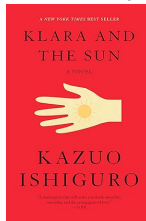


**US English 9-12**  
**2026 Summer Reading Project**

Summer reading is an expectation of all students. We unequivocally believe that you continue to grow as readers and thinkers with each new book you pick up. Summer reading isn't about perfection—it's about progress. The exposure to and study of complex ideas and artful writing often develops your own thinking and sophistication as a reader and writer. All Upper School students (9-12) will read a shared text with the goal of fostering conversation and community across the campus. Faculty and staff will also have an opportunity to share and be part of this collective experience.

This summer, we will be reading *Klara and the Sun* by Kazuo Ishiguro [[ISBN 978-0593311295](https://www.amazon.com/dp/0001056311)].

**DUE Date, Wednesday, September 9**



**TASK:**

Select **ONE** of the following prompts and reflect critically on the themes and ideas that Ishiguro develops in the novel:

**1. Thematic Response (Critical Writing)** You can print or share your paper with your fall semester English teacher. **Dedicate a minimum of 3-4 handwritten pages or a minimum of 500 words typed to your critical piece.** Select **two** or **three** themes that you see recurring in the novel. Write a critical response that **includes textual evidence** about how you found meaning within those themes (How might they show up in your own life, in your community, or within the national discourse?) *What did you find relatable or compelling or thought provoking, infuriating or problematic—and why?*

- **The Human Heart & Individuality** - *What makes a person truly unique? Can human consciousness, grief, or the "heart" be fully mapped and replicated by technology? What does it mean to genuinely love someone? Does love require a human soul? Does profound love mean wanting the best for another person, regardless of the personal cost? To what extent can love be created artificially? Who demonstrates more authentic empathy and "humanity" in the novel—the machines or the people?*
- **Privilege & The Price of Success** - *How does the societal pressure to succeed impact children and families? What are the ethical implications of "lifting" to gain an academic advantage? What is the true human cost of this ambition?*
- **Faith vs. Science** - *How do individuals make sense of a chaotic, uncontrollable world? How does Klara's deep faith and personification of the Sun contrast with the cold, scientific rationality of characters like Mr. Capaldi? Is there value in faith, even in a technologically advanced society? What is the role of faith in the human condition?*
- **Isolation & Connection** - *How do the characters cope with loneliness, illness, and grief? How does the novel explore human insecurity in the face of technological development? (mortality, obsolescence, loneliness and genetic*

enhancements) *In a hyper-advanced world, why are so many characters deeply isolated? Can an "Artificial Friend" or online interaction truly cure human loneliness?*

- **Environment & Industry** - *What is the relationship between technological progress and the natural world? How does the "Cootings Machine" symbolize environmental destruction and pollution, and how does the novel portray the healing power of nature?*
- **Ethics: Artificial Intelligence vs Humanity** - *What are the boundaries between person and machine? Is human consciousness truly unique? Is the human heart simply a highly complex biological machine? How does the novel explore human insecurity in the face of technological development? (mortality, obsolescence, loneliness and genetic enhancements) What are the moral consequences of creating sentient machines to serve us?*

## 2. Artistic Representation (Creative Choice)

Respond artistically to a theme or scene from the novel that speaks to you or explores an important idea from the book. This may include an extended [art/writing journal](#) of creative reflection that addresses one or more themes, a zine, painting, sculpture, collage, musical piece, triptych, clothing designs for Klara, original book cover, or other form of art. You should complete at least one full art journal page/piece to submit of any size or medium, but it must be your own original artwork and look as if you have spent some time on your creation.

Klara views the world quite differently from humans—often seeing things in distinct, geometric "boxes" or "panels" depending on her emotional state or processing load. Create an original piece of art that represents a pivotal scene in the book from Klara's specific visual perspective. Consider the intersection of humanity, technology and art or how Klara, a solar-powered android, perceives the world through fragmented boxes and distinct spatial views.

In addition to the artistic piece, you need to include a **150-word summary** that connects your creative piece to the text. The piece should delve into your response to the book, not just provide an illustration/artwork. The reflection should discuss what is being represented in your work (color choice, reasoning behind the selection of theme or scene, clarify any/all elements you included and why) and include at least two quotes to show how your art connects with Ishiguro's text.

## 3. Letter to the Author (Creative/Personal Response & Correspondence)

Write a thoughtful letter to Kazuo Ishiguro that responds to his novel. Share your reactions, reflections, and connections to the power of the story, while engaging with at least one major theme of the book. This is not a simple fan letter; it is a critical reflection on his artistic choices and the impact of his work. Make sure to write as if he might actually read it, being respectful and sincere. Write like it's a conversation, not an essay. The letter should be 1–2 pages typed (350–500 words) in Google Docs. You can print or share your letter with your fall semester English teacher.

### Your Letter Should Include:

- **A date/greeting/closing**
  - How would you address the author? ( Dear Mr. Ishiguro, ) How would you sign your letter (e.g, Sincerely, )
- **A personal reaction** to the memoir:

- What part of Klara’s story most affected or surprised you? How did the book make you feel? Did anything challenge your perspective?
- **A thematic connection:**
  - Discuss **ONE or TWO** of the following core areas and how they resonated with you
    - The Perspective: How choosing an Artificial Friend (AF) as a narrator changed your reading experience compared to a human narrator.
    - The Ending: Your reaction to Klara’s ultimate fate in the "Yard." Do you view her ending as tragic, peaceful, or something else entirely? Argue why you think Ishiguro chose to end her story this way.
    - The Big Picture: How this novel has shifted, challenged, or reinforced your own perspective on the rise of Artificial Intelligence in our current world.
- **Some thoughtful questions:**
  - What are at least **two** questions you would ask Ishiguro--about himself, about his book, about being a writer--if you could?
  - **A closing message of appreciation or reflection:**
  - What did you learn from his novel?

**Student Rubric**

	Does not meet expectation	Meets expectation	Exceeds expectation
Student work meets the length/component requirements for selected tasks.			
Student demonstrates thoughtful engagement with, and thorough understanding of, source material.			
(For task 1 only) Thematic analysis is supported by textual evidence.			
(For tasks 2 and 3 only) Creative choices reflect a serious engagement with the prompt and include commentary details that support reasoning.			

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact any one of us:

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