Welcome to High School! One of the biggest goals of your freshman English class is to prepare you to become a critical reader and thinker. It is equally important that you develop into a strong writer in order to convey your thoughts as well as advocate for yourself and your community. To that end, these texts have been selected because they explore diverse backgrounds and circumstances, and the activities are designed to help you practice those fundamental literacy skills.

**Texts to Read:**

1. *Under the Persimmon Tree.* Suzanne Fisher Staples (1010L):
   a. **Themes:** Choices, Hopes of surviving, Change, Importance of family, Dangerous conditions children face
   b. **Key Understanding:** The book manages to make the sometimes distant-seeming conflict immediate and vivid to American readers. A poignant picture of the cost of regional and global turmoil.

   OR

2. *Enrique’s Journey.* Sonia Nazario (830L):
   a. **Themes:** Choices, Hopes of surviving, Change, Importance of family, Dangerous conditions children face
   b. **Key Understanding:** Staples uses documented interviews and investigative journalism to illustrate the nuances of migration, and how the decision whether or not to migrate can have devastating effects on the family.

   AND

3. *7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens.* Sean Covey (870L): *All Students Read*
   a. **Key Understanding:** In an entertaining style, Covey uses cartoons, clever ideas, great quotes, and incredible stories about real teens from all over the world to help teens improve self-image, build friendships, resist peer pressure, achieve their goals, and get along with their parents, as well as tackle the new challenges of our time, like cyberbullying and social media.
Tasks to Complete:
Choose a character from the text to complete the following tasks:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Under the Persimmon Tree</th>
<th>Enrique’s Journey</th>
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<td>1. How does either Najmah or Nusrat’s background influence their life, education, friends and family?</td>
<td>1. Why is Enrique the focus of this novel, instead of Belky? How do Enrique and Belky’s lives diverge after their mother leaves? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.</td>
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<td>2. How is Najmah or Nusrat affected by their culture and setting? Use textual evidence to support your answer.</td>
<td>2. During Enrique’s travels, acts of kindness come from both likely and unlikely places. Which act stood out to you and why? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.</td>
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3. **PROJECT**: Identify three circumstances in the chosen text to which you can connect. These can range from loss, sadness, fear, gender identity, hope, etc. Choose a creative outlet to express your connection to the situation. Some ideas Include, but are not limited to:
   - A well-crafted and organized essay (500 word minimum)
   - An engaging and professionally-developed digital presentation
   - A multimedia video and/or podcast

   *The total project should include relevant and sufficient textual evidence, an original and concise analysis of the evidence, and a compelling personal connection.*

**7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens Tasks: Summary and Reflection**
For each of the four “parts” of the book, complete the following:

1. A comprehensive summary (1 paragraph minimum)
2. A paraphrase of the central idea of each habit discussed in that part. *One sentence minimum.*
3. A personal evaluation of your current level of proficiency with the habit. You may use the following scale for guidance:

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<td>I don’t do this at all, I have a lot of work to do!</td>
<td>I do this sometimes, but it is not a habit. I need to improve!</td>
<td>I would consider this a habit of mine, but I need to tighten up.</td>
<td>I consistently employ this habit, and could probably leverage it to strengthen another habit I need to develop.</td>
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In your evaluation, provide personal examples to support your perceived level of proficiency. Then, set a goal for how you plan to improve in the next three months, including specific commitments. *One paragraph minimum.* **It is recommended that task be completed as you read,** rather than waiting to complete all tasks after reading the whole book. Trust us on this one!