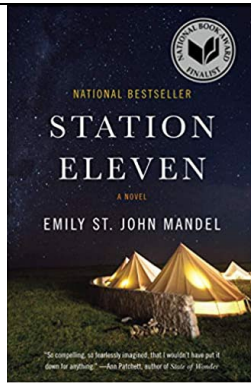


Honors Advanced Composition – SUGGESTED, ENCOURAGED, REWARDED Summer Reading Assignment



Kirsten Raymonde will never forget the night Arthur Leander, the famous Hollywood actor, had a heart attack on stage during a production of *King Lear*. That was the night when a devastating flu pandemic arrived in the city, and within weeks, civilization as we know it came to an end.

Twenty years later, Kirsten moves between the settlements of the altered world with a small troupe of actors and musicians. They call themselves The Traveling Symphony, and they have dedicated themselves to keeping the remnants of art and humanity alive. But when they arrive in St. Deborah by the Water, they encounter a violent prophet who will threaten the tiny band's existence. And as the story takes off, moving back and forth in time, and vividly depicting life before and after the pandemic, the strange twist of fate that connects them all will be revealed. *(Book image and description from Amazon.com)*

ISBN-10: 0804172447 ISBN-13: 978-0804172448

Read *Station Eleven* by Emily St. John Mandel (St John is her middle name; if you search for her in a library look in the M's for Mandel). As you read, have pen in hand. Underline, bracket, and comment in the margins those pieces of text which you find important and which elicit an emotional response. Pay special attention to the lists of things missed. After you finish your reading, answer at LEAST FOUR of the following questions. You MUST answer number 10 but the others are your choice. Your responses should be numbered and in paragraph form (5-7 sentences each) reflecting thoughtful consideration and knowledge of the book. Responses should be supported by textual evidence cited in MLA format (author's last name, a space, and the number of the page).

**** PLEASE NOTE:** Yes, there is a mini-series adaptation of *Station Eleven* on HBO. Yes, I've seen it. I cannot stress strongly enough that you **SHOULD NOT** watch this show prior to the discussion of the novel and the completion of the unit in class. The director made major changes to the story and while they do not impact the theme of the story or even Mandel's overarching message, the plot changes are significant. In other words, it would have a devastating impact on your grade if you watch rather than read.

1. What is the value of art (performance or otherwise)? Does it have inherent value, or is value artificially imbued onto it by its audience?
2. Miranda Colbert says "this life was never ours. We were only ever borrowing it" (101). What makes someone's life his or her own?
3. How do values and morals shift in *Station Eleven* from the pre-collapse world to the post-collapse world? What about in the Traveling Symphony? Is there a common set of values that humanity embodies despite outside events?
4. If "survival is insufficient," as it says on the lead caravan of the Travelling Symphony what makes life "sufficient" enough to live? What, according to Mandel, is worth living for, and, thus, worth dying for?
5. Do you agree with Mandel? Are there other elements of life that are more worthy? In your opinion, what is life worth living for?
6. Mandel explores many different types of relationships throughout the novel. Which characters have the most interesting relationships? Explain your choice and be ready to defend it if others disagree.
7. In what ways do the humanities and art represent our best human qualities?
8. Do you think Shakespeare represents the best the Traveling Symphony has to offer? What plays would you want to perform (or see)?
9. In the novel, not everyone wanted to remember the old world. What are the advantages and disadvantages of NOT remembering?
10. Consider the Museum of Civilization. Do laptops and credit cards represent what it means to be civilized? If not, what are the hallmarks of civilization? What exhibits would be in your own Museum of Civilization?

You should expect to submit this work to Turnitin.com no later than the second week of school (I will provide specific date). Again, this assignment must be typed and in MLA format. Keep in mind that this is my first impression of you as a student. Be sure to make the one you want to. Once school starts you should be prepared to have class discussions, group mini-projects and perhaps even an in-class write. You should be prepared to discuss the answers to the questions you selected and defend any opinions you assert.

Contact Mrs. Morgan at beth.morgan@cobbk12.org with questions.