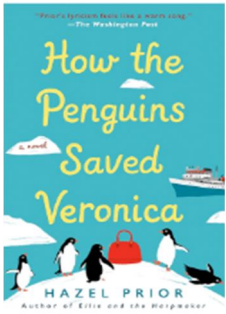


May 2026

Dear rising Advanced Sophomore,

Summer reading is an effective way to maintain reading and thinking skills, and you can keep your skills sharp with the aid of a good summer reading book. The assigned book for this level is *How the Penguins Saved Veronica* by Hazel Prior.

To give you a preview, here's a short description:



This debut novel by Hazel Prior is a rich heartwarming story that proves it's never too late to be the person you want to be.

Veronica McCreedy is a fussy, unfriendly 85-year-old woman who likes to be left alone and is fed up with the world and the hard life has dealt her. Knowing she is nearing death, she looks for a worthwhile cause to leave her fortune to, and suddenly her life takes off on an unexpected new path. While watching a nature documentary one evening, she learns about Adelie penguins and becomes intrigued by the team of scientists researching the creatures on Locket Island in the Antarctic. At the same time, Veronica's memories of her past are awoken by a dusty old padlocked chest in a storage room, reminding Veronica of the secrets she herself has kept locked away for so many years. This

leads her to finding her grandson, who is her only living relative.

With a growing desire to find meaning in her life, she heads off on an adventure that teaches her what family, love, and connection are all about.

Active reading will help you to stay connected as you read and will be a useful resource as you go back to the text to study. **Annotating** the text is a valuable tool in being an active reader.

- Underline or highlight key lines and passages as you read. What stands out to you? This will help you with memory and finding important passages later.
- Make notes in the margin of important points, questions, and observations and connections.
- Write a 3-5 sentence summary at the end of each chapter to recap key plot points. It can be a bullet-point list.

What should be the focus of your annotating? Here are some topics to be on the lookout for:

- The story is narrated in **4 different voices**: VERONICA, PATRICK, DIARY ENTRIES, and BLOG POSTS. Pay attention to these differing perspectives both in terms of the **story events** and in terms of the **author's writing style**.
- Read actively for **character development and growth**, which is a key aspect of this story.

NOTE: Some of the events and situations in the story are far-fetched. For this book, you need to **willingly suspend your disbelief** and just enjoy the story's characters and themes.

There will be a formal assessment of this novel as well as class activities. Be prepared with your annotated book on the first day of class. We look forward to meeting you in August.

Sincerely,
Ms. Diane Darst
Mrs. Karen Meyer
Your English II Advanced teachers

SPECIAL NOTE: If you decide to make a schedule change over the summer that results in a change in academic level for English, you will be required to read the book(s) assigned for that level. You will need to find the correct summer reading assignment on the school website and complete those requirements by the beginning of the school year.