***Outliers: The Story of Success***by Malcolm Gladwell **(Revised “A”)**

**(Directions)** There only needs to be one document completed for each group. Make sure each person’s name is on the document. Be sure that the information in the document is reflective of what you want turned in for the group. If you aren’t completely on-task for these assignments, you will be pulled out of your group and it will be an individual assignment for you.

***Outlier is a scientific term to describe things or phenomena that lie outside normal experience. In the summer, in Paris, we expect most days to be somewhere between warm and very hot. But imagine if you had a day in the middle of August where the temperature fell below freezing. That day would be outlier. And while we have a very good understanding of why summer days in Paris are warm or hot, we know a good deal less about why a summer day in Paris might be freezing cold. In this book I’m interested in people who are outliers—in men and women who, for one reason or another, are so accomplished and so extraordinary and so outside of ordinary experience that they are as puzzling to the rest of us as a cold day in August.***  -Malcolm Gladwell

Introduction***: The Roseto Mystery***

1. Why were the Rosetans in Pennsylvania considered outliers?
2. What was the secret to the Rosetans’ health?
3. What did Wolf and Bruhn have to get the medical community to understand about the connection with culture and health?

**(Chapter 1)**: **The Matthew Effect**

**QUESTION OF THE DAY OF THE CHAPTER 1**: **Discuss in groups and each group will present one or two of the responses from your discussion.**

**Discussion 1**: Are you old for your grade or young for your grade? Do you feel that your age within your grade level has had any impact on you athletically or academically?

**Discussion 2**: If you play a sport, when is your birthday and when is the birthday cutoff date for that sport? Explain how successful you are in that sport and if your level of success has any correlation with your birthdate.

Chapter 1: **GUIDED READING QUESTIONS: Answer each in COMPLETE SENTENCES (3-5 each).**

1. What does Gladwell point out about the hockey players? Why is that significant?
2. What are the perfect months to be born if you want to be a hockey player in Canada? Why?
3. Explain how this advantage relays itself over being selected for teams and practice time.
4. In education, where kids are ability grouped in early elementary school, how might we look at this information from this hockey team and apply it to education?
5. According to this chapter, what other factor(s) is/are involved with success other than passion, talent, hard work? Now that we know about this, what good does this do? What can we do with this information?

**Post Reading Discussion**:

Post Reading 1: What is the most interesting / thoughtful take away from today’s reading? How can the

information in today’s reading apply to your life?

**Chapter 2: The 10,000 Hour Rule**

**Chapter 2 QUESTIONS OF THE DAY**: **Discuss in groups and each group will present one or two of the responses from your discussion.**

Discussion 1: If you are involved in any extra-curricular activities (including sports), how many hours do you think you’ve dedicated to it in your lifetime? How successful are you at it? Explain whether you think that the hours you put into it actually influence your success? Why?

Chapter 2: The 10,000 Hour Rule

**GUIDED READING QUESTIONS: Answer each in COMPLETE SENTENCES (3-5 each).**

1. What happened the year that Bill Joy enrolled at the University of Michigan?
2. Define the word meritocracy (as found on page 37). Do you believe that this exists today?
3. Even though Joy was unbelievably smart, his computer programming skills were refined in part by\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
4. According to John Lennon, how long were the band’s sessions in Hamaburg and what advantage did he see in those sessions that allowed the band to develop?
5. How many hours did the Beatles play in a year and a half while in Hamburg and how does that compare to the careers of most bands? According to Gladwell, how does this really give the Beatles and advantage?
6. Gladwell lists all the opportunities that were afforded to Bill Gates. What were the major ones?
7. Of the richest people in the world, what is significant about the 14 Americans? What does that show?
8. This chapter focuses on the amount of time it takes to prepare to become outstanding. What else does this chapter show must happen for that preparation to be meaningful to success? What does Gladwell combine with talent to show a better picture of success?

**Post Reading Discussion:**

1. Many of the technology jobs that are around today, weren’t around 20 years ago. What would have happened if Gates and Allen had been born 30 years earlier or later? So, as you prepare to go out to prepare for your career, how can this information help you?

**TAKE AWAYS FROM THE BOOK SO FAR:**

1. Some people achieve more solely because of when they were born (time of year and time period), as opposed to their talent.

**(Chapter 5) The Three Lessons of Joe Flom:**

**Pre-Reading Discussion:** Have you ever had a setback in your life that, in retrospect, has turned out to be something that benefitted you in the long run?

**Chapter Five:**

Today’s activity is going to be a little bit different than the previous ones. **Everyone will read the summary of this chapter and we will base our discussion off of the summary.**

1.How did being Jewish during Joe Flom’s time period initially seem like a disadvantage to Flom and how does it actually turn out to be an advantage for him? (The “demographic tough”)

2.How does being born in the Great Depression actually turn out to be an advantage?

**Post Reading Discussion of Chapter 5**:

**Post Reading Discussion 1**: How does the message of the story of Louis and Regina Borgenicht similar to the message that we read about with Bill Gates and the list in Chapter 2 of the wealthiest people in the world?

**Post Reading Discussion 2**: Why does Gladwell urge readers to be skeptical of typical “rags-to-riches” stories? (119)

**PART TWO: LEGACY**

**(Chapter Six) Harlan, Kentucky**

**QUESTION OF THE DAY OF THE CHAPTER 6**: **Discuss in groups and each group will present one or two of the responses from your discussion.**

**Discussion 1**: What do you know about your family history? Do you have any interesting stories? What traits did your parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, etc. pass down to you?

Note: The first part of this chapter discusses the feuds that began when Harlan, Kentucky was founded. We are going to start in part 2 on p. 164.

**GUIDED READING QUESTIONS: Answer each in COMPLETE SENTENCES (3-5 each).**

1. Describe in full the “culture of honor.” Explain how this relates to Farmers vs. Goat Farmers.
2. What makes the violence of the south different than the violence of the north?
3. Explain what “cultural legacy” means.
4. What did the psychologists at Michigan study? What did they learn from this? How does this make you all feel as a southerner?

**Post Reading Discussion**

**Post Reading** **1**: Explain something in this chapter that you found the most interesting. Why is it interesting?

**Note**: The first part of the book was all about circumstances that lead to success. This section is about legacy.

**Chapter 7: “THE ETHNIC THEORY OF PLANE CRASHES”**

**(SECTIONS 1-7) pp. 177-198**

**Note**: Chapter 7 will be broken up into two days of reading and discussion.

**Discussion 1**: What is something that is a part of your culture? Did your parents teach you manners? Did you have special traditions that made you who you were?

**GUIDED READING QUESTIONS: Answer each in COMPLETE SENTENCES.**

1. Describe in 3-5 sentences what happened on the morning of August 3rd, 1997.
2. What other incidents had happened with Korean Air?
3. Korean Air knew it needed to make a change. How did it go about doing that?
4. What does Gladwell say that needed to have happen in the Avianca crash that Ratwatte excelled at?
5. What is the main difference between the cockpit communication of veteran pilot Suren Ratwatte and the transcript from Avianca 052?

**Post Reading Discussion**:

1. Post Reading 1: Define “mitigated speech.” How does that impact the pilots?
2. How does linguistics impact the communication in a cockpit?
3. Using the 1982 Air Florida crash into the Patomac River as an example, why might planes be safer when the least experienced pilot is flying? Explain what happened.

**Chapter 7: “THE ETHNIC THEORY OF PLANE CRASHES”**

**Part Two (pages 198-223)**

**Discussion 1**: The first part of this reading is all about the airline crashes, and what could have been done to prevent them. Have you ever had any crazy/scary flying experiences?

**Chapter Seven: The Ethnic Theory of Plane Crashes-Part Two (pages 198-223)**

1.What word is never mentioned in the conversation with the ATC?

2.What to things do we learn about the NY Air Traffic Controllers? What impact might this have?

3.What role does Klotz being a Columbian possibly contribute to the miscommunication between he and the ATC?

4.What are the three classic preconditions of a plane crash? How did these play out in the Avianca crash?

5.The co-pilot tells the Captain, “The weather radar has helped us a lot.” What is he really telling him and why doesn’t he just say what he means?

6.In Korea (and many Asian countries) where does the burden of understanding lie? How is this different in Western cultures?

**Chapter 7 Post-Reading**:

**Post Reading Question 1**: What is Gladwell explaining about the importance of communication?

**Post Reading Question 2**: So far in this book, what have you learned from this book that is helpful and interesting about what it takes to be successful? What parts has your group enjoyed? Not enjoyed? What cool project do you think we can do to display our knowledge?

**Chapter Eight: Rice Paddies and Math Tests**

**QUESTION OF THE DAY OF THE CHAPTER 8**: **Discuss in groups and each group will present one or two of the responses from your discussion.**

Discussion 1: How long would you spend on a math problem before concluding that it’s too hard to solve?

**GUIDED READING QUESTIONS: Answer each in COMPLETE SENTENCES (3-5 each).**

1. Is it easy or hard to grow rice? What evidence do you have to support this claim?
2. While it is easy to assume that students from Asian countries are just predisposed to math, what is another explanation as to why they could be better?
3. How many hours did the peasant farmers spend working annually? How does this relate back to another chapter we have read? Explain the connection.
4. How did growing rice help to develop a culture? Look at the paragraph that goes from page 236 to 237.
5. How long did the high school students Schoenfield questions, say that they spent on solving a problem before concluding it was too hard?
6. What does Gladwell share about the TIMSS exam? Which two things are related? What does that mean?

**Post Reading Discussion**:

1. Gladwell asserts that Chinese children learn numbers faster than American children. What evidence does he use to back this up? Do you agree with this idea or question it?
2. Try to remember the numbers listed on page 227. How long did it take each member of your group to memorize it?
3. Schoenfield believes that math is not so much ability as attitude. Do you agree or disagree? Explain.
4. What is the most interesting / thoughtful take away from today’s reading? How can the

information in today’s reading apply to your life?

**Chapter Nine: Marita’s Bargain (pages 250-269)**

Discussion 1**:** What should the purpose of the United States’ educational system be? What is effective about our system of education? What can be improved about our educational system?

Discussion 2: Does our school calendar (starting / ending dates) need to be changed?

**GUIDED READING QUESTIONS: Answer each in COMPLETE SENTENCES (3-5 each).**

1. What is special about the KIPP program? Where is the school located? What neighborhood feeds into KIPP Academy?
2. How does the length of the school year differ between U.S., Korean, & Japanese schools? (260) How does the American idea of “summer vacation” fit into this argument?
3. How has Marita’s cultural legacy let her down? (266) What is a solution?
4. What is Marita’s bargain? (267)
5. How do the 10,000 Hour-Rule & “meaningful work” apply to Marita’s life? (267-269)

**Post Reading Discussion**:

Post Reading 1: What is the most interesting / thoughtful take away from today’s reading? How can the

information in today’s reading apply to your life?