

Honors English 300 Summer Reading Assignment

Who Gets Heard in America?

Welcome to Honors English 300!

This year, we will explore literature that asks difficult questions about identity, voice, power, isolation, justice, and the American experience. Many of the texts we read - from *Spoon River Anthology* to *The Catcher in the Rye* to *Fences* - examine who is listened to, who is ignored, and how people try to make themselves understood.

Your summer assignment is designed to begin that conversation.

Your Task

Step 1: Read the three short stories listed below:

- “The Paper Menagerie” by Ken Liu
- “The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas” by Ursula K. Le Guin
- “The Veldt” by Ray Bradbury

As you read, think about:

- Which voices are respected?
- Which voices are ignored or silenced?
- How do identity, culture, class, race, age, gender, or circumstance affect who gets heard?
- What is the author trying to say about American society?

Step 2: Complete the “American Voice Journal” for each story. Make sure to print one for each story (which means three total). Your “American Voice Journal” must be handwritten.

A Note from Mrs. Bowden

This is NOT a packet of comprehension questions.

I am much more interested in your thinking, your interpretations, your questions, and your reactions than “right answers.”

American Voice Journal: “The Paper Menagerie”

Complete ALL FOUR sections below.

1. Meaningful Passage

Directions: Choose ONE passage from the story that stood out to you. Be sure to include the quotation, then answer the questions below:

- Why did this passage matter?
- What does it reveal about the story’s message or themes?
- What does it suggest about who gets heard — or ignored?

Length: One paragraph

2. Voice & Perspective Reflection

Directions: Choose ONE character or narrator, then response to the questions below:

- What shapes this character’s voice?
- What pressures influence them?
- Do people listen to them? Why or why not?
- How does the author make readers sympathize (or not sympathize) with them?

Length: One paragraph

3. Connection to America

Directions: In one well written paragraph, respond to ONE of the following prompts:

Option A: How does this story connect to issues or conversations happening in America today?

or

Option B: What argument does this story make about society, identity, or power?

or

Option C: What group, perspective, or experience does this story highlight that is often overlooked?

Length: One paragraph

4. Your Question

Directions: Write ONE thoughtful discussion question about the story and be prepared to present it to the class.

A strong question:

- does not have one simple answer
 - encourages debate or interpretation
 - connects to theme, society, or human behavior
- Good Example: Why do people sometimes accept unfair systems even when they know they are wrong?
 - Weak Example: What color was the character's shirt?

American Voice Journal: “The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas”

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