



**Bancroft Upper School
Required English Summer Reading
For *All* Incoming 9th Graders
2010**

A Separate Peace

BY

John Knowles

BACKGROUND

John Knowles' riveting novel *A Separate Peace* made quite a splash when it hit the shelves in the US in 1960, winning both the William Faulkner and the Rosenthal Foundation Awards. The story takes place in a small New England town at a boys boarding school with World War II looming in the background. It is the story of Gene Forrester's "coming of age." He represents the first person narrator, and as in all narrations the reader should be alert to "limitations" of the narrator. Pay close attention to Gene's judgments by carefully observing the actions of the characters and how they interact with the narrator. Be a detective and verify the accuracy of and indicate any misinterpretations by the narrator.

ASSIGNMENT

Construct a one-page essay that contains the following:

- An Argument – An argument (also called a thesis statement) is a statement that indicates what you will write about. It represents your reasoned opinion.
- Evidence – This includes quotations and examples from the text.
- A Conclusion – A conclusion represents your final thoughts.

Essay Option #1

At the close of the novel Gene states, "My war ended before I even put on a uniform; I was on active duty all my time at school; I killed my enemy there." Think about the quote and respond to the following two points in your one-page paper.

- Must every person leave his or her innocence behind in order to mature?
- What is an example of Gene's innocence early in the novel?

Essay Option #2

A Separate Peace is Gene's "coming of age" story. Gene is transformed from a fearful, angry teenager lacking in confidence to an adult who deals with negative feelings and eventually lives a life of inner peace and harmony. What steps or stages of development make up this journey and what does Gene eventually learn by the end of the novel? Use quotes and analysis to illustrate your points in your one-page paper.

ESSAY DETAILS

Your one-page essay should be typed, double-spaced, MLA style, in 12-pt font.

- Use **ACTIVE** verbs.
- Avoid First Person – essay should be written in Third Person.
- Use evidence from the text to support your points. (*quotes*)
- **MOST IMPORTANTLY – ENJOY THE BOOK & WELCOME TO 9TH GRADE ENGLISH!**
- **9TH GRADE TEACHERS: Bonny O'Rourke and Christian Gal**