

Human Rights Honors: Summer Reading Project

Outliers: The Story of Success

Both of us love Malcolm Gladwell's *Outliers: The story of Success*. We've both read it countless times, and the lessons found within continue to resonate. This book has changed the way we think, act and teach. It is our hope that *Outliers* has an equally significant impact on you. We anticipate that it will change the way you view those whom we deem successful, and we expect that it will have a profound impact on how you think and act during your senior year at East Hartford High School.

Since it was published in 2008, we have taught several chapters of *Outliers* to our College Prep Human Rights classes. Many of these students have been reluctant readers, to put it mildly. However, more often than not, these students find themselves connecting to the lessons in *Outliers* in ways they never imagined. They often lament not being able to read the entire book. What we're trying to tell you is that you should all consider yourselves lucky, really and truly, that we're assigning you the book in its entirety. You can thank us in person in September.

--Mr. Sparks and Mr. Szwed

***Outliers* is composed of nine chapters, each focused on some hidden measure of success. For the purpose of this assignment, you can choose either the prologue or the epilogue as your tenth chapter. It is highly recommended that you read both, however. Here is your assignment:**

- I. Summarize each of the ten chapters in 2-4 paragraphs. After each summary, use a sentence or two to construct the lesson about success you gather from the chapter.
- II. Write a brief personal essay (no more than 3 pages) about success and how these lessons/issues relate to you. Consider these questions as you write:
 - a. What does success mean to you?
 - b. What will you use to determine your own success in life, both immediately after high school and beyond?
 - c. How can the lessons in *Outliers* be used to your benefit?
- III. Create your own personal "Top-10" list, using the lessons you learned from each chapter. Rank these lessons in order of their importance to your own success.

The details:

- Use all default settings for Microsoft Word (yes, the entire assignment must be typed). Double space it.
- The entire assignment is due in the form of a hard copy at the very beginning of class on the first day of class.
- Save a digital copy to submit to us electronically once we have our class website up and running.
- There will be a 20 point deduction for each day the assignment is late
- Plagiarism of any sort will result in an automatic zero and possible expulsion from the class.
- Please email Mr. Sparks at sparks.cs@easthartford.org or Mr. Szwed at tszwed@easthartford.org if you have any questions.