AP English Summer Reading 2018-2019
Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* & Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World*

Directions
1. Buy your own print copy of these two books and clearly mark your name in it. You're going to be writing in your book and turning it in to me to examine in the fall. Digital or library copies make this impossible.

2. Read the two books carefully (including Wilde’s preface to *Dorian Gray*; if there’s an introduction or afterward for *Brave New World*, it’s up to you). As you read, you must
   A). annotate obsessively (difficult passages, summaries of key paragraphs, meanings of strange words, details that relate to the other book/other passages in the same book, crucial plot events, personal reactions, etc.). I’m going to check in the fall to see how well you did so.
   B). take thorough handwritten notes (I don’t allow Chromebook notes in class, so you’d better get in the habit now). You’ll need these notes in August.

3. Read and understand for yourself. Do not share ideas and reactions with other students, and don’t consult online crutches (i.e. Spark Notes, Cliffs Notes, etc.). Both of those lead to lazy thinking, frequently inaccurate information, vapid and predictable responses, and will be considered academic dishonesty by me. You wouldn’t be here now if you weren’t good readers, so read good. If you have to wrestle with the text a bit, that’s wonderful: that means you’re doing something worthwhile.

4. Learn enough about the following concepts to be able to say something accurate and intelligent on command:
   - Victorian Era
   - British Modernism
   - Hedonism
   - Aestheticism
   - Dystopia

5. In addition to being prepared for the kind of questions you’d expect on a good old-fashioned objective test (if you don’t know character names, plot details, and the like, you’re not helping us), prepare yourselves to answer a one-question in-class essay prompt that’ll count as a test grade. The test will ask you to respond with a strong thesis statement, which you’ll defend with robust quoted textual evidence. I’ll even let you use your (by that time) heavily-annotated books. So what’s the question? Nobody knows, but you’ll be in great shape if you prepare for questions such as these:...
   - In both works, is the pursuit of pleasure good or bad? Is pain actually *good* somehow?
   - How is our decision-making process affected by pressures and influences from those around us?
   - Speaking of people around us, how much should we care about all those other people that make up society? Can we care too little? Can we care about the collective too much?
   - In Huxley, what are the specific mechanisms (and there are a lot of ‘em) the World State uses to subjugate the people? Are any of these things creepily similar to what our world’s like today?
   - What makes key characters tick? For example, what, exactly, is John’s deal? What’s he so conflicted about? To what extent are Bernard, Helmholtz, and Lenina like John? Does Linda actually love John? Does John actually love Lenina? Does Dorian actually love Sybil? Does Lord Henry or Basil exert more influence on Dorian? And why’s everyone so into Dorian, anyway?

Do well on this, and you’ll start the year in great shape. Do this half-heartedly, and you’ll start the year in a smoldering crater that will take great effort to climb out of.

See you in August.