic; schoolboy adventures, drama in the boxing ring.” Moreover, it illustrates South Africa’s brutal era of apartheid and the racial healing for which the country has had to struggle. ISBN # 0-34-541005-X

I think you will enjoy reading these two novels this summer. If you’d like any other recommendations for books to read once you finish these, feel free to contact me and I’d be happy to suggest some of my favorites! I look forward to working with you this fall. Have a fantastic summer!

Sincerely,

Mrs. Janelle Kroenung

## Close Reading for Summer Novels

Close reading means reading *actively*—with a pen or pencil in your hand (**not** a highlighter)—and marking your book with as many responses as possible to what you are reading. You should have questions, ideas, and feelings as you read. Here are some guidelines:

1. **Circle** the names of new characters and of unfamiliar words.
2. **Underline** passages or **put an asterisk \*** beside passages you think are important in the novel. Next to any underlined or asterisked passages you should write comments. You don't have to do this for all passages you mark.
3. Put a **question mark** beside anything that you do not understand or would like to ask about in class. Passages that confuse you need to be clarified; mark them and then use the teacher to help clarify.
4. When you finish each chapter, go back to the top of the first page and **give the chapter a title. You must do this for each chapter.**
5. Also, when you complete each chapter, use the space at the beginning or end of the chapter to write a **brief summary** of what has happened. Your summary may be a short paragraph or it may be a list of what happened. Do this immediately after you finish the chapter. **You must do this for each chapter.**
6. **No highlighting.**