

**Canterbury High School**  
**Summer Reading 2023: Asian American Literature**  
**Mrs. Freehauf: sfreehauf@canterburyschool.org**

**The Assignment:**

1. Students taking Asian American Literature will choose one memoir from the 5 options listed below in preparation for our first unit. **Your assignment must be typed and ready to upload to turnitin.com & Canvas on the first day of school.** Summer reading assignments will not be accepted past the first week of school. There is a 10% grade deduction for every day it is late.
2. As you read your memoir of choice, you will record 6 passages that you find interesting, important, and that could be used as a writing prompt. The passages should span the length of the book. On your typed assignment, type up the entire passage you are referencing, include the page number, and then write a paragraph about why you chose the passage? Why is it important to the memoir, interesting to read, or both? Be detailed in your explanation and reference specifics of your chosen passage.
3. When you've read the book and typed up your passage, you will then write three prompts that fellow students could use for a writing exercise. The prompts must be based on three of your passages. Your goal is to write a prompt that will spark them to write either about the same content as the passage (in their own life) OR write in the same style as the author. You could even have a prompt that does both. Be thoughtful in this as you'll be sharing these prompts with classmates in the first days of school.
4. Your typed document should be in MLA format, the title should be the memoir you chose. Part one (label it part one) of your document will be the 6 passages with your paragraph explanation. Number your six passages clearly and include page numbers to avoid deductions. Part two (label it as part two please) of your document will be your 3 writing prompts. Please indicate which passage from part one your prompt is referring to.

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**The Choices:**

Choose one of the following memoirs & **email me with your choice by June 16th, 2023 at the LATEST.**

**1. Eat A Peach, David Chang (Korean-American)**

*"Eat a Peach" is a memoir written by David Chang, a renowned chef and the founder of the Momofuku restaurant group. The book delves into Chang's personal and professional journey, providing readers with an intimate look into his life and the challenges he faced along the way. Chang shares his experiences growing up as a Korean-American in northern Virginia and the impact of his family's food culture on his culinary pursuits. He chronicles his early days working in the food industry, including his time as a line cook and the pivotal moment when he decided to open his own restaurant. Throughout the*

*memoir, Chang opens up about his struggles with mental health and the pressures of the restaurant industry. He explores the highs and lows of his career, including the critical acclaim and success of his restaurants and the immense pressure to maintain his reputation. Beyond his personal story, Chang offers insights into the food industry, discussing topics such as the importance of creativity and innovation, the challenges of running a restaurant, and the cultural impact of food.*

## **2. Good Talk, Mira Jacob (Indian-American)**

*"Good Talk" is a graphic memoir written by Mira Jacob. Through a series of illustrations and conversations, the book explores the author's experiences as a first-generation American and addresses the complexities of race, identity, and belonging. The memoir revolves around the author's conversations with her young biracial son, exploring his curiosity about race and his struggle to understand where he fits in. Jacob uses these dialogues as a starting point to delve into her own life experiences, examining her Indian-American heritage, cultural upbringing, and the challenges she faced growing up. "Good Talk" touches on a range of topics, including interracial relationships, cultural stereotypes, and the impact of political events such as the 2016 US presidential election. It also reflects on the author's personal journey, her relationships with her family, and her own exploration of identity.*

## **3. Stay True, Hua Hsu (Taiwanese-American)**

*From the New Yorker staff writer Hua Hsu, a gripping memoir on friendship, grief, the search for self, and the solace that can be found through art. In the eyes of eighteen-year-old Hua Hsu, the problem with Ken--with his passion for Dave Matthews, Abercrombie & Fitch, and his fraternity--is that he is exactly like everyone else. Ken, whose Japanese American family has been in the United States for generations, is mainstream; for Hua, the son of Taiwanese immigrants, who makes 'zines and haunts Bay Area record shops, Ken represents all that he defines himself in opposition to. The only thing Hua and Ken have in common is that, however they engage with it, American culture doesn't seem to have a place for either of them. But despite his first impressions, Hua and Ken become friends, a friendship built on late-night conversations over cigarettes, long drives along the California coast, and the textbook successes and humiliations of everyday college life. And then violently, senselessly, Ken is gone, killed in a carjacking, not even three years after the day they first meet. Determined to hold on to all that was left of one of his closest friends--his memories--Hua turned to writing. Stay True is the book he's been working on ever since. A coming-of-age story that details both the ordinary and extraordinary, Stay True is a bracing memoir about growing up, and about moving through the world in search of meaning and belonging.*

**4. Beautiful Country, Qian Julie Wang (Chinese-American)**

*"Beautiful Country" is a memoir written by Qian Julie Wang. In this powerful and moving book, Wang recounts her personal journey as an undocumented immigrant in the United States and explores themes of resilience, determination, and the pursuit of the American Dream. The memoir begins with Wang's early childhood in China, where she and her family lived in poverty. In search of a better life, Wang's parents made the difficult decision to immigrate to the United States. They arrived in New York City, where they faced numerous challenges and struggled to make ends meet. Wang chronicles her experiences growing up as an undocumented immigrant, navigating the complexities of immigration policies, and the fear of deportation that constantly loomed over her family. Despite the obstacles, she remained determined to succeed academically and build a better future.*

**5. Speak, Okinawa, Elizabeth Miki Brina (Japanese-American)**

*"Speak, Okinawa" is a memoir written by Elizabeth Miki Brina. In this poignant and introspective book, Brina explores her complex identity as a biracial woman growing up between two cultures and delves into her family's history and their connection to Okinawa, Japan. The memoir centers around Brina's relationship with her mother, a strong-willed Okinawan woman, and her father, an American serviceman. Brina grapples with her own sense of belonging and the challenges she faces as she navigates her multicultural heritage. Through vivid storytelling, Brina takes readers on a journey through Okinawa's rich history and the enduring impact of World War II on the island and its people. She examines the intergenerational trauma and the cultural divides that shaped her upbringing and affected her understanding of her Okinawan heritage.*