

SUMMER READING ASSIGNMENT

CP AMERICAN LITERATURE

Welcome to American Literature! We are excited to have this opportunity to explore a vast array of ideas, topics, and themes with you over the next year. In order for us to begin the process, you will be responsible for reading two novels over the course of the summer. The assignments for each novel are outlined below.

1. Fahrenheit 451 by Ray Bradbury

Following in the tradition of dystopian fiction, Guy Montag, a firefighter in a futuristic society, is not pleased with his society, career, and himself. The novel explores his attempt to break free of his world and discover his “true” self.

ASSIGNMENT FOR THIS NOVEL: Complete the attached double entry journal (Attachment A) for this novel. You will be responsible for finding 6 quotes throughout the novel to use to examine the following question:

Define dystopia. Then, select 6 moments from the novel that are critical to Guy’s psychological or moral development. Analyze how these moments shape the meaning of the novel and prove this work to be a piece of dystopian literature.

2. Your Research Paper Novel

Similar to your Sophomore World Literature course, you will be assigned a research paper that you must complete during the course of the year. We will go over the requirements of this paper (such as page length, the amount of sources, etc.) at the beginning of the school year, but we need you to begin preparations for the writing now.

This paper will be different from the compositions that you have previously completed in your English classes. You will be focusing your writing on the analysis of a novel. What does that mean for you and your summer break? First, you need to **read the book** and understand it well enough to talk **confidently** about the many facets of this novel: themes, characters, symbolism, relationships, historical context, etc.

This presents a new set of challenges for your interaction with the novel and we trust that giving you time during the summer to prepare your work and understanding will better equip you to “hit the ground running” when we return from vacation.

ASSIGNMENT FOR THE RESEARCH NOVEL: PLEASE READ THE ENTIRETY OF THIS SECTION!

1. **CHOOSE A NOVEL** to read. There are many different novels for you to choose. Read the descriptions (Attachment B) and find a novel that interests you. Do not pick a novel because of its length or difficulty.
2. Read and **UNDERSTAND THE NOVEL**. In order for you to analyze this novel in detail, you need to make sure that you comprehend what you are reading. Please feel free to research/look up information to help you understand the plot, themes, symbols, development, etc. There are plenty of sources for each novel to help you with this task. We would recommend the Carnegie Library Databases as a place to start your research. A word of warning... DO NOT attempt to read SparkNotes and/or CliffNotes in order to “read” the novel. While these sources can add to your understanding of the work, they cannot replace the amount of detail and information contained within your novel.
3. **ANNOTATE THE NOVEL** as you read. Requirements and examples are attached to this document.
4. You will have an **IN-CLASS WRITING** on your research paper novel within the first week of class. We provide the prompts, but you provided the analysis. We will give you the requirements of this assignment when you return in August.

ATTACHMENT A
Double Entry Journal for Fahrenheit 451

Quote from the Novel	Reader Response

ATTACHMENT B

Summer Reading Novel List

Short Readings-

Annie John by Jamaica Kincaid

Annie tries to imagine herself as someone in a book—an orphan or a girl with a wicked stepmother. The trouble is, she finds, those characters' lives always end happily. Luckily for us, though not perhaps for her alter ego, Kincaid is too truthful a writer to provide such a finale.

The House on Mango Street by Sandra Cisneros

The House on Mango Street follows young Esperanza Cordero as her family moves to their own home after numerous rentals. In a neighborhood that non-residents are afraid to enter but residents are afraid to leave, Esperanza matures and discovers her own identity.

Of Mice and Men by John Steinbeck

The plot centers on George Milton and Lennie Small, itinerant ranch hands who dream of one day owning a small farm. George acts as a father figure to Lennie, who is large and simpleminded, calming him and helping to rein in his immense physical strength.

Intermediate Readings

Age of Innocence by Edith Wharton

Wharton's story of the upper classes of Old New York, and Newland Archer's impossible love for the disgraced Countess Olenska, is a perfectly wrought book about an era when upper-class culture in this country was still a mixture of American and European extracts, and when "society" had rules as rigid as any in history.

The Bell Jar by Sylvia Plath * **challenging**

In *The Bell Jar*, Sylvia Plath portrays the downward spiral of Esther Greenwood, a young girl growing to maturity in a time of rigidly assigned female roles. Desperately trying to evolve from adolescence to adulthood, Esther acts out the image of a good girl while longing to be brave, daring, and different. Her muddled identity brings on mental collapse, suicide attempts, and asylum stays as she says over and over "I Am I Am I Am."

The Catcher in the Rye by J.D. Salinger

Ever since it was first published in 1951, this novel has been the coming-of-age story against which all others are judged. Read and cherished by generations, the story of Holden Caulfield is truly one of America's literary treasures.

The Color Purple by Alice Walker * **challenging**

The Color Purple discusses Alice Walker's Pulitzer Prize-winning epistolary novel that weaves a mosaic of women joined by their love for each other, the men who abuse them, and the children they care for. When the novel opens, 14-year-old Celie is pregnant for the second time with her father's child. From such horrid beginnings, Celie forges close bonds with other women and grows strong and independent, in spite of the abuse she suffers from the men in her life.

The Grapes of Wrath by John Steinbeck

John Steinbeck gathered the country's recent shames and devastations — the Hoovervilles, the desperate, dirty children, the dissolution of kin, the oppressive labor conditions — in the Joad family. He set them down on a westward-running road, local dialect and all, the world to acknowledge.

In Cold Blood by Truman Capote

In 1959, Capote noticed a small newspaper item describing the mysterious murder of a Kansas ranch family of four. He decided that this might be the perfect story for him to write about. Five years of intense research followed, during which time Capote became very close to the two murderers, Richard Eugene

Hickock and Perry Edward Smith. He talked to the townspeople of Holcomb, where the murders were committed, and nearby Garden City. He followed the police investigation and the eventual appeals process until the execution of Hickock and Smith in 1965. During interviews he never took notes or used a tape recorder; instead he was able to transcribe the interviews from memory, a skill he had been practicing for years. The result, published in January 1966, was a long and highly acclaimed novel, a success critically and commercially.

The Jungle by Upton Sinclair

In *The Jungle*, Jurgis and his wife Ona, Lithuanian immigrants, come to Chicago in search of the American dream. Harsh living and working conditions take their toll on their family, whose struggle with poverty destroys their dream and forces Jurgis to embrace the Socialist philosophy. *The Jungle* — often dismissed as political propaganda — survives as Upton Sinclair's poignant and disturbing tale of the hardships immigrants faced in the early 20th century.

Long Reading

Adventures of Huckleberry Finn by Mark Twain

The sequel to *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, scholars continue to praise it as a modern masterpiece, an essential read, and one of the greatest novels in all of American literature. Twain's satiric treatments of racism, religious excess, and rural simplicity and his accuracy in presenting dialects mark Huck Finn as a classic. His unswerving confidence in Huck's wisdom and maturity, along with the well-rounded and sympathetic portrayal of Jim draw readers into the book, holding them until Huck's last words rejecting all attempts to "civilize" him.

East of Eden by John Steinbeck

Adam Trask, from the first set of brothers, repeats his own story with his sons, the twins Aron and Caleb. The enduring themes of light vs. dark, good vs. evil, hatred vs. love, and always the free will, the ability to choose one's own destiny are paramount to this rich and multi-layered tale.

A Farewell to Arms by Ernest Hemingway

Hemingway was not known for either unbridled optimism or happy endings, and *A Farewell to Arms* offers neither. What it *does* provide is an unblinking portrayal of men and women behaving with grace under pressure, both physical and psychological, and somehow finding the courage to go on in the face of certain loss.

For Whom the Bell Tolls by Ernest Hemingway

For Whom the Bell Tolls combines two of the author's recurring obsessions: war and personal honor. The pivotal battle scene involving El Sordo's last stand is a showcase of Hemingway's narrative powers, but the quieter, ongoing conflict within Robert Jordan as he struggles to fulfill his mission perhaps at the cost of his own life is a testament to his creator's psychological acuity. By turns brutal and compassionate, it is arguably Hemingway's most mature work and one of the best war novels of the 20th century.

The Scarlet Letter by Nathaniel Hawthorne ***challenging**

In the early days of Puritan Boston, Hester Prynne braves the stigma of adultery by wearing the embroidered scarlet "A" on her clothing. Sin, regret, guilt, self-punishment, and revenge are all detailed in relation to an extramarital affair resulting in a pregnancy. The symbolism is beautiful, the plot tragic, the characters engaging. *The Scarlet Letter* is a true masterpiece.

ATTACHMENT C

Annotation Guide

“An **annotation** is a textual comment in a book. It may consist of a reader’s comment in the margin, or printed explanatory notes provided by an editor” (The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory 41).

Guidelines:

1. You will be required to create 25 annotations per 50 pages of your novel. You may round down (ex. if your novel is 125 pages, then you should complete 50 annotations).
2. Annotations should be spread throughout the novel. The goal is to provide yourself notes and reminders about any important information for when you re-visit the novel.
3. Annotations must demonstrate higher-level thinking. In other words, they should not just be your comment on a word you notice in a line. They need to show your thoughts about a section in relation to the work as a whole.
4. Annotations should be written directly in your book. Annotations must be words written in the margins to count—they may include underlines, circles, etc—but these alone do not make an annotation.

Note: If you cannot afford to purchase your own books and must borrow them from a library or friend—do not mark in the books. Instead, use post-it notes in the book to make your annotations.

Grading:

Possible Points: 25

A: All passages important to the full understanding of the story have been duly noted. The annotations are marked by full detail. One gets the impression of a painstaking attempt to convey the full range of meaning. The text has not been taken at face value; the annotations reveal an understanding of the nuances, complexities, paradoxes and inconsistencies in the text. More than one thread exists so that multiple meanings emerge. The interpretations go far beyond the literal, derive from and are unique to that text and are varied (not relying upon repetition of ideas). ****At least 25 annotations per 50 pages have been made****

B: Passages have the completeness and thoroughness of a level A; however, level B work lacks the understanding of the complexities and inconsistencies that arise in the text, the originality of the insights, and the depth of analysis. At the A level, there is a sense that there is little more to be seen, while at the B level room for improvement is needed. ****Some annotations may also be missing or superficial.****

C: The selection and density of annotated passages encourages the surmise that the reader recognizes the central details of the story; however, the subtle passages seem to have escaped attention as telling lines. There are instances when annotating has become indiscriminate. A thread, connecting annotations and highlighting, exists but loses focus or does not seem logical. More needs to be written in the annotations to get a full understanding. Most of the interpretations are literal or obvious and have no connection to a central meaning. ****A significant number of annotations may be missing or superficial.****

D: The selection and density of annotations is desultory: A little here, a little there. Though sparse, what has been annotated is sufficient to allow the conviction that the reader has read the work—though likely with half-attention. The highlighting is excessive or indiscriminate and reveals only the most minimal grasp of the basic facts of the story. No clear, focused thread has been woven. Annotations have been reduced to a few words throughout the text. Interpretations, while at times go beyond the literal, are obvious or may reveal a misreading. ****Many annotations are superficial or missing.****

F: The annotations are scattered, random, or of utterly trivial passages. There is the appearance that the material has not been read. No clear, focused thread exists. Annotations read as a plot summary. ****More than half the annotations are missing or superficial****

Modified from: <http://burlesonisd.net/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2014/05/APLitAssignment.pdf>

Making Annotations: A User's Guide

As you work with your text, consider all of the ways that you can connect with what you are reading. Here are some suggestions that will help you with your annotations:

- Define words or slang; make the words real with examples from your experiences; explore why the author would have used a particular word or phrase.
- Make connections to other parts of the book. Feel free to use direct quotes from the book.
- Make connections to other texts you have read or seen, including:
 - Movies
 - Comic books/graphic novels
 - News events
 - Other books, stories, plays, songs, or poems
- Draw a picture when a visual connection is appropriate.
- Re-write, paraphrase, or summarize a particularly difficult passage or moment.
- Make meaningful connections to your own life experiences.
- Describe a new perspective you may now have.
- Explain the historical context or traditions/social customs that are used in the passage.
- Offer an analysis or interpretation of what is happening in the text.
- Point out and discuss literary techniques that the author is using.

Example of Student Brainstorming for Annotations

This will get everything out in
 - this is an awkward moment - I've had these.
 - what is this?
 Another pause A waiter knocked and came in with crushed mint and ice but the silence was unbroken by his "Thank you" and the soft closing of the door. This tremendous detail was to be cleared up at last.
 - Oxford
 Tom dislikes Gatsby and wants to ruin his reputation by showing that he is a nobody.
 What is so important about this date?
 "I told you I went there" said Gatsby.
 "I heard you, but I'd like to know when."
 "It was nineteen-nineteen" I only stayed five months. That's why I can't really call myself an Oxford man.
 I found out that this is a college in England. Maybe I can use a picture.
 Tom glanced around to see if we mirrored his disbelief. But we were all looking at Gatsby.
 Tom wants people to be like him - he is so arrogant.
 "It was an opportunity they gave to some of the officers after the Armistice" he continued. "We could go to any of the universities in England or France." (136)
 What is this?
 once again - Gatsby gets all the attention
 why not any in the United States? Is this more prestigious?