I.B. English 2 Language Arts will act to make your transition into 11th grade English that much easier. That course is considered a college-level course and like it, we will read a variety of works by authors who represent different time periods, cultures and genres. With that in mind, this summer we’ll begin English 2 by reading and responding to Julia Alvarez’s *In the Time of the Butterflies*. This remarkable historical novel uses multiple perspectives and a variety of written forms to infuse vibrancy into the courageous true story of the Mirabal sisters.

**You’ll be writing two essays.** Remember for each of your two essays, you should organize your ideas around a thesis about the novel. This thesis or argument should be focused, with clear reasons supporting its conclusion. The thesis and supporting reasons should be backed by references to the text. Use parenthetical citations.

**ESSAY ONE:** Choose one of the following three prompts and construct a formal response.

- Further examine the theme of courage in the novel. While Minerva Mirabal may be considered more outwardly brave, how is each sister courageous in her own way?

- The portions of the book written from Patria Mirabal’s point of view deal with religious themes and include many biblical allusions. How does Patria develop from an idealistic young Catholic girl to a woman who doubts? When does this change occur? Can it be argued that her faith is stronger in the end, even though she has some serious religious doubts?

- Why might Alvarez have chosen not to write from the point of view of any of the men? For this essay, explore two of the male characters—whether Señor Mirabal or the Mirabal sisters’ husbands—and discover how important they are to the underground rebellion.

**ESSAY TWO:** Expanding on the question of historical fiction, choose two scenes from the novel and research their historical veracity. Whether or not they are historically accurate, how effective is Alvarez in her quest to write “the truth according to character”? This essay should integrate at least two outside sources. Think of it like a short research paper.

For each essay, adhere to the following guidelines:

- **Format**- Typed, double spaced, 12 pt font Times New Roman, 1” margins
- **Structure**- Introductory paragraph (hook, bridge, thesis statement), Body paragraphs (state, support, explain), and Conclusion (reinforce thesis and persuade)
**In the Time of the Butterflies**- Comprehension Questions

Before each chapter, preview the questions to guide your reading. After each chapter, record your answer for each question to demonstrate your understanding.

CHAPTER ONE: DEDÉ, 1994 AND CIRCA 1943

1. Who is coming to visit? What does Dedé think of her?

2. What happens every November 25th?

3. How does Dedé describe each of the sisters?
   - Minerva
   - Maria Teresa
   - Patria

4. At night, Dede thinks about Trujillo and the police state. Describe the images in her mind.
CHAPTER TWO: MINERVA, 1938, 1941, 1944

5. Why does Papá allow the girls to go away to school?

6. What is Sinita’a secret? Describe the secret in your own words.

7. What happened to Lina? Describe the courtship with Trujillo.

8. Describe Trujillo’s visit to the school and the girls’ performance.

CHAPTER THREE: MARIA TERESA, 1945 TO 1946

9. How does the epistolary format (diary style) affect your view of María Teresa?

10. Why does Minerva say diaries are important?

11. Who is Hilda, and how is she connected to Minerva? Why is the connection between these two girls important?
12. Why does Mate have to hand over her diary? What could the demise of the little book symbolize to the reader?

CHAPTER FOUR: PATRIA, 1946

13. What did Patria and her family assume she would become? Why?

14. What causes Patria to abandon her aspirations of becoming a nun?


16. Why was Patria worried about Minerva?


18. What religious imagery do you notice in the chapter? How does it add to your understanding of Patria’s character?
CHAPTER FIVE: DEDE, 1994 and 1948

19. Fela is one of the family servants. What is her role in preserving the memory of the sisters?

20. Who is Minou?

21. Who is Jaimito? What is planned for him?

22. Explain what happened on the night Lio went into hiding. What does this indicate about the political climate in the Dominican Republic?

CHAPTER SIX: MINERVA, 1949

23. What does Minerva learn about her father?

24. What does she find in Papa's room and how does she react?

25. Why does the family go to the Discovery Day Dance? What happens while they are there?

26. When Papá goes to jail, what does he ask Minerva to do?
27. How did Papa change in jail? What causes this change?

28. How could the loaded dice a symbol for the regime?

CHAPTER SEVEN: MARIA TERESA 1953-1958

29. Describe Mate’s dream after Papá dies.

30. What does Mate spend most of her time writing about?

31. Minerva gets her law degree on July 27th. Why is she disappointed?

32. Why does Mate to join the National Underground?

CHAPTER EIGHT: PATRIA, 1959

33. What happens in Cuba? What does this have to do with the Dominican Republic?

34. What happens on Patria's retreat?

35. Why is it important that Patria names her son Raul Ernesto?
36. What is the SIM?

37. Why does Minerva ask Patria to keep Manolito?

38. What does Patria and Pedrito’s house eventually become?

CHAPTER NINE: DEDE, 1994 AND 1960

39. How do the differences in their marriages affect the sisters’ involvement in the revolution?

40. Why is Fidel’s speech played endlessly on the radio?

41. What does Dedé mean when she thinks, “The problem is when I open my eyes and see for myself”?
42. Explain how the SIM arrested the following people:
   - Leandro
   - Pedrito and Nelson
   - Manolo
   - Mate
   - Minerva

43. Does Dedé really have a choice in joining the underground?

CHAPTER TEN: PATRIA, JANUARY TO MARCH 1960

44. Who is Peña?

45. How does the Church respond to national events?

46. Patria says, “Once the goat was a bad memory in our past, that would be the real revolution we would have to fight: forgiving each other for what we had all let come to pass” (Alvarez 222). What does she mean?
CHAPTER ELEVEN: MARIA TERESA, MARCH TO AUGUST 1960

47. From where is Maria Teresa writing?

48. Why do Maria Teresa and Minerva not accept a pardon?

49. Why is it important to tell the OAS (The Organization of American States) what really happens?

50. What happens when they take Mate to “La 40”?

CHAPTER TWELVE: MINERVA, AUGUST TO NOVEMBER 1960

51. How did Minerva change after she gets out of jail?

52. Explain how Minerva feels when Elsa says “Viva la Mariposa.”

53. What is the significance of moving the men to a new location?
EPILOGUE: DEDÉ, 1994

54. What happens on the mountain pass?

55. What tone does Dedé use when recalling the trial and its aftermath?

56. What title does Dedé give herself about the retelling of her sisters’ story? Why?

57. After the sisters die, describe what happens to the following people:
   a. Jaimito-
   b. Manolo-
   c. Pedrito-
   d. Leandro-
   e. Mamá-