



## 💡 ABOUT THIS CLASS

AP English Language & Composition will focus on growth in the following areas: reading, writing, speaking, listening, self-advocacy, empathy and problem solving. Notice the emphasis on "growth." While AP Lang has in mind college preparation, and is considered a college level class, our goal is not simply to bring every student to a specific level of readiness but to grow every single student.

## 📖 THE BOOK: *THE NICKEL BOYS* BY COLSON WHITEHEAD

- When Elwood Curtis, a black boy growing up in 1960s Tallahassee, is unfairly sentenced to a juvenile reformatory called the Nickel Academy, he finds himself trapped in a grotesque chamber of horrors. Elwood's only salvation is his friendship with fellow "delinquent" Turner, which deepens despite Turner's conviction that Elwood is hopelessly naive, that the world is crooked, and that the only way to survive is to scheme and avoid trouble. As life at the Academy becomes ever more perilous, the tension between Elwood's ideals and Turner's skepticism leads to a decision whose repercussions will echo down the decades. Based on the real story of a reform school that operated for 111 years and warped the lives of thousands of children, *The Nickel Boys* is a devastating, driven narrative that showcases a great American novelist writing at the height of his powers.
- *The Nickel Boys* won the 2020 Pulitzer Prize, Whitehead's second prize in the last 4 years. Please note that there are some descriptions of the violence that the boys experienced while at the school. Also note that some of the chapters jump into to the future.
- **Purchase the book via Amazon or check it out from a local library.**
- **We will be using the book in class for a few weeks when we return to school in August.**

**CLICK ON THE 2<sup>ND</sup> PAGE FOR ASSIGNMENTS!!!**

## 👤 INSTRUCTOR

*To be determined*

## DUE DATE:

**Monday, August  
23<sup>rd</sup>, 2021**

**The First Day of  
School**

**No Late work will be  
Accepted !!!**

## ☑️ GRADING

**Assignment Valued at  
120 Points**

A = 111-120 points

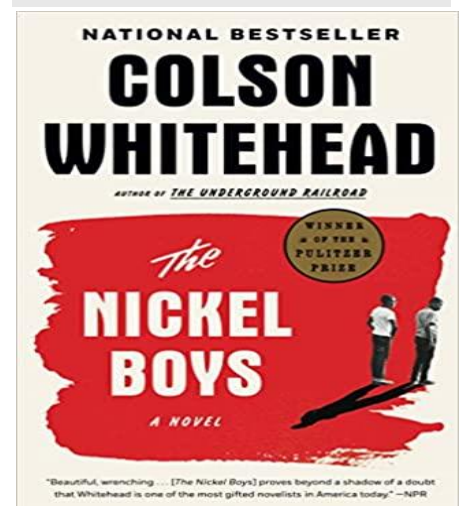
B = 101-110 points

C = 91-100 points

D = 84-90 points

F = 83 points and below

*Remember: a low grade or zero for your first assignment can have a negative impact on your grade*



"Beautiful, wrenching... [The Nickel Boys] proves beyond a shadow of a doubt that Whitehead is one of the most gifted novelists in America today." —NPR



# EXPECTATIONS

## **Annotations:**

First, you are required to read the entire book over the summer.

Strong AP level Readers **annotate** *while* they are reading. You can use any method you prefer:

- Write in the book
- Use Stickies or Post-its
- Keep a written or typed journal or notebook with all of your annotations, marked by chapter.

Expectations are that you will have annotations throughout the book.

- Strong readers keep their pen in their hand, ready to mark any thought that pops in their head while reading (directly on the page or on mini-post it notes)
- *A goal should be 4-5 annotations for every chapter*

You are annotating for anything that stands out to you as significant within the following categories:

- Ideas regarding the themes of the book and what the author's message is
- Language – the tone, diction, phrasing, the author's style and structure
- Cultural connections – thoughts on how the novel comments on situations in society



# EXPECTATIONS

## **Writing Assignments:**

The book is divided into 3 parts. For **EACH** part, you are required to write an analytical reflection according to these guidelines:

- Each reflection should be 3-4 fully-developed paragraphs
- Focus on analyzing the issues and ideas raised in the section, using the prompts below – one for each reflection
- Do NOT just summarize the plot or happenings of the section
- Incorporate elements of your thoughts and considerations of the themes or viewpoints that are raised in each part
- Write each analysis after you've finished that section

## **Prompts: (Use each only once)**

- Describe new insights or understandings you have gained at this point in the book. What do you think the author wants you to understand or think about?
- Make a connection between an idea brought up in the book and a contemporary cultural issue.
- Choose a passage in the book that stands out as exceptional writing in establishing tone, use of language, literary devices, style or structure. Indicate the page number(s) and explain why this writing is effective.

## **Requirements:**

- Include quotes as evidence to support your ideas (with page #s)
- Must be typed, double spaced, 12-point font, 1" margins
- Use proper heading and a title
- Save all 3 reflections on the same document for submission on the first day of school in August