

Summer Reading 1: Salvatore Scibona, "Where I Learned to Read"

Due Date: Sunday, 7 June, 11:59 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time

Read this page first; then proceed to back of sheet.

What We Do: Committed Reading

- Job number one: to discern the writer's **purpose** and put it into words. Use a **verb of action**, in the infinitive form: The purpose is (for example) *to narrate, to recount, to describe, to explain, to challenge, to question, to examine, to reflect on, to define, to establish, to enumerate, to classify, to compare, to liken, to appraise, to discredit, to dismiss, to debunk, to posit, to honor, to praise, to shame, to exhort, to inspire, to show us . . . something or someone; or perhaps to call us to action, to rouse us to do something, or to persuade us* (or some particular person or audience) of something.
- If the paragraph above contains words you don't know, **look them up**, and **hand-write their meanings in a notebook** that you'll bring to school with you in September.
- In reading, note all large **assertions**—claims about the world, about life, about human nature, about *how things are*.
- Look up **every word** and **every name** (of a person, place, political or social or academic or artistic movement or style, or historical event) that's new to you, and **write it down** in the notebook already mentioned.

You are not merely allowed, but expected to look up every unfamiliar thing and person mentioned in everything we read. That's our duty. It's how we educate ourselves.

That means finding out

- **what it was or is**
- **what it did or does**
- **when it happened or lived**

You are not allowed,

Not allowed,

NOT ALLOWED to read, listen to, or in any other way take in anything *about the text you're reading*, no matter from where or from whom it comes. Not from AI, not from any book or magazine or podcast or website, not from Mom, Grandpa, or any classmate, friend, or enemy. Confront the text on your own and *deal with it as best you can*.

Salvatore Scibona

is mainly a novelist and short-story writer. He was born in Cleveland, Ohio, in 1975. "Where I Learned to Read," a piece of nonfiction, appeared in the weekly magazine *The New Yorker* in 2011.

Instructions

Read "Where I Learned to Read." While reading, observe the points listed above, under "What We Do: Committed Reading." Seek no commentary on the piece, anywhere; seek no one's opinion about any aspect of it. If asked for help by someone else, refuse, politely, to help. Just confront the text, look things up as necessary, and then:

Hand-write, perhaps in a single sentence but in no more than three sentences, your best description or definition of each of these things:

1. the purpose of this text
2. in what sense Scibona "learned to read" at St. John's College; or, if you prefer to frame it differently, the *manner* of reading that he learned there; or *how his understanding* of reading, of what it *is*, changed during his time there.

How to Submit Your Work

- **Hand-write** on lined white paper.
- **Scan your work with a document-scanning application** or on an **office scanner**. Your cell phone should have a scanning app. (In iPhone, open "Notes," poke around till you see an eyeball icon, and click on that; it should open a menu that includes "Scan documents.") **Scan in strong, even light, with no shadows falling on the paper. Hold the lens right over the center of the page, so we see a proper rectangle.**
- **Send** your scanned page(s) to H. Runyon via **Teams chat** or as an **e-mail attachment**.

—> **Plain cell-phone photos of work will NOT count as done work.**