

Brown/AP English Literature
Summer Reading—A requirement for this class

Welcome to AP English Literature. I am looking forward to an interesting and exciting year culminating with all of you passing the AP Test in May. Below you will find the list of literary works and assignments that must be completed during the summer. You will be reading three novels and one very funny play.

***Invisible Man* by Ralph Ellison**
***Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe**
***1984* by George Orwell**
***The Importance of Being Earnest* by Oscar Wilde (drama)**

For each of the novels you will keep a dialectical journal (10 entries).
For the play, you will complete the major works data sheet (yellow).

Dialectical Journal

Effective readers make a habit of taking notes as they read. One of the best strategies for note-taking is a dialectical (double-entry) journal. As you read you are supposed to be forming an opinion about what you are reading. That opinion, however, needs to be based on the text—not just a feeling. **This is not “touch-feely” English, it is AP English;** therefore, all your opinions need to begin with the text. Notice all of the techniques the author uses such as: **point of view, characters, setting, atmosphere, tone, themes, diction, syntax, imagery, symbolism, figurative language, irony, style, and structure.** Your responses should come from your own impressions and **NOT outside sources such as “Spark Notes.”** I want you to think about what you read and organize your thoughts coherently into notes that will help you to participate in class discussions.

- The summer reading assignment is one of the few that does not need to be typed because I want you to be able to work wherever you go (plane, train, automobile, Starbucks). Please write legibly. Typing is certainly acceptable.
- The journals are designed to encourage good reading habits—something we will be working on the entire year. Emphasis is not placed on whether your responses are “right” or “wrong,” but on how much you authentically engage with the text.
- No scanty responses, please!

The procedure is as follows:

1. If you are hand-writing your journal entries, purchase a dedicated notebook. Draw a line down the center of your notebook paper.

If you are typing your entries, use the COLUMN function on MS Word.

2. Whenever you encounter something of interest (this could be anything from an interesting phrase to a note on character) write down the words/phrases in the **LEFT HAND COLUMN**. Use the MLA format for quotations making sure you include the page number. If the section is especially long, just write the first few words, use an ellipsis, then write the last few words.
3. In the **RIGHT HAND COLUMN**, write your thoughts about the text. This is where you interact in detail with the text. Make sure that your observations are **thorough, insightful, and focused clearly on the text.**

Important Notes

Read closely—that means reading when you are alert. Reading for this class should not be done in bed when you are falling asleep—save that for other novels.

Complete at least 10 journal entries for each novel.

Options:

1. Comment on the author's style, referring to particular words, phrases, passages. What do you notice about the author's writing that sets him apart?
2. Pick a passage that contains a specific literary device and make a comment as to the effect that device has on the passage as a whole.
3. Comment on character. What traits does he or she have that are getting in the way or contributing to his or her success? Does this character remind you of someone you know? Yourself, perhaps? Avoid the obvious.
4. Talk to a character. Ask the character a question, scold, advise, yell...whatever.
5. Select a quote that either seems important, or strikes you as interesting. Comment on your selection.
6. Describe the tone (attitude the speaker, or sometimes the author, has towards his or her subject) of the section by listing 10-12 words from the section and then discuss their overall effect on the section.
7. Discuss the structure of the book. Why is it divided into sections? In what way is each section a different part of the story as a whole.
8. Narrative perspective—from whose point of view is the story told. Does the viewpoint change? Is the narrator reliable or not? In other words, can you trust the information that the narrator is relating?

9. Discuss the title of the novel—you should only do this after completing the novel.
10. State the theme (there may be more than one). Theme should always be expressed as a universal. What is the universal statement about life or human beings that the author makes through telling this story?

Your grade will be based on the **effort** you put into this assignment. That is all there is to it. By the time you finish each novel, you will have a great set of notes as well as a great deal of insight into each particular text.

Due dates:

***Things Fall Apart*: Tuesday, September 1, 2009**

***1984*: Monday, September 14, 2009**

***The Importance of Being Earnest*: Monday, September 28, 2009**

***Invisible Man*: Tuesday, October 13, 2009**

I highly encourage you to read one novel every two-three weeks during the summer. Many of you will be enrolled in other AP classes, including We the People, which means a heavy workload beginning with the first week of school.

These novels will be the basis for most of the work you will be doing during the first quarter of the school year. You will be discussing, working in groups, analyzing, taking tests, and writing about these important works of literary merit.

Have a fun summer!