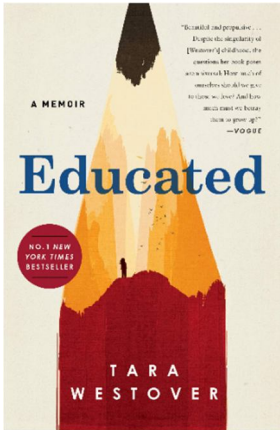


May 2025

Dear Rising Advanced Junior,

Because summer reading is an effective way to maintain your reading and thinking skills, we want to give YOU the opportunity to excel next school year with the aid of a great book. In addition to a "thinking" practice, this assignment will develop your reading comprehension and vocabulary as well as promote intellectual growth.



We have selected Tara Westover's *Educated* for next year's Advanced Juniors to read before the beginning of school in August. You will need to have your own copy of the book so that you may fully participate in class discussions. When you come to school in the fall, be prepared to be assessed on your reading of the text by the second class day. Additionally, we will incorporate *Educated* into the first writing unit of the semester.

**Book Summary** (<http://www.randomhousebooks.com/campaign/educated/>)

Tara Westover was 17 the first time she set foot in a classroom. Born to survivalists in the mountains of Idaho, she prepared for the end of the world by stockpiling home-canned peaches and sleeping with her "head-for-the-hills bag". In the summer she stewed herbs for her mother, a midwife and healer, and in the winter she salvaged in her father's junkyard.

Her father forbade hospitals, so Tara never saw a doctor or nurse. Gashes and concussions, even burns from explosions, were all treated at home with herbalism. The family was so isolated from mainstream society that there was no one to ensure the children received an education and no one to intervene when one of Tara's older brothers became violent.

Then, lacking any formal education, Tara began to educate herself. She taught herself enough mathematics and grammar to be admitted to Brigham Young University, where she studied history, learning for the first time about important world events like the Holocaust and the civil rights movement. Her quest for knowledge transformed her, taking her over oceans and across continents, to Harvard and to Cambridge. Only then would she wonder if she'd traveled too far, if there was still a way home.

*Educated* is an account of the struggle for self-invention. It is a tale of fierce family loyalty and of the grief that comes with severing the closest of ties. With the acute insight that distinguishes all great writers, Westover has crafted a universal coming-of-age story that gets to the heart of what an education is and what it offers: the perspective to see one's life through new eyes and the will to change it.

*Educated* will serve as a significant part of our first unit. We will discuss Westover's journey, explore themes, and analyze the author's writing style in class activities and individual work. Your knowledge of the memoir will be assessed in two ways: a Socratic Seminar and a major test at the end of the unit. To ensure your success, it's essential you read actively and take good notes.

Listed below are things to note, highlight, and/or mark as you read.

**A. Chapter summaries:**

1. Write a 1-2 sentence chapter summary at the end of chapters to help you manage the material in class discussions. Writing summaries is an effective active-reading strategy, one you should do for any material you read for school.

**B. Descriptive passages:**

2. Where does the writer create vivid scenes? Highlight scenes (at least 5) that appeal to the senses.

**C. Westover's Education:**

3. What impact did her family's **religious beliefs** have on her upbringing?
4. How did **trauma** (accidents, abuse, etc.) impact her relationships?
5. What steps did she take to get a more traditional **education**?
6. How did her educational experiences change her **perspective** of the world and her place in it? Highlight passages in the text related to these questions, making sure **to label** what these passages are about. In addition, add your personal reactions to her story in the margins.

**D. The Rhetorical Triangle:**

7. What do you know about the speaker? What is the author's purpose? Who is her audience?

A note on notes: You can take notes in your book or write notes on paper. It's up to you.

We hope you have a great summer, and we look forward to meeting you in August!

Sincerely,

Ms. Erin Gary  
Ms. Melissa Fette

**SPECIAL NOTE:** If a student decides to make any schedule changes over the summer that result in a change in academic level for English, she is required to read the book assigned for that level, which will be a different book. She will need to find the correct summer reading assignment on the school website.