Before we dive headfirst into a year filled with reading and writing, let's spend some time during the summer months getting our brains to think—yes, think, not just allow our eyes to scan the tops of words in an effort to finish the book before the beginning of September and some dreaded assessment. No, our purpose must exist as something different from the status quo. You see, to find true growth, we must make our brains perform and seek knowledge, not just experience what the words in front of us say, but, more importantly, try to understand what they mean, what they show, and what they can do for our lives.

Note: All of the below should be prepared by the first day of school.

The Reading:

Access via the internet, then read and annotate the following:

Kenyon Commencement Speech 2005 - David Wallace Foster. A remarkably intelligent and brutally honest author, Foster provides a semi-diatribe to these graduates in an uncommon way that offers them insight, reality, and supposed clarity. You can search this up via Google.

You will not be required to write about this... yet... so please be sure to annotate as you read for ethos (how Foster builds his credibility), pathos (the emotions he attempts to evoke from his audience), and logos (the appeals aimed at the audience’s mind, their rational, thinking side).

Everyone must read and annotate the following books:

Overachievers: The Secret Life of Driven Kids - Alexandra Robbins. The book brings to light the pressure to achieve in high school. It documents the experiences of several likable, high-achieving high school students to show how our high-stakes educational culture may be spiraling out of control.

Educated: A Memoir- Tara Westover. The book delves into a part of America that is often ignored. Tara is born into a family living in middle-of-no-where Idaho. Her family does not believe in modern medicine or the education system as we know it. Ultimately Tara abandons her survivalist family’s values and ends earning her PhD from Cambridge University.

*Please be sure to secure your own copy of these books. You are required to make annotations in them, as well as have it with you in class.
The Assignments:

These texts all own a considerable level of success. Whether via the bestseller list or through critical acclaim, these authors have touched people in a way that generated thought and forged thinking. Given this, we need to ponder two simple yet complex ideas: how and why?

The conscious choices made by writers, in combination with their voices and styles, exist because they have a commitment to the craft and a desire to impact the audience. They write to express, and the way they choose to do it matters just as much as the sentiments expressed.

Task 1: Symposium on The Overachievers:

During the first few days of school, we will have a graded symposium-style discussion on The Overachievers. Be prepared (which means you must have notes with you AND annotations directly in the text) to discuss the below questions. You must have direct evidence prepared to support your responses. As you read, think about and annotate for the following:

1. What is Robbins’ central claim? How does she develop it for her reader throughout her piece?
2. Who is Robbins’ target audience? Thinking about this, where in her text does she seem to directly appeal to this audience?
3. What is Robbins’ purpose in writing this piece?
4. Exigence is the term used to describe what has stirred an author or speaker to write or speak. Exigence is what has moved them to feel the need to get their message out. What is Robbins’ exigence? How do you know?
5. Identify Robbins’ appeals to pathos. What emotions does she intend to evoke from her audience and for what purpose?
6. How does Robbins build her credibility with her audience?
7. Robbins builds a logical argument here. Identify and analyze her appeals to logic. How do they impact her audience?
8. What do you notice about Robbins writing style? Identify specific passages as evidence.
9. How does Robbins structure her book? Analyze whether or not this is effective in conveying her claim and fulfilling her overall purpose.
10. What is your personal takeaway after reading Robbins book?

Task 2: Fishbowl Discussion on Educated:
We will have a graded fishbowl-style discussion about the book during the first days of school. We will give you the specific questions prior to the fishbowl; however, to help prepare for this discussion be sure to annotate while you read.

**Task 3: Presentation:**
During the first few days of school, you will be presenting your position on the following essential questions:

1. What does it mean to be educated?
2. What is the purpose of an education?
3. To what extent do schools serve the goals of an education (refer to your answer to #3)?

You must take a clear stance and offer appropriate and convincing evidence and explanations to support and develop your stance. You will want to draw from *Educated* and *The Overachievers* as two sources of evidence. To help you prepare for your presentation, think about and annotate for the 3 essential questions as you read each of the books.

*Note: We encourage you to break the mold of the typical PowerPoint presentation. Make decisions based on what you believe works best to communicate your analyses and reactions. Liberate yourself! Your presentations should not be less than 5 minutes and should not exceed 10.*

The presentation must be completely yours and yours alone; do not use any resources, other than the text, to help you. I want to know what YOU observed while reading the books, not what someone else noted. All work should be done independently. Do not do your work with a classmate! *Any of these infractions could result in zeros on the assignments.*

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Overall, enjoy the summer and let your mind relax. We hope we don't have just a great class next year, but also a memorable experience that leaves you prepared and satisfied.