SUMMER ASSIGNMENT

**Novel:** *Feed* by M. T. Anderson, 2002

Welcome to 11th IB Language and Literature!

We have picked M.T. Anderson’s *Feed* as it tells the story of a world deeply addicted and physically connected to technology. It’s also a great introduction to the ninth grade theme: coming of age. *Feed* is set in a futuristic society in which the newsfeed (which you likely see on the screens of your phones) is synced directly into the brain. This, as well as many other technological advances, makes for biting satire of modern society.

Before you begin, you’ll need to know a few things:

As stated, *Feed* is a satire, meaning that it uses irony, humor, and painful exaggeration to explore societal flaws. As you read, you’ll notice the word, “like” and a major use of expletives. Why? Because when Anderson was writing his novel, he spent time listening to the conversations around him. He purposely uses an excess of these words to stress the (already occurring prior to 2002) deterioration of the English language. Language changes, always has and always will, and for many old school speakers, words like “bae” are just as bad. We recommend that you do not listen to the novel (via audio book) unless you need to, as it will sound like the book is swearing at you. Again, this is a satire of teenage, American speech and there is too much valuable content to let this dampen your spirits.

*Feed* is also considered a dystopian novel, meaning that it presents a world in which things have gone terribly, terribly wrong for the majority, if not all, people. You may have had experiences with dystopian novels like *Fahrenheit 451, The Giver, The Hunger Games* etc. In this version of the world, because of implanted feeds, corporations have a direct line to every consumer’s thoughts. This may sound familiar if the ads on Instagram look a little too much like what you’ve been talking about recently. Dystopian novels usually have a very clear warning for society, and we hope you can figure out what it was that Anderson was warning the world about in 2002.

*Feed* is a coming of age novel about a futuristic teenage boy. Futuristic or not, he experiences moments of weakness, whining, loneliness, frustration, and longing that are universal to teenagers everywhere. In the words of Shmoop, “*Feed* rates a solid PG-13 on the steaminess scale—and maybe pushes that in at least one place. For one, it's pretty clear that these teens are looking for some hook-up action (although this is not presented in graphic terms).”

Finally, you will need to read this novel and do the accompanying assignments in order to receive homework credit during the first weeks of class.

Happy reading!
Assignment 1:

Log similarities and differences between the world of *Feed* and our own. Create a table just like the one below and include at least two examples and supporting quotations for each. Be sure to include an MLA citation (the author’s last name and the page number). This will be fairly simple if you do it while you are reading.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Feed</th>
<th>Reality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Entertainment</td>
<td>• Travelling to the moon is simple and apparently affordable for many people. <em>&quot;We went to the moon to have fun, but the moon turned out to completely suck&quot; (Anderson 3).</em></td>
<td>• Local amusement parks like Six Flags or Disneyland are popular destinations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Environment/Wildlife</td>
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<td>Advertising</td>
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<td>Education</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Assignment 2:

After reading the book, please answer the following analysis questions completely. Answers should be several sentences.

1. *Feed* was published in 2002, so we're talking before social networking sites really took off. M.T. Anderson didn't even have Facebook or Twitter as a model when he was writing, but strangely his book seems to predict these sites in a way. What other modern-day social or cultural inventions, practices and/or activities do you see amped up or otherwise elaborated in a futuristic way in the book?

2. If you were given the opportunity, would you want to have the feed like Titus and his friends do? What do you think would be some of the benefits? What about negatives?

3. Yeah, yeah... we know that news on both national and international events can sometimes be a real snoozefest, but the American culture in *Feed* turn ignoring the news into an extreme sport. What is the effect of the way the book gradually reveals current events (both American and worldwide) through fragments on the feed?
4. And just what's up with those lesions? Would you really want to walk around with a big old gnarly weeping sore (or many) on your face, just because the stars of The Big Bang Theory were sporting them? What do you think is going on with these sores? Can you think of a parallel to these "lesions" in today's culture?

5. Titus and his friends attend SchoolTM, a largely connected classroom run by the corporations— think Wal-Mart High. He tells us that he learns important stuff there, like "how to work technology and how to find bargains and what's the best way to get a job and how to decorate our bedroom" (25.4). (Okay, seriously, these sound like pretty useful skills.) What do you think the book is trying to say about education in Titus's world? Our own?

6. Fittingly enough, M.T. Anderson dedicates his novel to "all those who resist the feed." Just what do you think he means by that? What might the feed be in today's world? What are some ways of resisting it? (We're not just talking about declining the all-you-can-eat buffet at John's Superlicious House of Ribs). Do you do anything to resist the feed?