

English IB 2 Summer Assignments  
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Your assignment for the summer is to check out (or better yet purchase) two classics of the American stage, *The Glass Menagerie* and *Death of a Salesman*. Though not difficult reading, these two plays are extremely complex. As you read them, I am asking you to keep a commonplace book.

A commonplace book is basically a notebook in which you write your thoughts on a work of literature as it is read. The entries in the commonplace book are entirely up to you, but they should represent your personal experience of the book. Example entries could be your thoughts on an unexpected plot twist, thematic questions that you put forth and answer, or a unique element to the author's style that you've noticed. More specific entries (those that refer to a particular incident, style, technique, setting, staging, etc.) will be more valuable to you, as the commonplace book will then become a reference for you when you write the essays that will follow. Be sure to include page numbers for all textual references. There is no maximum page limit, but as the commonplace book is designed to represent an intense reading experience, a minimum of **eight handwritten pages**, (or, if you prefer, double-spaced typed) is expected for each play. This assignment is due at the start of the first class next year. Any student who fails to complete the commonplace book will receive a "zero" grade for the assignment.

IB 2 will focus on the structure and technique of literature. We will be looking at such literary elements as structure, meter, individual style, genre, and various literary criticisms. Essays on all major works will be assigned. A primary goal of the course will be to prepare you for the International Baccalaureate Higher Level Language A1 Examination. This Examination includes a 15 minute recorded oral commentary that will be externally moderated. A second principal course component will be the college application process. In addition to the work centered on literature, you will write several drafts of the UC Personal Statement regardless of where you plan to attend college. Overall focus of the course will be on giving you the skills to maintain your success after high school. If you are willing to put forth your best effort, the academic accomplishments to which you are accustomed will continue. Really.

Aside from this, I hope you have a great summer and genuinely look forward to seeing you again in August.

Sincerely,

Matt Skeahan