**Off Semester Reading Gifted English I Due Friday, January 5th.**

**Double space and type your assignment in 12 Times; use MLA format. Include the titles of the books you read in your responses. Do not place the assignment in a folder. Turn the assignment in class or on Schoology by Friday, January 5th . Feel free to email any questions or concerns regarding this assignment to** Alicia.stefanski@dcsms.org

**I. Read John Steinbeck’s *The Pearl.* It is available for free online. Or, you can check out a paper copy from me.**Parents need to know that The Pearl is Nobel Prize-winning author John Steinbeck's interpretation of a Mexican folk story in which a poor pearl diver's life is changed by the discovery of a very large gem. This short novel makes an excellent introduction to literary criticism, as the author's use of symbolism is fairly simple for teen readers to analyze and understand. However, the message put forth by the book -- that man invites evil by trying to better his situation -- invites a lot of questions.

Reponses to the following questions should be typed and contain at least **two short quotations to support** each answer. Responses to each question should be 150-200 words. Students who have the same answer or students who plagiarize will receive a zero for the assignment. I want to read students’ ideas about the novella.

1. Contrast the setting of the opening scene with the mountain setting at the conclusion of the novella.

2. How do Kino’s feeling about the pearl change as the story progresses and how does this convey a theme? (Novels are essentially about people (fictional characters) undergoing experiences (the plot). These experiences - their nature, and the effect they have on the characters - will cause the reader to come to conclusions about some aspect of life. These conclusions are your theme. Possible themes include the struggle against good and evil, greed can be destructive, or humans are never satisfied. )

3. What is the purpose of songs in the novella?

**II. Read a choice novel (fiction or non-fiction) of appropriate rigor that you have not read before. Do not complete these questions on what you read for summer reading. The book should be at least 150 pages. The book should not have been made into a movie or television series. You will complete A or B for 1 and 2. Students should incorporate textual evidence. Students who plagiarize will receive a 0.**

**1.** Knowledge: 125 words

**A** . Authors do not choose a title randomly—usually there is some significance to it. Identify and describe the meaning of your book’s title

**OR**

**B.** Describe the genre and setting (time and place) of your book. Explain its importance to the narrative.

**2.** Analysis: 125 words

**A.** Write an analysis of the main character. Describe him/her and his/her transformation. Then, explain WHY they transformed over the course of the book.

**OR**

**B.** Relate the book to human experience. Explain one truth about human nature and find three events from the text that relate to those truths.