

English IB and Pre-IB Summer Assignments

Robinson High School

Rising Seniors (Class of 2027)

Ghachar Ghochar Summer Reading Assignment

India is a linguistically diverse country with 22 scheduled languages, thirteen different scripts, and over 700 dialects. *Ghachar Ghochar* by Vivek Shanbhag was originally written in the South Indian language, Kannada, and is the author's first work to be translated into English.

The novel is superficially about a Bangalore family's rise to the middle class and how this new wealth transforms that family. However, it is about so much more:

- It is a parable for economically rising India.
- The clash between traditional and modern values; note how the "new" is encroaching on and changing the old.
- Feminism in a patriarchal culture.
- The work of translation – how language both hides and reveals as well as the difficulty of explaining things not just culture to culture, but family to family.

The book is a short read. I suggest that you read the whole book in one sitting then carefully re-read chapter 1, knowing the ending.

Annotate for the following motifs:

1. Highlight in YELLOW; annotate in black ink: The ants on the cover are foreign bodies that invade the family's space, disrupting their stiflingly organized world and in whose destruction the family takes growing pleasure. As you read, notice who or what are the metaphorical ants: disruptive characters or forces that the family destroys.
2. Red ink: weapons, explosions, allusions to warfare, language that is connotatively combative or warlike. Be sure to identify the literary device and the effect.
3. Highlight or box in ORANGE; annotate in blue: Homes, rooms, interiors – one critic noted how Shambhag's focus on interiors and the close-knit family unit creates a claustrophobic effect. Annotate where and how that happens. Note other effects as well.
4. Highlight in GREEN, annotate in blue or black: "balance" or balancing.
5. Highlight in PINK, annotate in blue or black: The title is composed of two nonsense words that Anita's family invents to describe something irrevocably entangled (Shanbhag 73-76). "Ghachar Ghochar" also means knotted up with the wrong people. Where do you see these "knots"? OR where do you see the inability to communicate via words?
6. Identify five places where you do not know the culture: research the items and record on an index card how it deepens your understanding of the novella. For example, it is helpful to know that "sona" means gold. I have also included a brief article on the "joint family" that I found extremely helpful. Record your research on the front of a large notecard; note the source on the reverse. Examples:

- Domestic abuse in India

- Wedding traditions/doweries/arranged marriages
- Food
- Deepavali
- Places, i.e. where the narrator honeymooned with his wife. Bangalore and Hyderabad

The Joint Family in India

In *Ghachar Ghochar*, the narrator lives in a joint family, and it is really this sociological unit that has been the mainstay of Indian life for centuries.

A joint family is defined as a unit of extended members of a family all living together under one roof, who also cook and eat together. Usually driven by patriarchal order, the patriarch and his wife and sons and their wives and children and so on form one group. A joint family is compared to socialism where each contributes according to ability and takes according to need. One of the common negatives against a joint family, is that it contributes to people being slackers. The narrator in *Ghachar Ghochar* for example, simply mooches off the family's collective earnings without making any money himself. Typically joint families have a common "god" that is worshipped. Property is usually divided equally among the male descendants.

In a country where social security nets are frayed, if they exist at all, joint families act as insurance for aging parents and the infirm because they get taken care of. Widows and orphans are similarly attended to. A lack of privacy and infighting, especially over allocation of property, are said to be additional challenges of the joint family structure.

A joint family was better suited for India's agrarian society, where efficient division of labor for farm chores and a lack of good transportation contributed to members sticking together. This is, however, changing in the new India where the new jobs are in cities, forcing younger generations to migrate. Influx of western attitudes about individuality are also slowly eroding the joint family structure in India.

Poornima Apte from BookBrowse Recommends, March 22, 2017

First Semester Texts (Please purchase these and have them with you August 10)

Ghachar Ghochar ISBN 978-93-5264-237-3

Survival in Auschwitz by Primo Levi ISBN 978-0-684-82680-6

Perfume: the Story of a Murderer by Patrick Suskind ISBN 0-394-55084-6

Second Semester Texts

Master Harold...and the boys by Athol Fugard ISBN 978-0-307-47520-6

Sweat by Lynn Nottage ISBN 978-1-55936-532-1

Medea by Euripides translated by Oliver Taplin ISBN 978-0-226-20345-4

Bloomsbury Edition of Top Girls by Caryl Churchill ISBN 978-1-3500-2857-9

Rising Juniors (Class of 2028)

The Thief and the Dogs by Naguib Mahfouz Summer Reading Assignment

ISBN 9780385264624

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Overview

Naguib Mahfouz's novel *The Thief and the Dogs* explores themes of betrayal, revenge, alienation, despair, and existential struggle in post-revolutionary Egypt.

Assignment

- 1. Read and annotate the full novel:** At least 5 annotations per chapter. Each annotation should identify a device (diction, syntax, imagery, etc.) and explain the effects it has.
 - Example:** The short declarative sentences illustrate his emotional suppression.
- 2. Prepare a close reading commentary.**
 - Select *one* extract of between 20-40 *continuous* lines. Choose a global issue and write a clear statement of how your extract comments on that issue. For example: "The extract demonstrates that change is possible only through reflection and acceptance."
 - Find a unifying literary aspect of your extract. For example, moon imagery might recur in a night scene, tying that scene together, or the entire extract might be a meal scene, a party, a fight, an escape, or something else that makes it more than a random selection of text.
 - Now support your statement about the global issue with at least 7 direct annotations from the extract. Explain how at least three devices/choices help develop the global issue. Prepare to speak for 5 minutes about how your extract develops and supports your statement about the global issue.

Global Issues	
Loyalty and Betrayal	Lingering Effects of War
Justice and Revenge	Classism, Class Dynamics, or Inequality
Crime and Marginalization	Coping with Grief
Categorical vs. Nuanced Thinking	Self-Destructive Behavior
The Failures of Ideology	Moral and Ethical Decay
Gender Dynamics	Guilt and Redemption
Corruption of Power	Humanity and Dehumanization
Trauma, Alienation, and Isolation	Sources of Meaning: Politics, Family, Faith

Key Authorial Choices to Consider and Annotate
Animal imagery (especially dogs) develops character , theme , and the significance of the title.
Setting: The Sheikh's House, Nur's Apartment, Rauf's House, Tarzan's Café, The Cemetery, Martyr's tomb, and Cairo help develop characterization , symbolism , mood , and theme .
Light and darkness imagery: details about the moon or its absence, personification of the night
Narration & Syntax: fragmented narrative, terse language, interior monologue, stream of consciousness, surrealism, time markers/confusion of time
Food and meal scenes: At Rauf's house, at Nur's apartment, and at the Café (characterization and symbolism)
Clothing: Pay attention to what the characters wear and how it helps <i>characterize</i> them.

Rising Sophomores (Class of 2029)

Into the Wild Summer Reading Assignment 2026-27

Part One: Read and Annotate

When we return from summer break, you will complete a supervised, in class AP style writing assessment using **ONLY** your book and annotations. Your summer work should prepare you to think critically, write analytically, and discuss the novel in depth.

This assignment is designed to reward authentic reading and thinking rather than polished perfection. Thoughtful engagement with the text is more valuable than summary. All annotations and written thinking should happen directly in the novel.

Essential Questions: As you read, track BOTH essential questions throughout the novel:

1. To what extent is the search for identity worth personal risk?
2. Does *Into the Wild* ultimately portray independence as admirable, dangerous, or something more complicated?

Your annotations should help you build evidence for both arguments, notice contradictions and ambiguity, and analyze how Krakauer shapes the reader's thinking. While your annotations should span the entire work, you should choose **THREE** "anchor chapters" across the novel where one or both questions become especially important. Write the essential question(s) clearly at the beginning of those chapters. Obviously, you will have meaningful annotations in these chapters, but these three chapters should **not** include ALL of your annotations.

Annotation Requirements

You must complete:

- a **minimum** of 24 meaningful annotations spread throughout the **entire novel**
- annotations may **NOT** be clumped into only a few chapters; you should have three anchor chapters
- at least 90% of annotations must identify and analyze a rhetorical/literary device or narrative choice
- at least 6 annotations must include a personal reaction, question, disagreement, or connection

Simple highlighting without commentary will not count; annotations without highlighted text evidence will not count.

For each rhetorical/literary annotation, explain:

1. the device or narrative choice
2. the effect on the reader
3. Krakauer's possible purpose

Strong annotations move beyond summary and explore **HOW** Krakauer shapes meaning.

Narrative Structure and Rhetorical Analysis Guide

Narrative structure is one of Krakauer's most important rhetorical tools. Possible structure choices include:

- interviews
- flashbacks
- shifts in timeline

- parallel stories
- historical allusions
- journal entries
- postcards and letters
- epigraphs
- juxtaposition
- shifts in perspective
- narrative interruption

For narrative structure annotations: narrative structure IS the device. Example: narrative Structure (parallel story) reveals Krakauer's connection to McCandless, particularly in...

Rhetorical and Literary Device Bank

Language and Style

- diction
- syntax
- repetition
- parallel structure
- rhetorical questions
- fragmented syntax

Figurative Language

- imagery
- symbolism
- metaphor
- simile

Narrative and Rhetorical Choices

- juxtaposition
- irony
- anecdote
- allusion
- pacing
- contrast
- shifts
- ambiguity
- point of view

Characterization

- direct characterization
- indirect characterization

Appeals

- ethos
- pathos
- logos

Themes

- nature
- identity
- self vs society
- freedom
- isolation
- ambition
- purpose
- relationships
- success

When annotating thematic threads, **some form of rhetorical/literary device should also be attached.**

Helpful Commentary Frames

- Krakauer positions the reader to...
- This juxtaposition emphasizes...
- The shift from ___ to ___ suggests...
- By including ___, Krakauer complicates...
- _____ imagery reinforces the idea that...
- Krakauer may structure the chapter this way in order to...

Strong Example:

“Krakauer interrupts McCandless’s story with another adventurer’s experience. Narrative Structure (parallel story). This positions the reader to compare McCandless to a larger tradition of romantic isolation rather than viewing him as completely unique.”

Annotations Rubric (30 Points)

Annotations are spread throughout the novel and not clumped together	5
Minimum quantity completed	5
At least 90% of annotations identify a rhetorical/literary device or narrative choice	10
Annotations explain effect on reader and/or author’s purpose	5
Annotations demonstrate thoughtful engagement and personal thinking	5

Part Two: Nature Reflection Photo Assignment (10 Points)

Take ONE original photo in nature that captures an idea connected to *Into the Wild*.

Students will create a one-page visual reflection inspired by *Into the Wild*. The reflection should include an original nature photo (you need to be in the photo), a 300-word written reflection, one quotation from the novel, and at least one moment of rhetorical or literary analysis. Students are encouraged to present their work creatively through color, texture, handwritten elements, artistic formatting, maps, sketches, layered design, or symbolic imagery. This assignment is not graded on artistic talent, but rather on thoughtfulness, effort, creativity, and meaningful connection to the novel.

10 Point Rubric

Includes all required components: original nature photo, 300 word reflection, quotation from the novel, and one rhetorical/literary analysis moment	2
Reflection demonstrates thoughtful connection to <i>Into the Wild</i> and one or more essential questions	3
Reflection includes meaningful analysis rather than plot summary	2
Visual presentation is creative, intentional, and thoughtfully designed	2
Assignment demonstrates effort, originality, and overall completion	1

A Note about the 2025-26 Booklist

(please download a copy of this so you have access to the Amazon links)

Dear Parents and Students,

I would like you to purchase all novels before the start of the school year. I do book checks digitally, through Canvas, typically two weeks before we start a new unit.

This past year many students did not have their novels on time, so teachers had to create PDFs of portions of the novel, or scramble to find an online version of the novel to start students off. This will not happen if you purchase all the novels/plays ahead of time.

The novels are locked in. We will not be making any changes in the middle of the year. Below are the novel links, with ISBNs included. It is important that we all have the same novels, especially *Siddhartha*, by Hermann Hesse, as that is a work in translation. If your student has a different translation, several assignments will be confusing for them.

Just a reminder, you must purchase physical copies of the works. While Audible is always a nice addition, students must be able to write in their novels.

Looking forward to an amazing year!

Buffy Vassey Buffy.vassey@hcps.net

REMINDER: THESE ARE THE EXACT VERSIONS STUDENTS NEED; ISBN MATTERS; NO USED COPIES PLEASE!

Into the Wild *Into the Wild* Jon Krakauer (Summer read)

Siddhartha *Siddhartha* Hermann Hesse

Their Eyes Were Watching God *Their Eyes Were Watching God* Zora Neale Hurston

Passing *Passing* Nella Larsen

Macbeth *Macbeth* Shakespeare

Please keep your *Sadlier Oxford Vocabulary* workbook, as well. We will resume vocabulary work in tenth grade.

Rising Freshmen (Class of 2030)

***Ender's Game* Summer Reading Assignment**

Please read *Ender's Game* before the first day of class, August 10. This text supports the first unit which is the Hero's Journey, an archetype that continues throughout the rest of the year. There will be a detailed reading test on the second day of class.

You do not have to purchase a particular edition this time:

Ender's Game by Orson Scott Card

In addition, students should purchase *A Summer Life* by Gary Soto and have it on the first day of school. The ISBN number is 978-0-440-21024-5.

The ninth grade team wants all of our students to have the same texts so please purchase these editions of the books:

Oedipus Rex translated by Robert Fagles ISBN 0-14-044.425 4

The Lord of the Flies by William Golding ISBN 987-0399506437

Oxford School Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet ISBN 978-0-19-832166-8

What is the What by Dave Eggers ISBN 978-0-307-38590-1