



## The Catholic High School of Baltimore Summer Reading List

**Teacher's Name:** Mr. Derosier

**School Year:** 2022-2023

**Grade Level:** 11

**Course No.:** 148

**Course Name:** AP English Language

**Academic Level (Honors/AP/CP1/CP2/CPA):** AP

### ASSIGNED READING

*This I Believe: The Personal Philosophies of Remarkable Men and Women*, Edited by Jay Allison and Dan Gediman (2006) ISBN 13: 978-0-8050-8658-4

### ASSIGNMENT

Your assignment is to answer each of the following prompts separately. I am not giving you a word count or page length for each response, but I expect your responses to demonstrate sophistication of thought and/or a complex understanding of the prompt. This assignment should be typed and include a properly formatted MLA header in the left corner of the document.

Per *The Catholic High School of Baltimore's* Honor Code, your work must be your own. Any type of academic dishonesty in completing this assignment will result in an automatic failing grade and a referral to the administration for disciplinary action.

#### Prompt 1

Studs Terkel's forward raises the question of truth and how we discern it. What do the essays in *This I Believe* tell us about the way we go about deciding what is true and what should not be believed? Do you think there are any absolute truths that apply to everyone?

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## **Prompt 2**

In two essays reflecting on the toll of war, Newt Gingrich emphasizes the need for vigilance (“I believe that the world is inherently a very dangerous place”), while John McCain celebrates the power of the quiet hero (“The true worth of a person is measured by how faithfully we serve a cause greater than our self-interest”). What is your approach to the tides of danger and victory, destruction and reconstruction that have shaped the world for as long as history has been recorded? Do you think the future can be more peaceful than the past?

## **Prompt 3**

What did you observe about the essays from half a century ago compared with contemporary ones? Which issues have remained constant? What new ones have arisen that Edward R. Murrow’s generation could not have imagined?

## **Prompt 4**

Questions of morality and immorality are raised throughout the book, from Isabel Allende’s response to her daughter’s death to Elvia Bautista’s experience visiting her brother’s grave. At the heart of many of these essays is the notion that love endures beyond a person’s lifetime. How does this book define a life well-lived and a grief that is not in vain?

## **Prompt 5**

Martha Graham’s “An Athlete of God” closes by describing the acrobat as “practicing living at that instant of danger. He does not choose to fail.” In what way does this describe the tandem of fear and faith experienced in our daily lives? What does it take to “choose” not to fail?



### **Prompt 6**

In “Seeing Beautiful, Precise Pictures,” Temple Grandin describes how her ability to visualize resulted in humane new procedures for numerous livestock-handling facilities. What ethical balance shapes her work? What small vision could you translate into grand action in your community?

### **Prompt 7**

Benjamin Carson pays eloquent tribute to his mother in “There Is No Job More Important than Parenting.” What qualities make her a good parent? What beliefs enabled her to sustain and inspire her son? Who has held a similar role of redemption in your life?

### **Prompt 8**

Which of the essays resonated with you the most? Did any of them inspire you to become an agent for change, either globally or simply in the way you affect the life of another individual?

### **Prompt 9**

Several of the essays describe discrimination, such as Phyllis Allen’s recollections of growing up in a racially segregated town, and Eve Ensler’s observations about atrocities committed against women. What do you believe is the root of discriminatory behavior? What causes some members of society to feel justified in causing the suffering of entire populations? How can we ensure equality in the face of the forces behind discrimination?

### **Prompt 10**

What do you believe? Write your own “This I Believe” essay.



## ASSESSMENT

**There will be a Socratic Seminar on this book.** The Socratic Seminar is a formal discussion, based on a text, in which the leader asks open-ended questions. Within the context of the discussion, students listen closely to the comments of others, thinking critically for themselves, and articulate their own thoughts and their responses to the thoughts of others. You will want to properly prepare for the Socratic seminar by taking notes and/or using post-its to mark important ideas throughout the book. You will not receive points for this, but annotating the book is essential to prepare for a Socratic seminar. More information about the Socratic Seminar will be provided to you during the first week of class.

If you need to contact me, my email address is [sderosier@thecatholichighschool.org](mailto:sderosier@thecatholichighschool.org)