

May 2010

Dear Parents:

Your student has requested the **7<sup>th</sup> Grade English Pre-AP** course for the upcoming school year. The purpose of this course is to offer promising students challenging work that will prepare them for Advanced Placement courses.

In the Alvin Independent School District, Advanced Placement English courses are offered to eleventh and twelfth grade students. Upon successful completion of course work, students may take AP examinations administered each year in May, and if successful, they will be awarded college English credit accepted by most universities. The Pre-AP courses offered in grades 6-10 develop reading, writing, and thinking skills necessary for success in AP courses. Reading selections for these courses represent concepts and/ or reading selections frequently cited on Advanced Placement examinations. Because these courses include works that are numerous and challenging, students are required to complete a summer reading assignment.

For the summer of 2010, your child **must read the following novel and nonfiction assignments:**

**7<sup>th</sup> Grade English Pre-AP Summer Reading Assignment:**

**Dark Water Rising** by Marian Hale *and*  
\*Nonfiction articles/ excerpts are attached

Please encourage your child to complete this reading assignment in order to be prepared for an assessment at the beginning of the school year.

Thank you for your cooperation and continuing interest in your student's education.

Sincerely,



Carla Voelkel  
Executive Director of Secondary Education



Kelley Smith  
English Lead Teacher

Please sign and return to your student's current English teacher.

\_\_\_\_\_ My child and I have received notice of the summer assignment for **7th Grade Pre-AP** and will comply. We understand that the completion date for this assignment is **AUGUST 23, 2010**, the first day of school.

\_\_\_\_\_ My child and I have received notice of the summer assignment for **7th Grade Pre-AP**, and I do not wish my child to be enrolled.

In the fall of 2010, my child will attend:

\_\_\_\_\_ Alvin Junior High

\_\_\_\_\_ Fairview Junior High

\_\_\_\_\_ Harby Junior High

\_\_\_\_\_ Manvel Junior High

\_\_\_\_\_ Nolan Ryan Junior High

Parent Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Student Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Current English Teacher's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Campus \_\_\_\_\_

## 7<sup>th</sup> grade Summer Reading Assignment

### Focus Question for Fiction and Non-fiction:

**How does the use of technology help or hinder preparation, evacuation, and repercussions of a natural disaster?**

- ◆ Does having a higher level of technology (weather, transportation, communication) make a difference? Consider the present day natural disasters (Ike, Rita, Katrina, Haiti etc.) and how technology altered the effects.
- ◆ Write a statement (to anchor your thinking for the summer) explaining your thoughts on how the technology of the 1900's affects the situations described in the book and articles you read. Be prepared to compare and contrast the technology used during the time of the Storm of 1900 and present day hurricanes (and other disasters) and how this affects the outcome.

## Article 1:

### **THE STORY OF AN EYEWITNESS**

**By Jack London, Collier's special Correspondent**

**(First published in *Collier's*, May 5, 1906)**

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*Upon receipt of the first news of the earthquake, Collier's telegraphed to Mr. Jack London—who lives only forty miles from San Francisco—requesting him to go to the scene of the disaster and write the story of what he saw. Mr. London started at once, and he sent the following dramatic description of the tragic events he witnessed in the burning city.*

THE earthquake shook down in San Francisco hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of walls and chimneys. But the conflagration that followed burned up hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of property. There is no estimating within hundreds of millions the actual damage wrought. Not in history has a modern imperial city been so completely destroyed. San Francisco is gone. Nothing remains of it but memories and a fringe of dwelling-houses on its outskirts. Its industrial section is wiped out. Its business section is wiped out. Its social and residential section is wiped out. The factories and warehouses, the great stores and newspaper buildings, the hotels and the palaces of the nabobs, are all gone. Remains only the fringe of dwelling houses on the outskirts of what was once San Francisco.

Within an hour after the earthquake shock the smoke of San Francisco's burning was a lurid tower visible a hundred miles away. And for three days and nights this lurid tower swayed in the sky, reddening the sun, darkening the day, and filling the land with smoke.

On Wednesday morning at a quarter past five came the earthquake. A minute later the flames were leaping upward. In a dozen different quarters south of Market Street, in the working-class ghetto, and in the factories, fires started. There was no opposing the flames. There was no organization, no communication. All the cunning adjustments of a twentieth century city had been smashed by the earthquake. The streets were humped into ridges and depressions, and piled with the debris of fallen walls. The steel rails were twisted into perpendicular and horizontal angles. The telephone and telegraph systems were disrupted. And the great water-mains had burst. All the shrewd contrivances and safeguards of man had been thrown out of gear by thirty seconds' twitching of the earth-crust.

### **The Fire Made its Own Draft**

By Wednesday afternoon, inside of twelve hours, half the heart of the city was gone. At that time I watched the vast conflagration from out on the bay. It was dead calm. Not a flicker of wind stirred. Yet from every side wind was pouring in upon the city. East, west, north, and south, strong winds were blowing upon the doomed city. The heated air rising made an enormous suck. Thus did the fire of itself build its own colossal chimney through the atmosphere. Day and night this dead calm continued, and yet, near to the flames, the wind was often half a gale, so mighty was the suck.

Wednesday night saw the destruction of the very heart of the city. Dynamite was lavishly used, and many of San Francisco proudest structures were crumbled by man himself into ruins, but there was no withstanding the onrush of the flames. Time and again successful stands were made by the fire-fighters, and every time the flames flanked around on either side or came up from the rear, and turned to defeat the hard-won victory.

An enumeration of the buildings destroyed would be a directory of San Francisco. An enumeration of the buildings undestroyed would be a line and several addresses. An enumeration of the deeds of heroism would stock a library and bankrupt the Carnegie medal fund. An enumeration of the dead-will never be made. All vestiges of them were destroyed by the flames. The number of the victims of the earthquake will never be known. South of Market Street, where the loss of life was particularly heavy, was the first to catch fire.

Remarkable as it may seem, Wednesday night while the whole city crashed and roared into ruin, was a quiet night. There were no crowds. There was no shouting and yelling. There was no hysteria, no disorder. I passed Wednesday night in the path of the advancing flames, and in all those terrible hours I saw not one woman who wept, not one man who was excited, not one person who was in the slightest degree panic stricken.

Before the flames, throughout the night, fled tens of thousands of homeless ones. Some were wrapped in blankets. Others carried bundles of bedding and dear household treasures. Sometimes a whole family was harnessed to a carriage or delivery wagon that was weighted down with their possessions. Baby buggies, toy wagons, and go-carts were used as trucks, while every other person was dragging a trunk. Yet everybody was gracious. The most perfect courtesy obtained. Never in all San Francisco's history, were her people so kind and courteous as on this night of terror.

### **A Caravan of Trunks**

All night these tens of thousands fled before the flames. Many of them, the poor people from the labor ghetto, had fled all day as well. They had left their homes

burdened with possessions. Now and again they lightened up, flinging out upon the street clothing and treasures they had dragged for miles.

They held on longest to their trunks, and over these trunks many a strong man broke his heart that night. The hills of San Francisco are steep, and up these hills, mile after mile, were the trunks dragged. Everywhere were trunks with across them lying their exhausted owners, men and women. Before the march of the flames were flung picket lines of soldiers. And a block at a time, as the flames advanced, these pickets retreated. One of their tasks was to keep the trunk-pullers moving. The exhausted creatures, stirred on by the menace of bayonets, would arise and struggle up the steep pavements, pausing from weakness every five or ten feet.

Often, after surmounting a heart-breaking hill. they would find another wall of flame advancing upon them at right angles and be compelled to change anew the line of their retreat. In the end, completely played out, after toiling for a dozen hours like giants, thousands of them were compelled to abandon their trunks. Here the shopkeepers and soft members of the middle class were at a disadvantage. But the working-men dug holes in vacant lots and backyards and buried their trunks.

### **The Doomed City**

At nine o'clock Wednesday evening I walked down through the very heart of the city. I walked through miles and miles of magnificent buildings and towering skyscrapers. Here was no fire. All was in perfect order. The police patrolled the streets. Every building had its watchman at the door. And yet it was doomed, all of it. There was no water. The dynamite was giving out. And at right angles two different conflagrations were sweeping down upon it.

At one o'clock in the morning I walked down through the same section Everything still stood intact. There was no fire. And yet there was a change. A rain of ashes was falling. The watchmen at the doors were gone. The police had been withdrawn. There were no firemen, no fire-engines, no men fighting with dynamite. The district had been absolutely abandoned. I stood at the corner of Kearney and Market, in the very innermost heart of San Francisco. Kearny Street was deserted. Half a dozen blocks away it was burning on both sides. The street was a wall of flame. And against this wall of flame, silhouetted sharply, were two United States cavalymen sitting their horses, calming watching. That was all. Not another person was in sight. In the intact heart of the city two troopers sat their horses and watched.

### **Spread of the Conflagration**

Surrender was complete. There was no water. The sewers had long since been pumped dry. There was no dynamite. Another fire had broken out further uptown,

and now from three sides conflagrations were sweeping down. The fourth side had been burned earlier in the day. In that direction stood the tottering walls of the Examiner building, the burned-out Call building, the smoldering ruins of the Grand Hotel, and the gutted, devastated, dynamited Palace Hotel

The following will illustrate the sweep of the flames and the inability of men to calculate their spread. At eight o'clock Wednesday evening I passed through Union Square. It was packed with refugees. Thousands of them had gone to bed on the grass. Government tents had been set up, supper was being cooked, and the refugees were lining up for free meals

At half past one in the morning three sides of Union Square were in flames. The fourth side, where stood the great St. Francis Hotel was still holding out. An hour later, ignited from top and sides the St. Francis was flaming heavenward. Union Square, heaped high with mountains of trunks, was deserted. Troops, refugees, and all had retreated.

### **A Fortune for a Horse!**

It was at Union Square that I saw a man offering a thousand dollars for a team of horses. He was in charge of a truck piled high with trunks from some hotel. It had been hauled here into what was considered safety, and the horses had been taken out. The flames were on three sides of the Square and there were no horses.

Also, at this time, standing beside the truck, I urged a man to seek safety in flight. He was all but hemmed in by several conflagrations. He was an old man and he was on crutches. Said he: "Today is my birthday. Last night I was worth thirty thousand dollars. I bought five bottles of wine, some delicate fish and other things for my birthday dinner. I have had no dinner, and all I own are these crutches."

I convinced him of his danger and started him limping on his way. An hour later, from a distance, I saw the truck-load of trunks burning merrily in the middle of the street.

On Thursday morning at a quarter past five, just twenty-four hours after the earthquake, I sat on the steps of a small residence on Nob Hill. With me sat Japanese, Italians, Chinese, and negroes--a bit of the cosmopolitan flotsam of the wreck of the city. All about were the palaces of the nabob pioneers of Forty-nine. To the east and south at right angles, were advancing two mighty walls of flame

I went inside with the owner of the house on the steps of which I sat. He was cool and cheerful and hospitable. "Yesterday morning," he said, "I was worth six hundred thousand dollars. This morning this house is all I have left. It will go in fifteen minutes. He pointed to a large cabinet. "That is my wife's collection of china. This rug upon which we stand is a present. It cost fifteen hundred dollars. Try that piano. Listen to its tone. There are few like it. There are no horses. The flames will be here in fifteen minutes."

Outside the old Mark Hopkins residence a palace was just catching fire. The troops were falling back and driving the refugees before them. From every side came the roaring of flames, the crashing of walls, and the detonations of dynamite

### **The Dawn of the Second Day**

I passed out of the house. Day was trying to dawn through the smoke-pall. A sickly light was creeping over the face of things. Once only the sun broke through the smoke-pall, blood-red, and showing quarter its usual size. The smoke-pall itself, viewed from beneath, was a rose color that pulsed and fluttered with lavender shades. Then it turned to mauve and yellow and dun. There was no sun. And so dawned the second day on stricken San Francisco.

An hour later I was creeping past the shattered dome of the City Hall. Than it there was no better exhibit of the destructive force of the earthquake. Most of the stone had been shaken from the great dome, leaving standing the naked framework of steel. Market Street was piled high with the wreckage, and across the wreckage lay the overthrown pillars of the City Hall shattered into short crosswise sections.

This section of the city with the exception of the Mint and the Post-Office, was already a waste of smoking ruins. Here and there through the smoke, creeping warily under the shadows of tottering walls, emerged occasional men and women. It was like the meeting of the handful of survivors after the day of the end of the world.

### **Beeves Slaughtered and Roasted**

On Mission Street lay a dozen steers, in a neat row stretching across the street just as they had been struck down by the flying ruins of the earthquake. The fire had passed through afterward and roasted them. The human dead had been carried away before the fire came. At another place on Mission Street I saw a milk wagon. A steel telegraph pole had smashed down sheer through the driver's seat and crushed the front wheels. The milk cans lay scattered around.

All day Thursday and all Thursday night, all day Friday and Friday night, the flames still raged on.

Friday night saw the flames finally conquered. through not until Russian Hill and Telegraph Hill had been swept and three-quarters of a mile of wharves and docks had been licked up.

### **The Last Stand**

The great stand of the fire-fighters was made Thursday night on Van Ness Avenue. Had they failed here, the comparatively few remaining houses of the city would have been swept. Here were the magnificent residences of the second generation of San Francisco nabobs, and these, in a solid zone, were dynamited down across the path of the fire. Here and there the flames leaped the zone, but these fires were beaten out, principally by the use of wet blankets and rugs.

San Francisco, at the present time, is like the crater of a volcano, around which are camped tens of thousands of refugees At the Presidio alone are at least twenty thousand. All the surrounding cities and towns are jammed with the homeless ones, where they are being cared for by the relief committees. The refugees were carried free by the railroads to any point they wished to go, and it is estimated that over one hundred thousand people have left the peninsula on which San Francisco stood. The Government has the situation in hand, and, thanks to the immediate relief given by the whole United States, there is not the slightest possibility of a famine. The bankers and business men hare already set about making preparations to rebuild San Francisco.

## **Article 2:**

September 15, 2008

### **After Surviving Storm, Fleeing a Fetid, Devastated Galveston**

By [IAN URBINA](#)

GALVESTON, Tex. — For thousands of people stuck on an increasingly fetid Galveston Island, the aftermath of [Hurricane Ike](#) is proving to be far worse than the storm itself.

With no water or power, no working toilets, no food or phones, people faced growing public health concerns here on Sunday. More than 2,000 residents who had defied an evacuation order were taken off the island, and state officials tried to ensure that no one could return.

“The storm was easy,” said Brenda Shinette, 51, who rode out the hurricane in her home but went to a shelter Sunday hoping to be taken to the mainland. “It’s what came after that was terrible.”

“We have no showers, and the food is spoiled,” Ms. Shinette added. “I feel like I want to pass out, but I can’t tell if it is from too much heat or too little food.”

She said the lack of toilets had become so bad in her neighborhood that she had been avoiding eating so she would not have to use the bathroom.

Five people were found dead in Galveston on Sunday, including one person in a submerged vehicle near the airport. Officials expressed fears that more would be found as other areas of flooding were searched, particularly on the west end of the island, where there was “horrendous” devastation, said the city manager, Steve LeBlanc.

“We had been taking rescue calls” from the west end, Mr. LeBlanc said at a news conference, “but we have lost all communication with them. We know there were people out there. What happened to them, I’m not sure.”

The authorities said that it might be a month before water and power were restored to some parts of the island and that the wastewater treatment plant was in bad shape. Only emergency personnel were being allowed onto the island, they said.

“We want our citizens to stay where they are,” said Galveston’s mayor, Lyda Ann Thomas. “Do not come back to Galveston. You cannot live here right now.”

Ms. Thomas added: “Galveston has been hit hard. We have no power. We have no gas. We have no communications. We’re not sure when any of that will be up and running.”

The air was becoming foul-smelling and was swarming with mosquitoes. Sewage was beginning to back up onto waterlogged streets. The lack of running water was becoming a health hazard; without the water, people could not flush toilets or properly wash their hands.

Small packs of stray dogs roamed the streets. Helicopters buzzed overhead on search and rescue missions. Debris from ruined buildings lined the broad boulevard along the Gulf of Mexico. A line of about 60 cars snaked around piles of wood, slabs of concrete and fallen awnings,

their drivers waiting for the Coast Guard to give out food, water and tarps.

Along the road to the island's flooded west end, longhorn steers grazed in the median strip near scattered recreational boats and a shiny late-model Corvette with water inside. Refrigerators and trash bins lay in the front yards of several homes, and some of the area's most expensive houses were reduced to rubble. Forty buildings in all had collapsed. In Jamaica Beach, west of Galveston, six houses were destroyed and most of the others damaged, said a police official, Steve Hubbell. He warned residents that snakes were slithering through debris and that nails in roadways were flattening tires.

As rain started again on Sunday, many people in Galveston reached their limit and headed to the shelter at Ball High School. The state sent dozens of buses to ferry residents to San Antonio.

"I will go anywhere but here," Shannika Jones said as she stood at the shelter with her sons, both under age 2, in a line to board a bus. "My babies are getting sick." Behind her were two rows of chairs filled with elderly people, some with open wounds.

"Next time they should warn people about this, not the storm itself," Ms. Jones said.

Elizabeth Madson, 45, a property rental manager who has lived on the island for seven years, said she regretted her decision to stay during the storm.

"I thought we were going to need Noah's ark," she said. "It was horrific; I would not wish that on anybody." She added, "Anymore, if they say a hurricane is on its way, I'm leaving two days before."

Despite the fraying nerves, people remained civil. Officials said the police had received numerous calls about looting and had arrested seven people, all in minor cases. Residents on the streets appeared exhausted but were mostly polite to one another and to those here to help them.

Scores of state and federal emergency workers are here. Few, however, seem to have answers, and even fewer have the basics they need to do their jobs.

“Without water, electricity or fuel, we are pretty handicapped,” said one police officer, who asked not to be identified. “Things are calm with residents still, but I think before long that could change.”

The city had only four working ambulances; one became so overworked that it caught fire and was taken out of service. More ambulances were being sent in by the authorities.

“Problem is, we can’t treat cabin fever,” said Dave Smith, a paramedic who drove one of the remaining three ambulances and who was responding to many of the several hundred 911 calls coming in each day.

The most serious calls are from people suffering from seizures, chest pains or dehydration, Mr. Smith said, or from elderly people who are running low on medicines or who have fallen down and are trapped. But most of the calls are from people desperate to get to the hospital because they think it will have electricity, water and food, he said. Those callers have been disappointed to learn that the island’s main hospital, the [University of Texas](#) Medical Branch, is accepting only the most serious cases. Officials said the hospital would remain closed to general patients for two to four weeks.

Gov. [Rick Perry](#) urged those who had left Galveston not to try to return. Officials said the bridge leading to the island would remain closed for at least a week.

“The bridge isn’t the only way on here,” said the director of the island’s port, Steve Cernak, who spent much of the day finding an alternate port for the two Carnival cruise ships, each with more than 2,500 passengers, that had been due to arrive soon.

“Vacationers is not what we need right now on the island,” Mr. Cernak said. “What we need are personnel and some serious resources.”

As the floodwaters receded, they left an inch-thick layer of slippery sludge coating many roads. Water still stands in the bottom floors of most houses. A few hotels have diesel generators supplying electricity and are enveloped in exhaust fumes when the wind is calm.

“You don’t want to come back to this,” said Mr. LeBlanc, the city manager. “Not now.”

*Thayer Evans contributed reporting.*

