

## Honors English 2: Journalism

### Naperville Central Communication Arts Department

### Summer reading assignment and expectations

“There is no more important contribution that we can make to society than strong, publicly-spirited investigative journalism.”

~Tony Burman, editor-in-chief of CBS News

“Good journalism thrives on good quotations. The right quotes...enliven and humanize a story...”

~Paula LaRocque, *Championship Writing*

“Don’t write about man, write about a man.”

~E.B. White

The secret is out: journalism is what English class should look like in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century! Not everyone wants to study classic novels and analyze literature, but everyone needs to learn to write, research, interview and talk to people, identify facts, and communicate in a way that will inform and interest others. These are real-world skills. Stop writing for your teacher and start writing for an authentic audience! Select your own topics to investigate! Practice your First Amendment rights to freedom of expression! No matter what you plan to study in college, your journalism skills will help you to develop clear, concise, and accurate writing—skills that you’ll need in almost any professional field.

In a world where anyone can publish “stories” and “report news” online, it is more important than ever to learn how to detect and produce journalism with integrity and accuracy. Journalism is a fast-paced, exciting and quickly-evolving field, but its core principles have not changed much at all. It is still a career path for those who believe that the truth must be made available to people and that **everyone has a story worth telling**. We want to begin that storytelling journey right away!

As preparation for the fall semester of your English 2 experience, you will be expected to read a novel and a section of a non-fiction text about journalism. You should arrive to class on the first day prepared to discuss them. The opening days of the semester in the fall will include an in-class writing experience based on our discussions.

Best-selling author Stephen King, in his memoir *On Writing*, said that “if you want to be a writer, you must do two things above all others: read a lot and write a lot.” Honors English 2: Journalism will be filled with rich and challenging reading and writing experiences. Your completion of this summer assignment will adequately prepare you for our journey together.

If you should have any questions while working on your assignment, you can contact Mr. Carlson at [kcarlson@naperville203.org](mailto:kcarlson@naperville203.org). Please understand that a response might take a few days due to summer schedules.

We’re going to have a great year together.  
Welcome to Honors English 2: Journalism!



Mr. Keith Carlson, CJE (Certified Journalism Educator)  
Communication Arts teacher  
Faculty adviser to the *Central Times*

## READING ASSIGNMENT

To prepare yourself for Honors English 2: Journalism, you will need to purchase copies of the following books:

1. ***The Shipping News* by Annie Proulx, 1994** (paperback with blue cover)
2. ***The Elements of Journalism: What Newspeople Should Know and the Public Should Expect, Revised and Updated 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition* by Bill Kovach and Tom Rosensteil, 2014** (be sure to buy the correct edition, which has a red stripe across the middle)

Because you will be expected to show evidence of annotation, print copies are preferable to digital, unless you are skilled with digital annotation and can show evidence of it to your teacher. Below, you will find some discussion questions to guide your reading and help you self-assess your reading comprehension. Consider identifying answers to these questions in your annotations or separately.

### INSTRUCTIONS FOR *THE SHIPPING NEWS*

Read and annotate the novel over the summer. We will have discussions followed by an in-class writing assignment about the book during the first week of class. Your annotations and/or notes should capture your reactions to the following questions:

1. **How do the editors and writers of the *Gammy Bird* prioritize the stories that appear in the newspaper?**
2. **How do the values of the community and the lifestyle of Newfoundland affect “what is news?”**
3. **What do you notice about the process of reporting in the book? Is it similar or different from what you expect traditional reporting to look like? How? Why?**
4. **How is the process of putting together the newspaper (writing, editing, layout, etc...) similar or different from what you expect it to look like? How? Why?**
5. **Where do you see the “Elements of Journalism” present in the book? Can you point to specific examples?**

### INSTRUCTIONS FOR *THE ELEMENTS OF JOURNALISM*

Read and annotate the preface, introduction and first chapter of the book over the summer. This will provide you with an overview of the authors’ 10 “elements of journalism,” which are each explored in detail in the book’s remaining chapters. You do not need to read past the end of Chapter 1 (page 45) this summer; you’ll be assigned additional chapters from the book throughout the school year. As you are annotating, you should be thinking about the following questions:

1. **What are the roles and responsibilities of citizens in relation to journalism? In what ways could journalism be defined as “collaborative”?**
2. **What is a journalist, and how has its evolving definition impacted the practice, craft, and profession of journalism? How important is it that we have a universal definition for journalist or journalism?**
3. **How would you describe or characterize “fair journalism”?**
4. **How has the role of the journalist evolved in our country, and what are some of the tasks now required of a journalist?**
5. **What is the “theory of the interlocking public,” and what challenges do journalists today face in dealing with this kind of audience? How has the audience for journalism evolved from the one described in *The Shipping News*?**

## ANNOTATING YOUR BOOK

Annotating is an important skill that must be individualized for each reader. There is no single good way to annotate literature, though there are several strategies that have proven to work well for many students. It is expected that you will arrive with annotations in your books, though your methods of annotating can be personal to you (see next section). Continue to develop your own strategy for annotation that accomplishes the following:

- Mark/identify key or important ideas or plot developments
- Ask questions
- Define terms or unknown vocabulary
- Identify answers to pre-reading discussion questions provided by your teacher
- Highlight quotes or ideas that you find personally impactful or meaningful
- Summarize sections of readings (such as chapters) for quick reference later on

## TWELVE WAYS TO MARK UP A BOOK

Consider these suggestions as you work to find a method of annotating that works best for you:

### What Not To Do:

- **Limit your use of a highlighter** – Quality marking isn't done with a fat-tipped highlighter. You can't write, which is an important part of marking the text, with a large marker. Get yourself some fine point colored pens to do the job.
- **Don't mark large volumes of text** – You want important points to stand out. Although we all know that everything can't be important, we often highlight all of the text on the page. You want to find the 20% of the text that is important and mark that.
- **Don't take the time to mark up items that you read on a daily basis** – (e.g., magazines, newspapers), unimportant or irrelevant items.
- **Don't mark the obvious** – Don't waste time marking up things that are already in your knowledge-base or skill set. If you already know it, you don't need to mark it.

### What To Do:

- **Mark the text with a pencil, pen, or, even better, colored fine-tipped pens** – Remember, you are not focused on highlighting, but marking and writing.
- **Know your preferences** – Some people have an aversion to marking directly in the text. Books are precious things to many people and they want to protect them from damage and even the wear and tear of everyday use. If this describes you, grab some Post-It brand notes and do your marking and writing on them. This also gives you the advantage to move and reorganize them should you see fit. But seriously consider marking directly on the page. Your books will become more valuable to you when you're your contributions to the information that they contain. They become *your* copy, not just a copy.
- **Underline the topic sentence in nonfiction passages** – Remember, each paragraph has one topic sentence. The rest is supporting information and examples. Identify the topic sentence to find it easier.
- **Use codes** – Flag text with codes (e.g., Question marks to indicate disagreement, Exclamation marks to note agreement or to flag a strong statement, triangles to indicate a change in thinking, or a star for the topic sentence). Create your own system!
- **Write the passage topic or summarize the passage in the margin as a reminder** – A few words or a phrase will do.

- **Write questions in the margin** – When you don't understand something or when you don't understand the author's thought process on a particular topic, write the question in the margin as a reminder to settle the question.
- **Circle new and unfamiliar words** – Look them up as soon as possible.
- **Add your or other author's perspectives in the margins** – Other authors have surely written on the same subject. What do they say? Do they agree with this author? If not, what do they say. Add these ideas in the margins.
- **Add cross-reference notes to other works on the same topic** – Use the author's name and a shortened version of the other book's title.
- **Add structure to a narrative text** – Use 1, 2, 3, 4...or an outline format I. A. B. C. 1, 2, 3, a, b, c...to add a structure that you understand.
- **Draw arrows to related ideas** – Or unrelated ideas...
- **Summarize** – Add your own summary after the last paragraph. That simple exercise will crystalize your thinking on the topic. If you can't write it, you don't understand it. Another great idea is to return to the beginning of a chapter and write a summary of that chapter at the beginning of it so you can be reminded what happens in that chapter when you go back and look at it again.
- **Use office supplies to help organize** – Post-it notes or flags are great ways to also mark locations within books, much like bookmarks do. Or use colored paper clips to identify pages or chapters that are important. And if you still cannot be convinced to write in your book, sticky notes are your only option for documenting your interactions with the text.

**\*\*\*IMPORTANT!\*\*\***

**Bring your annotated texts and reading notes to the first day of class! You will need them for both class discussion and your first assignment. Failure to complete the reading may result in a loss of points not only for this assignment, but for any activities related to the readings that take place at the start of the school year. You will not be required to turn in any answers to the discussion questions as a homework assignment on the first day, though many students choose to answer those questions as preparation for book discussion.**