

Mandatory Assignment.

Please read and annotate the *Life of Pi* by Yann Martel and be prepared to discuss the novel in detail in the first weeks of class. Whether those annotations are about significant details, vocabulary, literary themes, or otherwise, you should aim to have at least 2 annotations on each page. Your goal is to find something significant at every turn and to be able to connect them to other relevant moments later in the text.

In addition to reading and annotating the novel, you will keep a reader's **hand-written** journal in which you'll record your response to the novel. Please write neatly. There are 100 short chapters in the novel. Write responses to a quote or passage from ten of the chapters. Try to distribute your responses well (for example, five from the first half of the novel and five from the second half.) Your hand written journal is worth a Quiz grade and your annotations are worth a Daily grade.

Here is an example of a response.

Quote:

"I have nothing to say of my working life, only that a tie is a noose, and inverted though it is, it will hang a man nonetheless if he's not careful." (Ch. 1, p. 6)

Response:

I once wrote a poem called "Ode to a Necktie." It was modeled after a series of odes written by the Chilean poet Pablo Neruda. In his odes Neruda praises forks, eggs, socks and other mundane things. In my poem, I praise my necktie because I feel it keeps me together, helps me face my daily work. So in a way, I don't at all agree that a tie is a noose; in fact, on a couple of occasions, when I have had to do serious academic work at home, I have reached for my tie in order to place myself in the right frame of mind. I do acknowledge, however, that the author probably intends the necktie to symbolize soul-killing work, the drudgery of daily paper-pushing and mindless busy-ness—the kind of work that chokes creativity and turns workers into mere drones. Shouldn't the mind be used for more than mere material gain? Crunching numbers and closing deals will not necessarily help you discover the meaning of life. Can the fast-track help us in our pursuit of happiness?

Please note that in the above response I have tried to compose a **personal, thoughtful** response. I consider my own personal experience as well as the author's intentions. In your own journal responses, take the time to ponder the quote or passage you are responding to. Spread your work out over a period of time; it is not advisable to rush through this assignment. Each entry should be between 100-150 words in length.

Optional Assignment (in addition to the mandatory one).

Write a book report on a book from the recommended reading list for Cistercian Upper School. The book report should not simply summarize the plot but should be a reflection paper in which you discuss and respond to the book's meaning. This optional assignment will be worth an extra quiz grade. It should be 500-700 words in length.