Dear Class of 2021,

Welcome! We are excited that you have chosen to be part of our Pre-AP (Advanced Placement) program. Each one of the English Language Arts classes on the AP track requires the completion of a summer reading assignment. After completion of the assigned reading, each student will complete the included assignments to facilitate their understanding of the book.

Over the summer, it is important to keep reading, writing, and thinking critically in preparation for the upcoming school year. The English Language Arts Department at Blue Valley High School believes that integrating summer reading into the curriculum helps students transition into the new school year more quickly. According to the American Library Association, students who read over the summer are more likely to build life-long reading habits and keep up their basic reading skills. Additionally, summer reading can generate interest in libraries, books, and reading in general. We also like to use this text as a touchstone from which to start the school year. Instruction can begin immediately since students have already read the text.

Attached you will find the assignment for the summer reading requirement. All students registered for HELA 9 will read Of Mice and Men by John Steinbeck. You may check out your required book from your local library or you may purchase it from a bookstore. Please note that the entire assignment is due Monday, August 28—we strongly recommend that you work on this assignment prior to the start of school. Have a wonderful summer!

Sincerely,

Mrs. Kelsey Bakalar
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Mrs. Katie Davis
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Miss Mackenzie Fuller
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Mr. Ryan Mahoney
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I have received a copy of the 2017 Honors English Language Arts Summer Reading Assignment, including the letter and directions. I realize that the novel should be read by Monday, August 21, 2017 and the two assignments (chart and article) should be completed by Monday, August 28, 2017.

Name ____________________________________________________________ (printed)

Signature ______________________________________________________
Of Mice and Men was chosen as the summer reading book because it exemplifies all necessary components in preparation for Advanced Placement classes. The literary merit of the novel has withstood the test of time and will be an extremely relevant teaching tool in the classroom.

Expectations and Assessment

Due Dates and Grading:
- The students need to finish reading the novel by Monday, August 21.
- The summer reading assignments (chart and article) will be due Monday, August 28.
- The assigned chart will be worth 15 points and the article will be worth 10 points.
- Your assignment must be **typed** in a 12 pt. font (Times New Roman or Arial) and include a cover page that includes:
  - Your Name
  - Teacher’s Name
  - HELE 9/your hour
  - Due Date

Week One and Two of School:
- Discussion over novel and articles
- Writing Assignments
  - Prompt: Examine one theme from the novel and discuss its relevance to today’s society. Use evidence from both the novel and your article to support your claim.

Cheating and Plagiarism
- BVHS will not tolerate academic cheating or plagiarism in any form. It will result in a score of a zero on the assignment and may result in disciplinary action.
- Learning to think and work independently is part of the educational process.
Of Mice and Men Study Guide
Background Information

Author Biography

John Steinbeck (1902-1968) was born in Salinas, California. He came from a middle class family. His father was the county treasurer, and his mother was a former schoolteacher. She inspired and encouraged his love of books and reading.

He attended Stanford University, but he did not graduate. In his twenties, he traveled to New York City with the dream of supporting himself as a freelance writer. When his efforts failed, he went home to California. He then began to work seriously on novels and short stories.

When Steinbeck was a young adult, he spent his summer vacations working as a hired hand on local ranches. His interactions with the people he met during those summers greatly influenced the characters he created throughout his career. In an interview following the publication of Of Mice and Men, Steinbeck revealed that all the characters in the novel are composites based on real people.

Steinbeck said in his essay “Advice for Beginning Writers” (1963) that he still felt afraid every time he began writing a story, even though he had a long successful writing career behind him. He went on to say that a writer who does not experience this fear may not have an appropriate respect for the art of writing.

Book Summary

Of Mice and Men was published in 1937. The story epitomizes the themes and ideas that Steinbeck propounded throughout his novels: the plight of the laborers, the perils of isolation, and the hope for a better future. Set in California during the Great Depression, Of Mice and Men is an excellent vehicle to learn about the life and times of migrant workers in the 1930s. With its beautiful descriptive passages, easily accessible dialogue, and fast-paced timeline, it is very easy to follow along. Readers are drawn in by the memorable characters that, ironically, represent a segment of society that was largely ignored in its day. Analyzing the balance of power, the importance of friendship, and the role of dreams in our lives allows readers to gain a deeper understanding of the text while applying valuable lessons to their own lives.

Character List

- **Lennie Small**: a nondescript, hulking creature of a man whose childlike mentality continually gets him into scrapes with men who neither respect nor understand him.
- **George Milton**: a small, lean man, used to fighting for his place in the world. He oversees andprotects Lennie.
- **Slim**: a tall skinner (a highly skilled mule-driver) that serves as a counselor to the ranch hands.
- **Candy**: The one-handed ranch worker who has lived past his prime.
- **Curley’s wife**: a woman who is not respected by the men on the ranch.
- **Crooks**: the African-American stable buck is called Crooks because of a spinal injury inflicted by a kicking horse.
- **Curley**: the boss’s son, he possesses a jealous, cruel streak.
Unit Essential Questions: What makes a person an individual? How does conformity hinder or enhance personal identity? Why is identity important?

Part I: Complete the following chart using your book.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thematic Idea</th>
<th>Thematic Statement</th>
<th>Quotation</th>
<th>Commentary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>(What does Steinbeck say about the topic? Please write in a complete sentence.)</td>
<td>(Provide evidence from the novel that supports the statement. CITE PAGE NUMBERS.)</td>
<td>(Why is this important in society today?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loyalty</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isolation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Friendship</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The American Dream</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Part II: Article Assignment

Find an article of at least 500 words that appeals to you and that parallels any of the thematic ideas presented on your Thematic Chart. You must provide a printed copy, and be prepared to discuss it in class.

- The article can be from the local, state, national or world newspaper/magazine.
- *** NO entertainment, gossip, or advertisement kinds of articles.
- Read the article and highlight any evidence that can be connected to one or several of the novel's themes/big ideas. Explain in the margins (next to the text you have highlighted) what the connection is to the novel.
- You should have at least three to five annotations (highlighted text with commentary).
Evidence Chart Rubric

_____ A – Excellent
Chart includes 15 entries total.
Theme is accurate and written as a complete sentence.
Information is cited with page numbers.
Evidence is insightful and thorough.
Commentary is clear, connects directly to the quote, and demonstrates strong depth of thought.

_____ B – Above Average
Chart includes 12-14 entries total.
Theme is somewhat accurate and written as a complete sentence.
Information is cited with page numbers.
Evidence is thorough but is less thoughtful.
Commentary is clear, connects to the quote, and demonstrates some depth of thought.

_____ C – Average (the included sample chart falls here)
Chart includes a minimum of 10-12 entries total.
Theme is either inaccurate or not in the form of a complete sentence.
Most information is cited with page numbers.
Evidence is basic.
Commentary is either unclear, does not connect to quote, or lacks depth of thought.

_____ D – Needs Improvement
Chart includes fewer than 10 entries total.
Theme is in accurate and not in the form of a complete sentence.
Little information is cited with page numbers.
Commentary is attempted but does not reflect understanding.