

THE AMERICAN EXPERIENCE READING PROJECT

What does it really mean to be an American? What is America, anyway?

The books that we read in class for Junior English are classics by American authors about the America they saw – but they can't begin to capture the entirety of the true American experience. Throughout the course of this school year, you will be choosing six books (three per semester) to read that will help fill in the gaps. Some are classics as well; some, however, are new, or focus on a narrow niche of American life (Black inner-city high school students? Amish teenagers? People with depression? NBA players? Pioneer women? Contemporary American Indian teenagers? Muslim immigrants immediately post-9/11?).

Those of you who took sophomore English from me will recognize that this is similar to SLIRP. However, it has a slightly different focus in order to enrich your American literature experience. In addition, this project will help prepare you for Senior Government and your life as an informed adult in the United States. Junior year is a time when you seriously begin the transition from child to adult, and part of that is the transition from reading children's books to reading more challenging – whether in terms of content or verbiage - texts.

For each AERP book that you read, you will complete and submit a small packet in lieu of a formal book report or major book presentation. These packets are available in my room or on my website. At the end of each semester you will do a presentation that incorporates what you've learned or discovered through reading the books you chose.

Your books should include:

- At least 1 fiction
- At least 1 nonfiction
- At least 1 written after 1990
- At least 1 that takes place between 1900-1975
- At least 1 that takes place before 1900
- At least 1 that has a protagonist who is not your gender
- At least 1 that has a protagonist who is not of your primary ethnicity (race) or culture (religion, etc.)

One book may fulfill more than one of the above requirements.

AERP Books:

- Must be written by an American author
- Must be about life in the United States (historical or contemporary)
- May not be fantasy or science fiction unless approved by Mrs. Baker
- May be nonfiction but not how-to/instructional books
- Should be at the appropriate reading level; unless you have special accommodations stating otherwise, this means that books should be at a high school or adult reading level.
- Must be at least 150 pages long unless approved by Mrs. Baker

Books longer than 400 pages may count as two books if approved by Mrs. Baker beforehand.

The easiest way to make sure that a book is approved for AERP is to choose it from the list of pre-approved AERP books, which is available online and in Mrs. Baker's classroom; keep in mind that not every book on this list may be appropriate for you based on reading level, mature content, etc.. (If you have reading accommodations, contact me for book suggestions.) Other books must be pre-approved by Mrs. Baker; if you read a book without having Baker's approval first, it may not count and you may receive a zero for your entire book project. As this list is updated when Mrs. Baker acquires new books throughout the year, new versions will be posted in the classroom and online.