

CHELMSFORD HIGH SCHOOL
SUMMER READING - GRADE 12
2009 - 2010



Over the summer we would like to encourage you to read as many books as you have the time and interest to read. Reading will improve your comprehension skills and keep you mentally “in shape” for next fall’s English class. “Guiding Questions” and “Guidelines for Annotating Texts”* are provided. Follow the recommendations for taking notes, and record the answers to the guiding questions as you read. These notes will help you recall ideas to share in class discussions and when you answer your in-class graded writing assignment. *see below

*We encourage parental involvement when students are making reading choices. The suggestions cover a wide range of topics (some containing challenging and/or mature subject matter),

Grade 12 (All except AP) must read one of the following books*:

- **The Book Thief** by Markus Zuska
- **Animal Farm** by George Orwell
- **Life Expectancy** by Dean Koontz

Assignment:

A short written assignment will be given and graded.

Guiding Question:

Which purpose did the author have when he/she wrote the book?

- a. to communicate a belief about how the world works
- b. to highlight a specific aspect of human nature
- c. to present ideas on living a happy, healthy, or productive life
- d. to develop a specific theme from which the reader can learn

Step One:

While and after you read your book, take notes on the author’s purpose(s) in your notebook, paying particular attention to Step Four.

Step Two:

Develop a thesis statement that expresses what you believe the author’s purpose in writing the novel was.

Step Three:

List three reasons that support the thesis that you created.

Step Four:

For each of the three reasons, choose three quotes that support that reason. There should be 9 quotes all together, three for each reason.

Step Five:

Discuss your reasons for choosing each quote and the relationship of the quotation to your thesis.

AP must read all of the following books*:

- **The Medea** (a verse translation not a prose translation) by Euripides
- **The Power and the Glory** by Graham Greene
- **A Native Son** by Richard Wright

Assignment:

A written assignment will be given for each book and graded.

Guiding Question:

The Medea: Medea commits egregious crimes in the spirit of brutal revenge; is she exonerated for her sins or not?

Consider the meaning and motivation behind each act

The Power and the Glory: Consider the following concepts while you read:

- Anti-hero vs. hero
- Foils
- Faith/penance
- Fate
- Setting

Native Son: What is Richard Wright’s thesis and how does it play a part in a much larger debate? How do plot events and characters shape and play a role in the debate/thesis?

Guidelines for Annotating Texts

There is not one “right” way to annotate as you read, but there are some general principles for good annotating that you should keep in mind. You should write marginal notes in the text that consist of questions and comments, essentially your dialogue with the text itself.

Review this guide frequently as you are completing your assigned reading. Close reading takes more time than quick, superficial reading, but doing so will save you time and anxiety later as you prepare to discuss and write about the literature.

1. **Always read with a pen or pencil in hand.** Doing so helps you to focus and to stay alert.
2. Always **take your time** as you begin a new text. Ask yourself many questions as you begin: Who is telling the story? What is the setting? What details does the author provide about characters when they are first introduced?
3. **Abbreviate** as you take notes. Use **initials** for characters. Try to develop your own set of **symbols** for important ideas. For example, you might place a **star** next to key passages.
4. Keep a **list of characters** and their **key traits**. A good place for this is the inside cover of the book. You can add brief notes to your lists as you read.

***Front and back covers** as well as the first and last “blank” pages are also good places to jot notes about important settings, key ideas, and key page numbers.
5. Look for **patterns** as you read. What ideas do you see repeated? What **connections** can you draw between different characters and different events?
6. Try to make a **quick note at the end of each chapter**, indicating the most important points it contained.
7. Think of a **memorable title for each chapter** and write it down at the beginning. (You can still make your own title even if the author has provided one.)
8. On the first or last page of a chapter, **bullet-point the key events** as a summary of that section.
9. **Use question marks.** Be alert to what puzzles you. Good readers do not zip along without stopping to monitor their comprehension. They stop to think and to note what they don’t understand. You should also write down questions you would like to discuss.
10. Of course, you should always pay attention to **vocabulary**. A strong vocabulary comes from *reading*, not from memorizing lists. Your text includes many words that will be new to you. Circle or star these words. Try to determine meaning from the context. If you are really puzzled by a word, look it up.

We suggest that you use sticky notes in addition to writing marginal notes in order to give you enough space for your thoughts.