

English Grade 7

Summer Assignment 2024

Mrs. Okoniewski

tokoniewski@theparkschool.org

For your summer reading assignment, you will read a book that tells the story of Hà, a ten-year-old girl who must flee Saigon with her family during the Vietnam War and seek refuge in the United States. For all 10 years of her life, Hà has only known Saigon: the thrills of its markets, the joy of its traditions, the warmth of her friends close by, and the beauty of her very own papaya tree. But now the Vietnam War has reached her home. Hà and her family are forced to flee as Saigon falls, and they board a ship headed toward hope. Author Thanhha Lai bases Hà's story on her own childhood experiences and wrote this book as a series of first-person verse poems, each 1–3 pages in length, that span the course of a single year. The book is:



[Inside Out and Back Again](#) by Thanhha Lai

ISBN 978-0061962790

You will need a **small marble composition book** (college-ruled) to complete this assignment, and you will use this same notebook for journaling in class for the remainder of the school year.

This summer work will be collected on the first day back to school in September.

Task #1: Reading of the poem “Maps” & Journal

Read the poem, “Maps,” by Yesenia Montilla (see attached).

In your composition journal **label, number**, and in your own handwriting, dedicate two pages to the poem by responding to each of the following:

1. Write down any interesting words or phrases
2. What do you notice about how the poem is structured?
3. List any questions you have after reading the poem. What do you wonder?
4. How do you think the poet/speaker feels about maps?
5. How do you think maps contribute to the way we understand the world?
6. How do you think maps are used to convey certain ideas about different places in the world?
7. The speaker of the poem outlines the disadvantages of maps. Do you think that maps and borders have any positive traits, or do you agree with the speaker? If you believe that maps have positive traits, what are they?
8. In the poem, the speaker is separated from someone they care about and this is made more painful because they are separated by lines on the map. Why is it painful to be separated from someone you care about? In your opinion, do the lines on maps physically and emotionally divide us from others?

Task #2: Inside Out and Back Again Reading & Notes

Students should read Lai’s novel over the summer and take notes **in the book** as they read. In addition to reading and taking notes, each student will keep a reading journal that charts his/her experience reading *Inside*

Out and Back Again. Annotations (or notes in the margins) will be a focus of the class during the school year, so each student should practice them over the summer.

Annotations can take many forms but are mostly used to make observations about plot, characters, and major themes (*Identity, Coming-of-Age, Language/Communication, or being an Outsider*). Your book should look ‘worked in’. This summer, I want you to focus the notes you take on the protagonist and narrator, *Hà*.

What do we know about her character?

What pages and scenes feature important moments?

How does she change over the course of the novel?

In what ways is she an outsider?

*What details inform readers about her identity? (In other words, what makes *Hà*, *Hà*?)*

How is she different from those around her?

In addition to the notes focused on *Hà*, you should highlight, underline, and/or mark any passages that you find particularly important or significant. Then, write in the margins (marginalia), jot some notes about why you marked that passage.

Why is this scene or passage in the book so important, do you think?

Pay specific attention to scenes in which *Hà* feels or is treated like an outsider or telling you about her identity and family life. Be aware of the notes you are taking. By no means should the entire book be highlighted and/or underlined. You should be able to search your notes quickly during class discussions.

Task 3: Inside Out and Back Again Journal

In addition to reading and taking notes, each student will keep a reading journal that charts his/her experience reading *Inside Out and Back Again*. You will complete one journal entry for each of the sections listed below. It is highly suggested that you do not wait until after you have read the entire novel to complete your journal entries! You can break down the assignment into smaller chunks by reading one section and completing the assigned journal entry for that section.

Use the same marbled composition notebook as the poem above and label all responses accordingly.

In your own handwriting, include the following for each of the sections noted below.

Section/Page #s	Detail/Evidence	Page #	Inference/Reasoning
	<p><i>Detail about Ha</i> OR <i>Detail that helps develop one of the themes (Identity, Coming-of-Age, Language/Communication, or being an Outsider)</i></p> <p>Example: “Everyone must smile no matter how we feel.”</p>	<p><i>Where did you find this detail/evidence?</i></p> <p>Page 1</p>	<p><i>What this shows about Ha’s interests, traits, values, beliefs, etc.</i> OR <i>What lesson or moral is being conveyed?</i> <i>List any key words or phrases.</i></p> <p>Ha does what she is told or what is expected of her but seems to cover or hide her real feelings.</p> <p>‘Must’ indicates there is no choice</p>

Part I, pp 1-69			
<p>Part I Summary/Reflection: Write approximately <u>1-paragraph</u> (5-6 sentences) summarizing and highlighting the action that occurred in pp 1-69, and <u>1-paragraph</u> (5-6 sentences) reflecting on any connections you can make with Hà, her emotions, how she's changed, and/or another text you have read or even connect Hà and your own world (What if this was your life?).</p>			
Part II, pp 73-111			
<p>Part II Summary/Reflection: Write approximately <u>1-paragraph</u> (5-6 sentences) summarizing and highlighting the action that occurred in pp 73-111, and <u>1-paragraph</u> (5-6 sentences) reflecting on any connections you can make with Hà, her emotions, how she's changed, and/or another text you have read or even connect Hà and your own world (What if this was your life?).</p>			
Part III, pp 115-234			
<p>Part III Summary/Reflection: Write approximately <u>1-paragraph</u> (5-6 sentences) summarizing and highlighting the action that occurred in pp 115-234, and <u>1-paragraph</u> (5-6 sentences) reflecting on any connections you can make with Hà, her emotions, how she's changed, and/or another text you have read or even connect Hà and your own world (What if this was your life?).</p>			
Part IV, pp 237-260			
<p>Part IV Summary/Reflection: Write approximately</p>			

<p><u>1-paragraph</u> (5-6 sentences) summarizing and highlighting the action that occurred in pp 237-260, and</p> <p><u>1-paragraph</u> (5-6 sentences) reflecting on any connections you can make with Hà, her emotions, how she's changed, and/or another text you have read or even connect Hà and your own world (What if this was your life?).</p>			<p>Total- 4 long summaries & reflections</p>
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You should treat this reading journal as a personal object, a place to be and act and write as yourself. If you like to draw, draw. If you like to ask questions, ask questions. If you want to write about other characters or do research about the historical background of the book and write about that, go ahead. As long as you fulfill the general requirements of the assignment (i.e. summarize the action of each chapter and provide a personal reaction/analysis of the reading), you may do what else with it what you will.

Class Supply List- Please have the following on the first day back in September:

- 3-ring binder (1 ½ inch) & lined paper
- 5 Dividers (Label and place in binder: Literature, Greek/Latin, Tests/Quizzes, and Poetry)
- 1 marble composition book that is college-ruled for journaling (use the same as your summer work)
- pens/pencils/highlighters
- Post it notes for note-taking
- 2 boxes of tissues for classroom use (Please bring to English class our first day of class in September)
- 2 dry erase markers for classroom use (Please bring to English class our first day of class in September)

Required Texts - Please obtain the specific editions below **BEFORE** we return to school in September. It is imperative that you purchase the following editions; this will make finding passages in class that much easier.

[*Inside Out and Back Again*](#) by Thanhha Lai ISBN: 978-0061962790 (summer assignment)

[*Before We Were Free*](#) by Julia Alvarez ISBN: 978-0440237846

[*Haroun and the Sea of Stories*](#) by Salman Rushdie ISBN: 978-0140157376

The Merchant of Venice by William Shakespeare
[\(Cambridge School of Shakespeare edition\)](#) ISBN 978-1107615397

Maps

<https://poets.org/poem/maps>

Yesenia Montilla

for Marcelo

Some maps have blue borders
like the blue of your name
or the tributary lacing of
veins running through your
father's hands. & how the last
time I saw you, you held
me for so long I saw whole
lifetimes flooding by me
small tentacles reaching
for both our faces. I wish
maps would be without
borders & that we belonged
to no one & to everyone
at once, what a world that
would be. Or not a world
maybe we would call it
something more intrinsic
like forgiving or something
simplistic like river or dirt.
& if I were to see you
tomorrow & everyone you
came from had disappeared
I would weep with you & drown
out any black lines that this
earth allowed us to give it—
because what is a map but
a useless prison? We are all
so lost & no naming of blank
spaces can save us. & what
is a map but the delusion of
safety? The line drawn is always
in the sand & folds on itself
before we're done making it.
& that line, there, south of
el rio, how it dares to cover
up the bodies, as though we
would forget who died there
& for what? As if we could
forget that if you spin a globe
& stop it with your finger
you'll land it on top of someone
living, someone who was not
expecting to be crushed by thirst—