Pre-AP Socratic Seminar

***A Separate Peace***

**Summerville High School**

*“There are no great limits to growth because there are no limits of*

*human intelligence, imagination, and wonder.”*

*–Ronald Reagan*

**Assignment:** Today we will reflect on and answer the following questions for our up and coming Socratic seminar that will take place on Wednesday (March 9th). The following questions ask you to think critically about *A Separate Peace* and you will have a chance to a have a seminar with your class. On Wednesday, one student will be asked to lead the seminar, and these are the questions that will be asked. You will be graded on your participation on the following questions. Today, your only task is to familiarize yourself with these questions and be able to answer them verbally at the seminar. This seminar is based solely on participation – and the seminar is worth 50 points. You will be graded on your participation and on the thoughtfulness of your answers.

**Note:** You may have notes with you at the seminar; however, you will need to be able to give your answers verbally without reading from your notes.

**Questions:**

1. Trace Gene and Finny’s relationship from the summer of 1942 up to Ch. 6.  Give examples of incidents Gene would later remember as “shining moments” in their friendship.  Include incidents which brought about change in one or both characters and events that changed their relationship.
2. Describe the setting of *A Separate Peace* and explain the significance of that setting. How does the tone of the story change as the story progresses, from Devon in summer to Devon in winter? How are the boys insulated, initially, form world events? Could the story have taken place just as easily in another time and place?
3. War, broadly defined as conflict, exists on several levels in the novel.  How are the various characters affected both by World War II and by a personal “war” within himself and/or with another character?
4. How do breaking the rules/rebellion, competition/games, and betrayal/envy/resentment evolve as themes in the novel?  What is their significance?
5. John Knowles uses war terminology throughout *A Separate Peace*. What ***affec*t** do you think this has on the reader? Why?
6. Sophocles, a Greek poet and playwright, suggests that we never reach a full realization of who we are as individuals until we find another human being with whom we can share ourselves. Using specific examples from the text, explain how Gene’s relationship with Finny brings the narrator to a fuller understanding of himself
7. Create one question on your own that you **may** be asked to present to the class. Your question should elicit a response that will discuss the theme of the novel thus far, and further, how can we apply the theme to the human condition and ultimately, our lives? The leader of the seminar will call on one student at a time to share their question, we may not get to all, but it is best to be prepared ☺