

World Literature II (for students entering 10th grade)
2009 Summer Reading Assignment

Dear 10th graders:

May 2009

World Literature II will be a continuation of the study of great works of world literature that you have already begun, with a special focus on Great Britain. One of the themes we discuss all year is what motivates humans to behave as they do and thus what kind of government best suits them. To this end, I am asking you to think about these questions as you read this summer. There are **three books for you to read**: two are required and for one, you have a choice of five for your third book.

Required texts:

***Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury**

***Brave New World* by Aldous Huxley**

Please choose one of the following:

Lord of the Flies by William Golding- (1954) British novel set during World War II

Player Piano by Kurt Vonnegut- (1952) American novel set in "the near future"

We by Yevgeny Zamyatin- (1921) Russian novel that was the inspiration for many of the others we read

Watchmen by Alan Moore- (1986-7) British graphic novel set in the 1980s (read the novel—watching the movie instead will make it impossible for you to do the assignment in August)

Oryx and Crake by Margaret Atwood- (2003) Canadian novel set towards the end of the 21st century

WARNING: All of these books are disturbing because they are about some of the terrible things human beings do to one another. I have tried to list them in order from least to most upsetting. You need to choose the level of disturbance you want to handle this summer.

The following homework assignment is **due on the first day of school**. No creative excuses will be accepted. If your dog eats it, please bring in your dog.

Your assignment will be used as the notes to prepare for the essay that you will be writing on the novels after we discuss them during the first two weeks of school.

For those of you who feel you want to read more, do not despair; here is a list of other suggested British works you are heartily encouraged to explore:

Wuthering Heights by Emily Bronte

One of the most passionate stories of the power of possessive and demanding love, the story is set in a landscape that is as wild and powerful as the hero and heroine.

Jane Eyre by Charlotte Bronte

Charlotte Bronte tells the suspense-filled story of a poor governess in a house of deep, dark secrets. As Jane comes to understand herself, she also learns about the secret lives of those around her.

Moonstone by Wilkie Collins

Collins was one of the first mystery writers to use a detective to solve the case, a crime involving the theft of a diamond that once adorned a Hindu idol. One of the best mysteries ever written, it contains rich language and plotting. (from Walt Whitman High School's reading list notes)

Oliver Twist by Charles Dickens

This is the famous story of the orphaned boy who roams the streets of London with a gang of pickpockets before he discovers his true place in life.

The Mayor of Casterbridge by Thomas Hardy

Thomas Hardy is a master at exploring the minds of characters who have made a mistake. When the mistake of his youth comes back to haunt him, the mayor has to deal with the consequences.

Dracula by Bram Stoker

When Bram Stoker's *Dracula* appeared in 1897, the most astute praise came from the author's mother, who wrote to her son: "It is splendid. No book since Mrs. Shelley's *Frankenstein* or indeed any other at all has come near yours in originality, or terror." (Walt Whitman High School's notes)

Have a great summer and enjoy your reading!

About your SUMMER ASSIGNMENT...

Thomas More created the name Utopia for his imaginary, perfect island in his book *Utopia*, a place that seems to be socially and politically perfect. You will recognize the Latin roots "u" and "topos" to translate literally as "no place" a recognition even in its coining that utopias, perfect worlds, cannot exist. A dystopia is its opposite.

All of the novels you are going to read describe worlds that initially intend to be perfect. We will be examining the aspects that make these societies perfect and imperfect and talk about the aspects of human nature that make them this way.

Note: The title *Brave New World* comes from a famous line in William Shakespeare's play *The Tempest*, a play which John, a major character in the novel, has read. Huxley makes several **allusions** to *The Tempest*, a play of love and magic and spiritual regeneration. But the most important piece you need to understand is that Miranda, the heroine, lives on an isolated island, and she has never seen any humans besides her father. In the beginning of the play, a crew of noblemen and sailors is deliberately shipwrecked there by her father, Prospero, who has magical powers. When she finally sees these human beings, Miranda cries out, "O brave new world, / That has such people in it!"

Huxley uses this comment and several other speeches from the play to explore his *Brave New World*. As you read the novel, think about John's comment on the brave new world to which he has come.

1. In addition to reading, please complete the following notes as you read.

Whenever you begin a work of literature, you should immediately begin to think about the characters. For the following characters,

Fahrenheit: Guy, Beatty, and Clarisse

BNW: Bernard, John, and Lenina

Who is this person? (description)

What is he/she like? (character)

What does he/ she really want? (motivation)

What does he/she do or say that seems truly important? (behavior and beliefs)

you should locate **at least**

one quotation describing his or her physical appearance

two quotations showing distinguishing features of his or her personality

two quotations showing motivation (for this you may need to make inferences)

an action that you feel is indicative of the nature of his or her character

(do not forget correct citations for each quotation!)

Please use the following chart, or type your answers into the electronic version available on the website.

This assignment will be collected on the first day of school, and you will use it as the basic notes for our discussion and your essay.

2. Please answer the following four questions—one set for each of the two required novels (total of eight questions you will answer). You are more than welcome to type up your notes and questions, or you can leave them as the first entries in your English journal for the school year.

2a. What do you see as the climax of the novel?

2b. What symbols do you believe the author is using?

2c. What societal or governmental aspects make this appear to be a perfect world at first?

2d. What does each author seem to be saying about human nature?

3. For your choice novel, you will complete a creative assignment based on your novel during the first weeks of school. To prepare, as you read please take notes on the characters and their motivations and make a list of ways people behave that the author seems to be critiquing.

Additionally, students entering our 10th grade need to have learned the Latin bases in Lessons 1-14 in *Everyday Words from Classic Origins* as well as a few vocabulary words for each base. The book is available from Lisa Straub in the front office (367-8085 X 203). Every student needs one.

If you lose this sheet, you can find the assignment on the website (www.crossroadscollegeprep.org).