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Ms. Maarciano Block G

CLASS PROJECT ASSIGNMENT –

A Separate Peace: A Celebration of the American Spirit

PROMPT

 The boys at Devon faced the immediate prospects of being personally involved in World War II. How about you? How much do you know about World War II? Maybe not much more than the boys from Devon. Have you studied about it in history class? Perhaps your attitude is, "Who cares about World War II, anyway? It is a dusty, old war that happened decades before I was born. So what?!"

Let's blow away the dust and take a fresh look at it from a different angle. The allied victory in World War II was a celebration of what was and is best in America. Think about it for a minute.

Why were we fighting? We fought for freedom and democracy, and we fought against tyranny and prejudice. What did the allies accomplish? We defeated Hitler and Mussolini and turned back the invading forces of Japan. We beat back the weeds of tyranny and prejudice so that individual people and nations could grow and flourish according to their own needs and desires. We advanced technology and changed the face of war forever. Americans joined together and pooled their ingenuity, resources and talents for one common purpose, and the results were fantastic.

It is with this in mind that we prepare a Celebration of the American Spirit in conjunction with the reading of A Separate Peace because of the influences of World War II in the novel.

PREPARATION

 Before you begin planning your celebration, you need to define and understand what you are celebrating. That makes sense, right? What is the American Spirit? Make notes here:

YES, BUT WHAT HAVE YOU DONE FOR ME LATELY? Like the students at Devon, you also have a war to fight; a war that, like World War II, has many battle fronts. You will have to fight the war on drugs, the war on crime, the wars on AIDS and cancer, and the war on the breakdown of the family and of our society. Some of you are out there on the battlefield already--you've been drafted, dragged into the war willing or not.

You and the people in your neighborhoods are the soldiers. Teachers, social workers, leaders of neighborhood associations--these are the lieutenants and colonels. The problem is that we are lacking generals and lacking the total commitment of the American Spirit that we had in WWII. Right now we're fighting skirmishes--a little battle here, a little battle there just trying to hold off the enemy rather than attacking with a full-scale offensive. I'm sure many of you feel like it's "every man for himself." The battle is real. Everyday in newspapers across the country, people read about people being shot, knifed, killed. People go "section 8" like Leper did or become very real members of the "suicide society."

What is our American Spirit? Where is it? Write your answer here:

GETTING BACK ON TRACK

What will be the spark that rekindles the American Spirit so it will again burn in the heart of our country and be a beacon for that which is good and just and true; so it will burn out apathy and short-sightedness and indifference? Write your answers here:

THE FOURTH OF JULY

 Be a spark. You. . . .Yes, you. It's absurd. But that's where it's at. Without a spark, there is no fire. Period. Imagine if each one of you would be a spark; we'd have a sparkler! Imagine if you ignited the rest of the school. We'd have a firecracker! Imagine if your school could ignite your community and your community could ignite another. We'd have the Fourth of July!

The point is that it is up to you to find the American Spirit to help fight the battles we face ahead, and it is up to you to pass that spirit along so we as a nation of Americans can win the “war” against the forces that are undermining our country.

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Gene said, ". . . I lost part of myself to him then, and a soaring sense of freedom revealed that this must have been my purpose from the first: to become a part of Phineas." Maybe that's a pretty good analogy to what it means to be an American. Each one of us gives up a little part of ourselves to our country--to become a part of something greater than any one person could be individually. In World War II, it wasn't any one soldier's death or any one general's idea or any one person's contribution to the war effort that made the allies successful. It was the fact that everyone gave something for the common good; everyone made a contribution to the greater cause.

THE BOTTOM LINE

So what are you going to do? For this assignment, you are going to plan one day of activities for your school to Celebrate the American Spirit. You are going to light a spark. You are going to have a pep rally for America. After that one day, will the spark be tended and turned into a flame? That's up to you. This is your chance to start--to take pride in your school, your community, your state and your country and to do your part to help begin win the war that faces us all.

YEAH, RIGHT. SURE. (HUMPF) "It ain't gonna work." "Man, the war's too big." "You're nuts." "You gotta be part of the problem 'cause you gotta be on drugs if you think this will work!" You're right. Standing up in the school auditorium, listening to the school band play the national anthem, and waving a few flags isn't going to do it. We're talking commitment and involvement here. We're talking about a really BIG project. We're talking about taking a real step in the real world---and you are going to be responsible.

GOTTA HAVE IT!

Enthusiasm, ideas, organization, determination--these are the requirements for success with this project. Some of you are probably a little enthusiastic already, some of you probably have some ideas. Determination is going to be important as time goes on. You have to be committed to complete this project.

REQUIREMENTS

 1. You must plan one day's worth of activities relating to The American Spirit for your whole school.

2. You must have the approval of the teacher for each activity (just to make sure you don't do anything illegal or inappropriate).

3. Each activity must have a complete Activity Plan filled out and a complete Project

Plan, including the Activity Plans, must be submitted to your teacher for approval by the principal before anything is done beyond the planning stage.

4. Do not go beyond the planning stage until the Project Plan is approved. That means don't contact guest speakers, community leaders, or anyone outside of the school until your teacher tells you it is okay.

ORGANIZATION

1. You have to elect two people who will be co-chairpersons of the project. These two people will be responsible for coordinating the project and act as a liaison to other people in authority (teacher, principal, community leaders if they will be involved).

2. Find out how much time you have to use on your American Spirit Day (or Pep Rally For America, or whatever you want to call it). You need to structure your activities so that every student in the school is scheduled to be somewhere specific under a specific teacher's guidance during the day.

3. As a group, decide what projects, what events, what activities you want to do. You need to estimate how long each activity will take. After you decide what you want to do, divide the class into committees, one committee for each activity.

4. Each committee should elect a chairman who will coordinate the group's efforts and keep the project co-chairpersons posted about progress. Each person in the committee should have specific tasks to do to make sure the activity is properly planned and executed.

SUGGESTIONS

1. Structure your Spirit Day in sections of time that match your current schedule. (Class periods are 43 minutes long, make your activities in chunks of 43 minutes.) The less disruptive your schedule is to the normal routine, the more likely your plan will be approved. Consider lunch schedules and planning periods for teachers in your schedule. Consider scheduling students to participate in the activities by grade level or some other criteria your school normally uses for scheduling assemblies, pep rallies, etc.

2. Make the activities fun but also educational, interesting, and meaningful so that students come away from each activity a little richer, a little better educated, a little more informed than they were before.

3. Make sure students understand the purpose of this American Spirit Day. The idea is to get people involved with your school, your neighborhoods, your community, your city, your state, your America. Your goals are to give students a strong feeling of patriotism by showing them the best things America has to offer, to explore the difficult issues that face each one of us today and to search for ways to combat the problems in our society.

IDEAS

1. Begin the day with the Pledge to the Flag and the singing of The Star Spangled Banner and America.

2. Make a multi-media presentation in which you show what is RIGHT with America-- why we are still flooded with immigrants and what we have to offer that most other places in the world do not. Start with clips from the past starting with the American Revolution and hit the highlights of our nation's accomplishments up through the present day. If you have a small school, show your multi-media presentation to all students in your auditorium or assembly room at the beginning of the day. If you have a large school, you may have to schedule different groups to see the presentation throughout the day.

3. Invite panels of guest speakers--your mayor, county council members, your board of education members, leaders in your community--and schedule them to meet with groups of students (say one class at a time) to discuss the problems in your area and ways the community and school are or could be working together to help solve those problems.

4. Invite MADD or your local "Just Say No!" campaign coordinators to show students how they can help combat those two trouble spots.

5. Coordinate a variety show around the American Spirit theme using students from your school and people from your community.

6. Have -A-Thons (fill in the blank with the activity or activities of your choice) to help raise money to improve your community. Have a specific goal in mind. Be sure to ask for business sponsors as well as individuals.

7. Have some American Spirit trophies or certificates made up. Have games/events that relate to the theme of the day, and use these as awards.

8. Invite a representative from your police department to come give safety tips and to discuss ways the public can help them in their efforts.

9. Maybe one of your local businesses would donate bumper stickers that say "The American Spirit--Catch It!" or some other appropriate slogan.

10. Have each one of the clubs in your school decorate one hallway based on the American Spirit theme.

These are just some basic ideas. You all are creative and can come up with some great ideas of your own--things that interest you and make use of your talents.

PROJECT PLAN

PROPOSED PROJECT NAME 

PROPOSED BY  

DATE OF PROPOSAL 

SUBMITTED TO 

PURPOSE OF THE PROJECT      

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT           

PROPOSED SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

            

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

            

NOTE: Attached to this proposal is an Activity Plan for each of the activities we would like to have for this project.

DATE(S) REQUESTED FOR THIS PROJECT:

OR

OR



Comments from the person to whom this proposal is submitted:

Approved Denied Need More Information

 

Signature Date

ACTIVITY PLAN

NAME OF PROPOSED ACTIVITY 

PROPOSED BY 

DATE 

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTIVITY

             

MATERIALS NEEDED

   

SOURCE(S) OF MATERIALS

   

The page(s) which follow contain a detailed, step-by-step description of how the activity will be planned and executed.