

Senior Literature

SY 2017-2018 Summer Reading Assignment

Welcome to Senior Literature! British Literature and AP English Literature and Composition are both academically challenging and intellectually stimulating courses. This summer reading assignment has been designed to develop your reading comprehension, increase your vocabulary, promote intellectual growth, and foster a deeper appreciation for literature. Please contact Miss O'Mallan (missomallan@ndhsguam.com) if you have any questions. Happy reading!

Required Reading for all seniors

You are required to read

The Alchemist by Paulo Coelho

and **one** of the following if you intend to take British Literature and **two** if you intend to take AP English Literature and Composition:

Medea by Euripides

The Picture of Dorian Gray by Oscar Wilde

Frankenstein by Mary Shelley

Atonement by Ian McEwan

The Kite Runner by Khaled Hosseini

Madame Bovary by Gustave Flaubert

Jane Eyre by Charlotte Bronte

Mythology by Edith Hamilton

All the Light We Cannot See by Anthony Doerr

Annotate as you read

Annotating is essential for close and critical reading of texts in preparation for class discussions, writing assignments, analyses, research, and test/exam responses. Establishing a structured method of annotating will assist you in college and the business world, situations where close reading contributes to success. Furthermore, annotating helps you dissect difficult texts and discern meaning from them. Here are some common methods of annotating:

Within the text:

- Circle phrases you find particularly effective, represent repetitive themes or images (motifs), and/or reveal figurative language.
- Note shifts in pronoun usage/narrative point of view.
- Circle words the author uses for their connotative meanings
- Circle words you need to define in the margin
- Underline sentences that stand out, develop an argument, or make a point
- Number related points
- Bracket important sections of text
- Connect important ideas, words or phrases with arrows

In the margins:

- Summarize and number each paragraph (shorter pieces)
- Define unfamiliar terms
- Note any questions that come to mind
- Note possible connotative meanings of circled words
- Note any significant patterns or motifs
- Identify any outstanding language usage or writing strategies you discover
- Identify points or arguments

Don't simply mark a passage without stating why in the margins (unless it's obvious). Never rely on your memory because when referring back to your marks, you may not recall the context in which you first encountered the marked passage, so it becomes meaningless unless you reread.

Reader's Response Notebook (DUE DATE: First class day back at school)

Complete the Reader's Response Assignment for each novel or play that you read.

Divide your novel into three equal sections. Upon completion of each section you are to complete the following tasks in a composition notebook that is to be turned in on the first day of class. You will need to complete a reader's response for each of the three sections for the novel of your choice. You must begin each paragraph with a topic sentence that is supported by evidence as well as provide explanations that show how the evidence supports your topic sentence.

1. Write one paragraph that discusses your emotional response to the events of the novel or work.
2. Write one paragraph that chooses a specific literary element or literary device and analyze its use, purpose, and significance to the novel or overall theme. Provide a well written topic sentence along with cited evidence and explanations.
3. Answer the given question for that section, listed below, using three paragraphs. Topic sentences should be well written with cited evidence and explanations provided. All three paragraphs should work together to answer the given question. Please use transitional words and sentences to connect paragraphs.

Section Questions for *The Alchemist*

1. Reflect on the idea of a Personal Legend. Explain if you agree or disagree with this idea. If you agree, describe your current understanding of your own Personal Legend. If you disagree, explain your beliefs in regard to having a purposeful life.
2. Is Fatima's refusal of Santiago an act of true love or an act of greed? Defend your answer.
3. According to the alchemist "Those who don't understand their Personal Legends will fail to comprehend their teachings". Explain what he means by this statement. Explain why you agree or disagree with this statement.

Section Questions for *Medea*

1. In Medea's first long speech to the chorus, she claims that women are afflicted with the most "wretched" existence on earth. In exactly what ways, according to Medea, is the lot of women unfair? Do the complaints of Medea seem to you legitimate? Defend your answers.
2. Jason is presented as a character with a heroic past, yet his actions in the play often exemplify the traits of a weak, reactive character. Medea also predicts an "unheroic death" for him at the play's close. Does anything in the play attest Jason's background as a hero? Are we meant to sympathize with Jason at all? Defend your answers.
3. The chorus at one point remarks that the most profound hate emerges out of the loss of the deepest love. How does the play explore the ambivalence of violent emotions? Where does it preach against succumbing to such emotions; where, against resisting them?

Section Questions for *The Picture of Dorian Gray*

1. Analyze the motives behind each character (Basil Hallward, Lord Henry Wotton, and Dorian Gray) at the beginning of the novel.
2. Why does Dorian believe it is necessary to hide his portrait? Does he hide the picture only because of what others may find out, or is there an additional reason?
3. Describe Dorian's reaction to Basil once he sees the portrait. Why does he react in the way he does?

Section Questions for *Frankenstein*

1. Why is Frankenstein so disgusted by his creation – why doesn't he protect it as Prometheus does?
2. Would the monster have been less dangerous had he never acquired knowledge?
3. What do you think of the portrayal of women in the book, particularly with regard to the fact that it was written by a woman?

Section Questions for *Atonement*

1. Briony the child/writer: How does McEwan use detail, dialogue, free indirect discourse, and other literary techniques to create our first impressions of Briony? What is your impression of her and why? In what ways is she older than her years and in what ways is she still very much a child? Why does the scene she witnesses at the fountain change her whole perspective on writing? What is the significance of the passage in which she realizes she needs to work from the idea that "other people are as real as you. And only in a story could you enter these different minds and show how they had an equal value" [p. 38]? Do her actions bear this out?
2. In what ways are Briony and Cecilia (and their mother) similar and different? What about Robbie & Briony? How does each character tell him/herself stories? (In other words, how is writing and storytelling key to most of the characters we've met so far?) Find specifics. Describe the relationship between Robbie and Grace Turner.
3. Briony claims that the writer has the "absolute power of deciding outcomes" (350) – in what ways this is true? In what ways is this a creative misreading itself? (Does she have absolute power? What about what "really" happened, "in reality"?) Does she owe her reader "satisfaction" and "hope" rather than "bleakest realism"?

Section Questions for *The Kite Runner*

1. We begin to understand early in the novel that Amir is constantly vying for Baba's attention and often feels like an outsider in his father's life, as seen in the following passage: "He'd close the door, leave me to wonder why it was always grown-ups time with him. I'd sit by the door, knees drawn to my chest. Sometimes I sat there for an hour, sometimes two, listening to their laughter, their chatter." Reflect on and discuss Amir's relationship with Baba.
2. The strong underlying force of this novel is the relationship between Amir and Hassan. Discuss their friendship. Why is Amir afraid to be Hassan's true friend? Why does Amir constantly test Hassan's loyalty? Why does he resent Hassan?
3. Amir and Hassan have a favorite story. Does the story have the same meaning for both men? Why does Hassan name his son after one of the characters in the story?

Section Questions for *Madame Bovary*

1. Emma Bovary frequently spent time looking out the window. Discuss the symbolism of windows in the novel, with specific illustrations.
2. Emma's affair with Rodolphe is different in many ways from her later affair with Leon. Compare and contrast these relationships, from the point of view of Emma's downfall.
3. Emma Bovary can be seen negatively (as a romantic fool, corrupt and selfish, causing her own destruction) or she can be seen positively (as a woman of heightened sensibility and refinement, who is destroyed by the mean-spirited bourgeois milieu). Which view of Emma do you take? Support your opinion with examples from the novel.

Section Questions for *Jane Eyre*

1. How are Jane and Helen Burns different in their attitude toward injustice? How would you explain this difference?
2. Does Rochester ever actually intend to marry Blanche Ingram? If so, when does he change his mind? If not, why does he go to such lengths to make Jane believe he does?
3. How do you feel about Jane's decision to leave Rochester? Are her actions believable in light of her character?

Section Questions for *Mythology*

1. Why did the portrayal of Zeus change over the years?
2. What were the four things that Venus made Psyche do out of bitterness and envy? How did Psyche manage to get them done? Does her story at this point remind you of any others you might have read?
3. Summarize the plot of Atalanta's myth. What do you believe is the purpose of this myth? Why was this story passed down from generation to generation? Defend your answers.

Section Questions for *All the Light We Cannot See*

1. On page 160, Marie-Laure realizes "This...is the basis of his fear, all fear. That a light you are powerless to stop will turn on you and usher a bullet to its mark." How does this image constitute the most general basis of all fear? Do you agree?
2. Reread Madame Manec's boiling frog analogy on page 284. Etienne later asks Marie-Laure, "Who was supposed to be the frog? Her? Or the Germans?" (page 328) Who did you think Madame Manec meant? Could it have been someone other than herself or the Germans? What does it say about Etienne that he doesn't consider himself to be the frog?
3. On page 390, the author writes, "To shut your eyes is to guess nothing of blindness." What did you learn or realize about blindness through Marie-Laure's perspective? Do you think her being blind gave her any advantages?

Assessment: Timed Free Response Question

Be prepared to answer one of the following FRQs at the start of the semester using the summer readings. Gather support and evidence for different options as you read. Make use of your annotations and your Reader's Response Notebook.

Option 1: Palestinian American literary theorist and cultural critic Edward Said has written that "Exile is strangely compelling to think about but terrible to experience. It is the unhealable rift forced between a human being and a native place, between the self and its true home: its essential sadness can never be surmounted." Yet Said has also said that exile can become "a potent, even enriching" experience. Select a novel, play, or epic in which a character experiences such a rift and becomes cut off from "home," whether that home is the character's birthplace, family, homeland, or other special place. Then write an essay in which you analyze how the character's experience with exile is both alienating and enriching, and how this experience illuminates the meaning of the work as a whole. Do not merely summarize the plot.

Option 2: "You can leave home all you want, but home will never leave you." —Sonsyrea Tate
Sonsyrea Tate's statement suggests that "home" may be conceived of as a dwelling, a place, or a state of mind. It may have positive or negative associations, but in either case, it may have a considerable influence on an individual. Choose a novel or play in which a central character leaves home yet finds that home remains significant. Write a well-developed essay in which you analyze the importance of "home" to this character and the reasons for its continuing influence. Explain how the character's idea of home illuminates the larger meaning of the work. Do not merely summarize the plot.

Option 3: In *The Writing of Fiction* (1925), novelist Edith Wharton states the following:
At every stage in the progress of his tale the novelist must rely on what may be called the illuminating incident to reveal and emphasize the inner meaning of each situation.
Illuminating incidents are the magic casements of fiction, its vistas on infinity. Choose a novel or play that you have studied and write a well-organized essay in which you describe an "illuminating" episode or moment and explain how it functions as a "casement," a window that opens onto the meaning of the work as a whole. Avoid mere plot summary.

Option 4: "And, after all, our surroundings influence our lives and characters as much as fate, destiny or any supernatural agency." --Pauline Hopkins, *Contending Forces*
Choose a novel or play in which cultural, physical, or geographical surroundings shape psychological or moral traits in a character. Then write a well-organized essay in which you analyze how surroundings affect this character and illuminate the meaning of the work as a whole.

Option 5: In a novel by William Styron, a father tells his son that life "is a search for justice." Choose a character from a novel or play who responds in some significant way to justice or injustice. Then write a well-developed essay in which you analyze the character's understanding of justice, the degree to which the character's search for justice is successful, and the significance of this search for the work as a whole.