

English Language Arts Department
Summer Reading Assignment
Journal Assignment for Summer Reading

ASSIGNMENT:

In order to appreciate and understand a work of literature, a reader must actively read; in other words, he or she must actively engage with the text. To assist you in developing this process, you will create a reading journal as you read. You will be responsible for typing three journal responses. You will write the first entry when you have completed approximately 1/3 of the work. You will write the second entry when you have completed approximately 2/3 of the work. You will write the third entry when you have completed the whole work. Each entry will contain the following three parts:

- a. Write a one paragraph reflection on the section. You should explore your thoughts or opinions on the character(s), event(s), conflict, etc. How do you feel about a character's actions or decisions? What are your initial impressions of the character(s)? How have your impressions changed as the novel has progressed.
- b. Choose a significant quote from the section. A "significant" quote provides insight into the conflict, the developing theme, the characters, etc. Write the quote out in its entirety and provide the page number.
- c. Explain the significance of this quote. How does it develop some critical element of the work? What insight does it provide into the conflict, the character, and/or the theme?

Be sure to date each of your entries. Be honest on the dating.

REQUIREMENTS

1. The journal should be typed and double-spaced.
2. Bring the journal with you to the first day of class.
3. If the journal is more than one page, it should be stapled together.

ASSESSMENT:

The journal may or may not be assessed as part of the summer reading grade. The role of the journal in the summer reading assessment will be determined by the individual teacher. Regardless of its graded value, the journal will assist you in becoming an engaged reader.

King Philip Regional High School
Summer Reading 2008
English/Language Arts

Grade 9, Level 1- Troy by Adèle Geras

Many people are familiar with the story of the Trojan horse, but do they really know what happened during the famous Trojan War? What caused the fighting? Who was involved? What ultimately happened? *Troy* answers these questions as well as others and provides background information for Homer's *The Odyssey*.

Instructions for summer reading can be found at the beginning of this section. Students are expected to complete the required journal entries prior to the first day of school.

Grade 9, Level-2 *The Hobbit* by J.R.R. Tolkien

J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit* is a prequel to his famous and award-winning Lord of the Rings trilogy. The novel introduces the characters of Gollum, Gandalf, and Bilbo Baggins, and reveals where and how Bilbo found the ring. Over the course of the book Bilbo meets and overcomes many challenges, and discovers he has qualities and abilities he never imagined.

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Grade 9, Level-3 – *Swallowing Stones* by Joyce McDonald

Can we really predict how our actions will impact those around us? To what extent do we need to take responsibility for our own actions, even ones that are not malicious or even intentional? *Swallowing Stones* deals with one boy's journey through the varying emotions that inevitably appear when one's actions directly, and negatively, impact another. On his seventeenth birthday, Michael MacKenzie receives what he thinks is the ultimate gift, a new rifle and fires a celebratory shot into the air. Michael's single shot ends up killing a man who is innocently fixing his roof. As Michael struggles to deal with both the emotional and legal ramifications of his actions, he learns that sometimes even accidents can have long-lasting, tragic consequences and that taking responsibility for one's mistakes can sometimes be as difficult as "swallowing stones."

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Grade 10, Levels-1 & 2 – *A Lesson Before Dying* by Ernest Gaines

Jefferson, a black man in the South in the 1940's, witnesses the shooting of a white store owner. Although he is an innocent bystander, he is accused of the crime, found guilty, and sentenced to death. Jefferson's grandmother asks a teacher, Grant Wiggins, to counsel Jefferson to help him learn to face his death with dignity. Both men are remarkably changed by the relationship that ensues. Oprah's Book Club calls this "a powerful exploration of race, injustice, and resistance."

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Grade 10, Level-3 – *Early Autumn* by Robert B. Parker

When private detective Spenser is hired to help recover a boy who has been kidnapped by his father, he has no idea this will prove anything but a routine case. But, when he discovers that neither of Paul Giacomin’s parents are truly interested in taking care of him, and that nobody has taught him how to be himself, he decides desperate measures are called for, and kidnaps Paul himself. Can he find the time and space they need to teach Paul how to stand up and be himself?

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Grade 11, Level-AP — *Nickel and Dimed* by Barbara Ehrenreich

How does anyone survive, let alone prosper, on minimum wage? Barbara Ehrenreich, a financially successful syndicated writer, tackled this question by moving from Florida to Maine to Minnesota. Along the way, she takes on a series of minimum wage jobs. Ehrenreich’s account of these experiences provides the reader with insight into the anxiety, desperation, and generosity of the “working poor.” Her work provides a window into America and another side of “the American Dream.”

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Grade 11, Level-1 – *Macbeth* by William Shakespeare

Does the individual control his or her destiny? Are our lives shaped by external forces beyond our control and power? Shakespeare’s tragedy explores the relationship between free will and supernatural forces. In traditional Shakespearean fashion, the playwright examines the ways in which our greatest strengths, characteristics like ambition and pride, can become our greatest flaws.

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Grade 11, Level-2 – *The Color of Water: A Black Man’s Tribute to His White Mother* by James McBride

This memoir weaves together the story of James, one of twelve children growing up in Brooklyn, New York, son of a white, ex-Orthodox Jewish mother. As James learns of his mother’s past and identity, he reflects on his own world of social alienation, family expectations, and racial curiosity. To understand his present existence, James juxtaposes his mother’s self-discovery with his own understanding of self and race. The two stories force the reader to question racial identity, the individual within the family structure, and the influence society imposes on the individual.

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Grade 11, Level-3 – *The House on Mango Street* by Sandra Cisneros

Sandra Cisneros's *The House on Mango Street* is a stunning novel focusing on the challenging and exuberant life of Esperanza Cordo. Caught between two cultures, Esperanza unfolds the beauty and tragedy of her inner-city, immigrant experience with maturity, humor, and heartbreaking honesty.

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Grade 12, Level-AP – *Wuthering Heights* – by Emily Bronte

Considered a “masterpiece of imaginative fiction” now, but “lurid and shocking” by mid 19th century standards, this passionate love story of Cathy and Heathcliffs spans two generations— from the time the boy Heathcliff arrives to live on the estate of the Earnshaws, through Cathy’s marriage and Heathcliff’s plans for revenge, to Cathy’s death and the union of the Earnshaw and Hinton heirs. The novel raises essential questions: Why do we love so intensely? What is the result of such love? How do we avoid tragedy in our lives?

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Grade 12, Level-1 – *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Bronte

How would you respond if you grew up as an orphan, went to school at an inhumane boarding school, and then became a teacher in a mansion, where you fell in love with a mysterious person? This novel raises these questions as well as other relevant questions. What is the effect of sin on the individual? How do different people react to sin and suffering? How do human beings find redemption? This example of Romanticism and Gothicism has intrigued “young” people of all ages for many years.

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Grade 12, Level-2 – *1984* by George Orwell

What would happen if totalitarian were really total: with all power split into three equal groups— Eastasia, Eurasia, and Oceania? This novel dominated by Big Brother explores the reality where “Power corrupts; absolute power corrupts absolutely” (Lord Henry Acton). The novel explores the question of what would happen if our very ideas were controlled by “thought police,” and asks the questions: What is freedom? How do we achieve inner freedom in the midst of oppression?

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Grade 12, Level-3 – *Animal Farm* by George Orwell

A group of animals on a farm decide to overthrow the humans and form their own society on the farm. They, at first, seem successful, but their new society begins to breakdown.

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